



## YDC MANDAN PACKING LUNCH FROM HOME

Packing lunch for your child doesn't need to be time consuming or frustrating, but it is important to remember that everything your children eat and drink matters. The right mix can help your children be healthier now and in the future.

### Tips and Tricks

**Aim for Balance:** Aim for a fruit, vegetable, whole grain, and protein (lean meat, seed spread, yogurt or cheese).

**Bring in the Kids:** Involving your children in lunchbox planning and preparation is key to increasing their knowledge and acceptability of food. Give them choices to help guide what to pack (i.e. blueberries or apple; carrots or cucumber).

**Cut and Peel:** Lunch from home should require no further adult prep work once packed. All grapes should be sliced or quartered, fruit should be peeled and cut as necessary, etc.

**Keep it Cold:** Remember to pack an ice pack in your child's lunch to keep cold foods cold. You could also consider freezing a bottle of water or yogurt tube to act as cold packs also.

**Leave it Home:** To keep our children with nut allergies safe, please do not pack peanut/treenut products. We ask that desserts, sugary treats and potato chips stay home. A good balanced diet can have a marked effect on children's social and emotional behavior as well as their ability to use the full range of their intellectual capabilities. Fuel your preschooler with nutritious foods, using the USDA My Plate as a guide.

### What if my child would like hot food?

No problem! Use a food thermos to keep hot foods hot for up to 5 hours! Target has a variety of food thermos choices available.

Some even come with a utensil so you don't have to remember to pack it separately!

Tip: Prime your thermos for hot food by following these simple steps:

- (1) Warm your thermos by filling it with boiling water
- (2) Put the lid on and let it sit for a few minutes
- (3) Pour out the water
- (4) Add steaming hot food (at or above 165°F) and put the lid on tightly



## Food Group Suggestions

### Grains

Bagel  
Bread  
Crackers  
Croissant  
English Muffin  
Quinoa  
Pasta  
Pita bread  
Pretzels  
Rice  
Tortilla shell

### Protein

Beans  
Cheese  
Chicken  
Cottage cheese  
Eggs  
Fish  
Ham  
SunButter\*  
Turkey  
Yogurt

\*Please, no peanut/treenut products

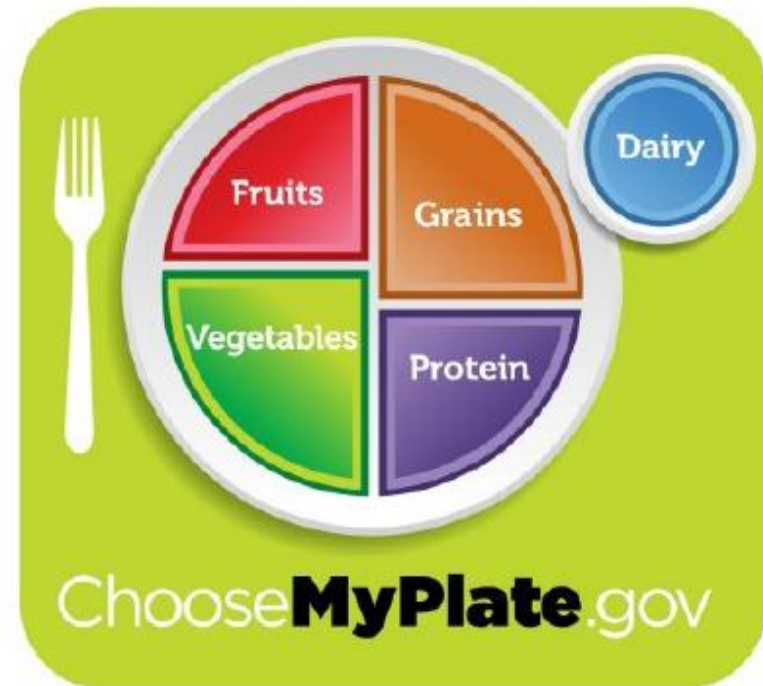
### Fruits/Veggies

Apples  
Apricots  
Avocado  
Beets  
Broccoli  
Cantaloupe  
Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Celery  
Cherries  
Corn  
Dried fruit  
Edamame  
Grapefruit  
Green beans  
Honeydew  
Kale

Kiwi  
Lettuce  
Mango  
Nectarines  
Peaches  
Pears  
Peas  
Peppers  
Pineapple  
Plums  
Potatoes  
Raspberries  
Spinach  
Squash  
Strawberries  
Tomatoes  
And so many more!

