

**Wise Notes for Consumers**

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**Five Days of 5 Food Group Lunches**

For parents whose children do not want to eat the meals served at school, providing a well-balanced, healthy, and appetizing selection of foods that can be kept cool until eaten can be a challenge. To help answer the question, “What can I pack that won’t spoil by lunchtime and contains healthy foods that my child will eat?” Here are 5 ways to fill lunch boxes with all 5 food groups for a week’s worth of different lunch ideas!

By combining whole grains with low-fat cheese, yogurt or milk, and adding in a fruit and vegetable, we are able to fill lunch boxes with all five food groups in a week’s worth of different lunch ideas from AgriLife Extension’s Dinner Tonight program!

- Traditional - Sandwich with turkey breast and reduced-fat cheese on whole wheat bread, serve with unsweetened applesauce, carrots with low-fat ranch dressing, and low-fat milk box.
- Traditional with a twist - Ham and cheese roll-up: slice one piece of reduced –fat cheese in half and roll each half in a slice of deli ham, secure with a toothpick and serve with whole wheat baked pita chips and sliced cucumbers with hummus, and 100% juice.
- Lunch on a Stick - Using a kebab skewer alternate cheese cubes, sliced turkey breast, and sliced cherry tomatoes (makes 2), serve with orange slices, granola bar and bottled water.
- Finger Foods - Sliced low-fat turkey pepperonis, sliced low-fat cheese, whole wheat crackers served with blueberries, celery sticks with hummus, and a milk box.

*Extension programs serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion, disability, or national orientation. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.*

- Try Something New! Half a whole-wheat pita filled with your child's favorite lunch meat and low-fat cheese, served with yogurt, snap peas with ranch dressing, and 100% juice.

It is also important to consider food safety. Keep cold foods like meat, eggs, lunch meat, cheese, milk, cut fruit and cooked pasta, vegetables, and rice cold. Use insulated bags, ice packs, freezer gels, or frozen juice boxes. Keep foods like soup and chili hot with a wide mouth insulated bottle; pour boiling water into the bottle to heat the inside. Then heat the food to 165 degrees F. Drain the boiling water from the bottle and replace with the hot food.

To learn more about healthy lunch options, contact the Wise County Extension office at 940/627-3341.

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