

## Healthy Brown Bag Lunches



### Quick Tips

- Keep lunches balanced by incorporating all food groups – lean protein, whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy
- Lunches that contain a combination of protein and fiber from whole grains, beans, nuts, vegetables, and fruits will keep you full and satisfied longer
- Meal prepping for the week or the next day is a great time saving tip – prepare your lunch the night before and it will be ready to go for work in the morning
- Cooking in bulk on the weekends is a great way to meal prep – make a big batch of soup or casserole and freeze into individual portions to be reheated for a quick lunch
- Remember to stay hydrated throughout the day – aim for eight 8oz. glasses of water a day or 64 oz. total

### Healthy Swaps

#### Sandwiches and wraps

- Use whole wheat bread or a whole wheat tortilla instead of white bread or flour tortillas to get the additional fiber, which will keep you full longer
- If you are watching your carbohydrates, try using a lettuce wrap or making an open faced sandwich with one slice of bread
- Choose a lean and low – sodium variety of lunch meat – grilled chicken, roast beef, roasted turkey, and canned tuna or salmon are good lean choices
- Choose healthier spreads or dressings such as hummus, mustard, light mayo, plain Greek yogurt, or guacamole
- Load your sandwich or wrap with vegetable toppings to get those nutrients – spinach, tomato, cucumber, shredded carrot, bell pepper, or avocado (healthy fats!) are all ideas!
- Cheese provides calcium and protein, but it can also add extra calories – choose a lower-fat variety such as Swiss or provolone instead of cheddar
- If your craving something crunchy to go along with your sandwich, try a baked chip, baked sweet potato chip, or veggie sticks with hummus

#### Salads

- Look for dark, leafy greens such as romaine, spinach, or arugula
- Healthier lean protein toppings – canned tuna or salmon, hard boiled egg, beans (black beans, kidney beans, chickpeas, soybeans), or grilled chicken
- Add 2 tablespoons of chopped nuts for extra crunch, fiber, and healthy fats
- Add fruits and vegetables of various colors to provide a variety of nutrients
- Try adding whole grains to your salad to increase satiety – couscous, quinoa, or wild rice go great in salads
- For dressings, opt for lower-calorie versions or make your own vinaigrette dressing with oil, vinegar, and spices

- **Hummus and Veggie Wrap:** whole-wheat tortilla spread with 1 Tbsp. hummus, 1 slice Swiss cheese or 2 Tbsp. feta cheese, and filled with veggies such as cucumber, carrot, peppers, spinach, avocado, tomatoes, etc. – serve with any type of fresh fruit
- **Turkey – Avocado Sandwich:** 2 slices whole-grain bread with 3 ounces deli turkey breast, ¼ cup sliced avocado, and 1 slice Swiss cheese – serve with a piece of fresh fruit such as a medium pear or apple
  - Could also be made as a wrap with a whole-wheat tortilla or lettuce wrap!
- **Tuna Salad Sandwich:** 3 ounce pouch tuna, 1 Tbsp. plain Greek yogurt, 1 Tbsp. mustard, chopped celery, and a couple pinches of lemon pepper seasoning – top with sliced tomato and serve with fresh fruit and a part-skim mozzarella cheese stick
  - Recipe tip - you can also make egg salad with the same recipe but using Dijon mustard and swapping dill seasoning for the lemon pepper seasoning
- **Green Salad with Tuna:** 2 cups romaine lettuce, 3 ounce pouch tuna, 2 Tbsp. sunflower seeds, 2 Tbsp. dried cherries, ¼ cup sliced carrots, and 2 Tbsp. vinaigrette dressing – serve with 1 slice whole wheat bread and a container of yogurt
- **Black Bean Quinoa Salad:** ½ cup quinoa (could use from dinner the night before!), ½ cup black beans, ¼ cup cooked corn, 1 ounce of feta cheese (or other low-fat cheese), chopped tomato and a dash of pepper – drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar and mix together
- **Bento Style Lunches:**
  - Single serving pack of guacamole or hummus with carrots, part-skim mozzarella cheese stick, grapes, and 3 oz. lean deli meat
  - Serving of whole-wheat crackers with slice of Swiss cheese, 3 oz. lean deli meat, strawberries, and sugar snap peas – include a fun size piece of dark chocolate for a sweet treat
  - Switch up the kinds of fruit or vegetables used to give your lunches more variety during the week!
- **Use up Those Left Overs:**
  - Leftover pasta with sauce – serve with a leafy green side salad
  - Leftover chicken or fish, whole grain such as rice or quinoa, and roasted vegetables from last night's dinner
  - Soups make great leftovers – try freezing large batches into single servings
  - Breakfast for lunch – make extras when you have breakfast on weekends and pack leftover pancakes, a hard boiled egg, strawberries or any fresh fruit, and a container of yogurt for a rounded out lunch
  - Recipe tip – healthy toppings for pancakes include peanut butter or your favorite nut butter for protein and healthy fats, a drizzle of honey for extra sweetness, fresh fruit, pure maple syrup, or flavored low-fat yogurt