### Drinks

Fat-free or low-fat unflavored milk  
Water





### Chicken Salad

If your little one enjoys chicken salad sandwiches, why not try breaking one down for her? Your child can make her own sandwich with crackers or have fun dipping the crackers and bell peppers into the chicken salad. She might even go wild and make sandwiches with the apple slices. Anything goes with this nutritious combo!

- Chicken salad
- Whole wheat crackers
- Sliced bell peppers
- Thin apples slices



### Pasta Salad

Cold pasta salad is a great option to make with leftover ingredients, or it's easy to make ahead of time and feast on all week. Choose whole wheat pasta for the extra fiber that helps keep your little one fuller, longer.

- Pasta salad:
  - Whole wheat pasta
  - Italian dressing
  - Cherry tomatoes (cut into quarters)
  - Lightly cooked broccoli (fresh or frozen)
  - Lightly cooked green beans (fresh or frozen)
  - Cheese
- 1 hard boiled egg
- Melon



### Ham and Cheese Roll-Up

Deli meat can be featured in your child's packed lunch without having to resort to a sandwich. This lunch covers all of the food groups, and your little one will have fun dipping away!

- Ham roll-ups
  - Low sodium ham
  - String Cheese
- Hummus
- Sliced bell peppers
- Half a banana



### Homemade Lunchables

Sure, kids love those prepackaged mini-meals, but there's not much to love about the processed foods that are loaded with sodium and other preservatives.

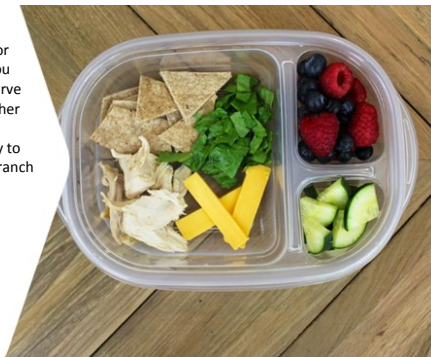
- Low-sodium turkey
- Cheese
- Whole wheat crackers
- Cooked green beans or snap peas
- Thin apple slices
- Sunseed butter—to keep our children with nut allergies safe, please do not pack peanut/treenut products



### Deconstructed Chicken Wrap

A full-on chicken wrap might be a little much for most preschoolers, but by breaking it down, you can take ingredients from a lunch you might serve yourself and make it work for your child. Another great thing about this meal is that you can use leftover rotisserie chicken to make it extra easy to prepare. You could also throw in a little bit of ranch dressing if your little one likes to dip.

- Shredded rotisserie chicken
- Cheese
- Spinach or romaine lettuce
- Whole what tortilla—cut up
- Cucumber slices
- Blueberries and raspberries



### Chicken and Guacamole

A great time-saving meal prep tip is to buy a rotisserie chicken and make it work for whatever chicken dish you are whipping up. It also tastes great on its own and can be a great protein staple in your child's lunch since it's still yummy as cold leftovers.

- Rotisserie chicken pieces
- A mini guacamole to-go cup (to prevent browning)
- Whole wheat pita slices
- Lightly carrot slices or sticks for dipping
- Quartered grapes



### Chicken and Cheese

This lunch idea is a great reminder that simple is more than OK!

- Cubed rotisserie chicken
- Shredded cheese
- Sliced bell peppers
- Pineapple and blueberries
- Don't forget to add a grain!
  - Pasta
  - Whole grain crackers
  - Pretzels



### Deconstructed Tacos

Have some leftovers from taco night? Don't let them go to waste! All of your taco ingredients taste great cold and your preschooler will have fun putting them together all on his own.

- Ground turkey or beef with taco seasoning
- Shredded cheese
- Diced tomatoes or salsa
- Lettuce
- Mini guacamole to-go cup
- Watermelon

