

How to Pack Your Best Lunch for Work

 Connections



With school back in session and fall approaching, change is in the air — from new routines to eating foods that are more abundant this time of year, such as apples and tomatoes. Jess Peterson, lactation consultant at Huntley Hospital and a former registered dietetics technician and wellness technician at Woodstock Hospital, and the Worksite Wellness Team at Woodstock share tips for making healthy lunches during this busy time of year.

Pack your best lunch for work

- **Start with fresh, whole foods.** Aim for a variety of fruits and vegetables so that you get a wide range of nutrients every day.
- **Pack protein.** Protein, such as nuts, eggs, peanut butter and hummus, helps you feel full longer.
- **Choose fewer packaged foods.** For foods that come pre-packaged, choose items with less saturated fat and added sugars.
- **Fall in love with leftovers.** Eat leftovers for lunch to help reduce food waste, lower your grocery bill and free up more of your time. Leftovers require minimal prep time.
- **Plan ahead.** Stay on track with your healthy eating goals by aligning your grocery list with the lunches you want to make for the week.

Tips for prepping lunch for kids

- **Put your kids in the chef's seat.** When kids can help plan and prepare their lunches, they are more likely to eat them.
- **Get creative.** If your child eats a sandwich for lunch every day, think of some sandwich alternatives. For example, use whole grain crackers instead of bread, or make wraps or pinwheels by wrapping a slice of low-sodium turkey and a crunchy slice of sweet bell pepper around a cheese stick. Also, try kabobs, adding dips or cutting foods into different shapes, such as heart-shaped sandwiches and bell pepper pieces cut like stars.
- **Make eating healthy easy.** Be sure the food containers are easy to open and that any fruit is cut up or peeled so kids are more likely to eat it.

For a customized nutrition plan, work with a registered dietitian to help you meet your goals and needs.

2 Recipes for Fall

The recipes below were created by registered dietitians at McHenry Hospital, Huntley Hospital and Woodstock Hospital.

Apple Carrot Salad

Ingredients

3 cups freshly grated carrots
3/4 cup raisins
1 large apple, cored and chopped
1/4 to 1/3 cup light mayonnaise

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium-sized bowl.
2. Chill at least one hour.

Pumpkin Parfait

Ingredients

1 cup light vanilla yogurt
1/4 cup canned 100% pure pumpkin
1/4 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
1/2 cup low-fat granola

Instructions

1. Combine yogurt, pumpkin and spices in a bowl. Blend well.
2. Place half of the yogurt mixture into two 1-cup parfait glasses.
3. Top yogurt mixtures with half of the granola.
4. Top each with remaining yogurt mixture and granola.