

Lunchtime Packing Ideas For Healthy And Happy Kids

(NAPSA)—Thirty million children across the U.S. will head to elementary school this year, and according to the American Dietetic Association, more than half will bring their lunch.

To keep your child from partaking in the inevitable lunch swap, while at the same time providing wholesome and healthy food options, Aladdin, a leader in lunch containers, shares ideas to get the school season started right:

Planning makes perfect

Avoid morning packing panic, which often leads to poor, last-minute choices. Plan the night before and ask your child to participate in the process. This will ensure she gets a lunch she enjoys—and eats.

Keep your options open

Move over mac and cheese. Children tend to stick to their favorite foods, but there is more to lunch than PB&J. Introduce new foods by incorporating them into your child's favorite standbys. For example, spread kid-friendly peanut butter on a celery stick with raisins on top, and voila, ants-on-a-log.

Sound snacking

Snacks provide 25 percent of the total calories consumed by children, according to a recent survey of more than 3,000 infants and toddlers. So transform your "Cookie Monster" into a "Fruit and Veggie Monster" to ensure he receives his daily essentials. Pack a healthy treat or two—like peanuts and baby carrots—in a colorful container like Aladdin's new perfectly portable Snack & Go.

Make use of leftovers

No need to reinvent the wheel every day. On evenings when you're struggling for lunch ideas, send your child to school with yummy leftovers. Aladdin's new Heat & Go offers a fun way to provide warm, homemade meals while away from home.



Packing a lunch for your child to take to school can start him or her on the road to healthy eating.

Be waste- and worry-free

Send your child to school with a soon-to-be-treasured lunch or snack container, such as those in the new Aladdin Lunchkeeper Series. They not only help keep food fresh, but provide a reusable solution for 185 days of lunch to come! For more information, visit www.aladdinlunch.com.

Cosmo Pasta Magic

- 1 9-ounce package of pasta**
(try the spiral- or bow-shaped ones for fun)
- ¼ cup basil pesto**
- 6 ounces meat or meat substitute**
- 2 cups diced vegetables**
- 1 Tbsp. olive oil**

Put the pesto in a large bowl. Cook pasta according to the package instructions. While the pasta is cooking, heat the oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the meat or substitute and veggies and cook, stirring until hot, about 3 minutes. Drain the cooked pasta, reserving ½ cup of the pasta water. Whisk the pasta water into the pesto. Add the pasta to the pesto and toss. Add the meat and veggie mixture and combine.