

Nutrition For Active Families

Healthful, Fun And Swap-proof School Lunches

(NAPSA)—To help parents and caregivers faced with the ever-challenging task of preparing healthful school lunches that kids will actually eat, Registered Dietitian Sarah Wally offers a few tips:

- **Include all food groups.** A balanced lunch is a healthful lunch. Follow the MyPlate meal-planning model and pack a serving or two from each of the following categories: grains, vegetables, fruit, dairy and protein. Vegetables and fruits should account for roughly half of the meal.

- **Keep foods safe.** Making sure hot foods stay hot and cool foods stay cool is imperative to keep food-borne illness at bay. Insulated thermoses are a great option for storing soups or warm pasta. Adding a frozen juice box to your kid's lunch bag creates an instant ice pack to keep cool items chilled and it will defrost just in time to enjoy at lunch. As a bonus, just 4 ounces of 100% juice counts as a serving (half a cup) of fruit.

- **Get the kids involved.** Asking your children to help plan their weekly lunches lets them feel important and in control. Share with them your criteria for a healthy lunch and then give them some options to choose from. Kids will enjoy a break from repetitious lunches and learn a bit about creating healthful meals.

- **Use lunchtime as a way to connect.** A handwritten note can



The lunch you pack for your child can be one she'll like and good for her, too.

be a surprising, sentimental way to reconnect with your kids. Use a napkin to write a few words of encouragement before that after-lunch test or important soccer game. It can make their day.

Recipe for a Healthful Lunch Box

- Choose whole grain breads and crackers for added fiber.

- Pack 100% juice, providing vitamins, minerals, and beneficial plant compounds called phytonutrients.

- Stick to low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

- Help your kids to “eat the rainbow” by offering a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables.

Learn More

For more information, log on to www.fruitjuicefacts.org.