



# Healthy Eating: Lunch Ideas

## What makes a healthy lunch?

A healthy lunch includes a variety of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk products. Choose lean protein, like grilled fish or chicken, or beans or tofu, and healthy fats, like olive or canola oil.

Making lunches will help you control portion sizes and include more healthful foods. But if you eat lunch out, you can still have a healthy meal.

## IF YOU MAKE YOUR OWN

- Try tuna or chicken salad with apple chunks, pineapple, grapes, or raisins. Put the mixture on whole wheat bread and have some carrot sticks on the side.
- Make a grilled cheese sandwich with low-fat cheese. Add sauteed spinach and onion, and tomato slices.
- Make pasta sauce or soup with lots of vegetables, such as spinach, kale, onions bell peppers, and grated zucchini or carrots.
- Make a turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread. Add lots of vegetables, such as lettuce, tomatoes, cucumbers, bell peppers, and avocado slices. Use mustard instead of mayonnaise.
- Make a green salad and add lots of colorful vegetables, such as red cabbage, carrots, and bell peppers. Top with dried cranberries or raisins, or with sliced pears, oranges, nectarines, strawberries, or grapefruit. Or top with drained, canned tuna or a hard-cooked egg and a sprinkle of low-fat cheese. Use olive or canola oil and vinegar for dressing.
- Make a mini pizza using whole wheat pita bread. Top with tomato sauce, lots of veggies, and a sprinkle of low-fat cheese.
- Make burritos with whole wheat tortillas, low-sodium canned black beans, and corn. Add sliced avocado, tomatoes, bell peppers, low-sodium salsa, and low-fat cheese.
- Make a pasta salad with whole-wheat bow tie pasta. Add broccoli or other veggies, chunks of cooked chicken breast, and a little feta cheese. Drizzle with olive oil and vinegar or lemon.

## IF YOU EAT OUT

- If you eat burgers at fast-food restaurants, order the smallest burger, such as the child-sized, instead of a double or triple burger. Find places that let you choose healthy sides like fruit, salad, or milk instead of french fries and soft drinks.
- Eat smaller portions by sharing a meal or taking some food home. Restaurants often give you much larger portions than you need.
- Order vegetarian foods. Ethnic restaurants, such as Indian, Thai, or Japanese restaurants, often have a wide variety of vegetarian choices.

## TRY TO PLAN AHEAD

Plan for lunches when you make your weekly shopping list.

When you can, double a healthy recipe and freeze part of it to take to work or eat at home.

Buy a few healthy frozen entrees that are lower in fat, calories, and/or sodium. You can use these on days when you don't have time to make your lunch.

## IF YOU HAVE HEALTH CONCERNS

If you're trying to eat more healthy foods because you have a health problem, use the following space to list questions for your doctor or a registered dietitian. Or keep track of other ideas for healthy lunches or good places to eat.

### Ideas or questions about healthy eating

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