

Packing lunch at home



By preparing your lunch at home, you not only have control over portion sizes and variety, you also get to prepare a lunch that is tasty, nutritious and budget-conscious. If you do not have access to a refrigerator at work, use cold-packs in a small cooler. These handy packs can keep your lunch cold for hours and they're reusable!

The next time you leave your work station to go out to lunch, count how many minutes it takes you from the time you leave your chair until the time you actually receive your meal and begin to eat. Then add the number of minutes from the time you finish eating until you get back to your work station. Chances are your total amount of time *not* eating is at least 30 minutes. That amounts to 2-1/2 hours per week if you work a five-day work week. You could easily spend less than 2 hours a week at the grocery store and preparing your lunches for the week! Not only is it time-efficient, but a lunch prepared at home can give you more control over your food choices for maximum nutrients and taste.

Tips:

- Cut up vegetables and fruit into single servings and store them in individual containers or "baggies" in the refrigerator. This will make lunch packing easier and faster.
- Pick one evening of the week to prepare your meat and bean servings. Cook meats and beans in advance to help cut down on preparation time later. Be sure to check how long uncooked and cooked meats and beans will stay fresh.
- Buy enough yogurt to last for at least a week. The expiration date is usually printed on the container.
- Keep a supply of plastic forks and spoons at your work-station for convenient use.
- If you must prepare multiple lunches, have an assembly line going when preparing lunches, or alternate evenings for each adult in the family to prepare lunches for the next day for the entire family. Buy and pack healthy favorites that are most likely to be eaten.

Use your portions guide to help you prepare your lunch at home:

Example 1: Fruit 1 /2 cup blueberries	Milk 1 (8 oz.) container of low-fat yogurt (about 100 calories)	Vegetables Salad	Grains Whole grain cereal (mixed in with the yogurt)	Meat and Beans 1 skinless/boneless grilled chicken breast. Slice and add to your salad.
Example 2: Fruit 1 small apple	Milk 1 slice of low-fat cheese for sandwich	Vegetables 1/2 cucumber cut up Lettuce and tomato for sandwich	Grains 2 slices of bread	Meat and Beans 2-3 ounces of low-sodium roast beef
Example 3: Fruit 1 large banana	Milk 1 tablespoon of low-fat sour cream	Vegetables 1 cup of baby carrots	Grains Whole grain crackers with your salad	Meat and Beans 1/2 cup black bean soup. Top your soup with 1 tablespoon of low-fat sour cream.

Source: United States Department of Health and Human Services and the United States Department of Agriculture - www.mypyramid.gov.

This information is intended for educational purposes only, and should not be interpreted as medical advice. Please consult your physician for advice about changes that may affect your health.

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield is the trade name of: In Colorado: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. In Connecticut: Anthem Health Plans, Inc. In Indiana: Anthem Insurance Companies, Inc. In Kentucky: Anthem Health Plans of Kentucky, Inc. In Maine: Anthem Health Plans of Maine, Inc. In most of Missouri (excluding 30 counties in the Kansas City area): RightCHOICE® Managed Care, Inc. (RIT), Healthy Alliance® Life Insurance Company (HALIC), and HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates administer non-HMO benefits underwritten by HALIC and HMO benefits underwritten by HMO Missouri, Inc. RIT and certain affiliates only provide administrative services for self-funded plans and do not underwrite benefits. In Nevada: Rocky Mountain Hospital and Medical Service, Inc. In New Hampshire: Anthem Health Plans of New Hampshire, Inc. In Ohio: Community Insurance Company. In most of Virginia (serving Virginia excluding the city of Fairfax, the town of Vienna and the area east of State Route 123.): Anthem Health Plans of Virginia, Inc. In Wisconsin: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Wisconsin ("BCBSWI") underwrites or administers the PPO and indemnity policies; CompCare Health Services Insurance Corporation ("CompCare") underwrites or administers the HMO policies; and CompCare and BCBSWI collectively underwrite or administer the POS policies. Independent licensees of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association. © ANTHEM is a registered trademark. The Blue Cross and Blue Shield names and symbols are registered marks of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association.

