

Today's Lunch Special: a Green and Trash-Free Lunch

Looking for ways to become eco-friendly? An easy place to make a difference is with your child's lunch.

Though water bottles, juice boxes and individually wrapped "grab and go" foods are convenient, they generate tons of trash. Each year the average child dumps 67 pounds of lunchbox trash costing school districts valuable dollars to collect and dispose of the trash.

Re-thinking how your child's meal gets packed can reduce trash going to landfills and has some unexpected benefits.

Simple ways to pack a trash-free lunch:

- Send drinks in a **reusable bottle** (stainless steel or reusable BPA free plastic bottle). . Prevent another plastic bottle from going into a landfill, or worse, into the ocean. Over a week, a month, a year, that really adds up!
- Send food in **re-usable lunchboxes** instead of paper bags
- Instead of plastic wrap, foil or baggies, pack food in **re-usable containers**.
- Consider buying foods in bulk or in larger boxes and packing a portion in **re-usable containers**.
- Try **cloth napkins**, or **re-usable silverware** that can be washed at home.

In addition to feeling good about reducing trash, a few added benefits are:

- **Parents save money.** Individually wrapped goodies and drinks are premium priced, often up to 50% higher
- **Parents see leftovers.** "Hmm. The healthy sandwich has one bite taken, and every cookie disappeared." And, many kids snack on leftovers after school.
- **Healthier food choices.** Your food and drink options are limitless when you pack in re-usable containers and don't rely on pre-packaged products, which tend to be processed foods.

To learn more about trash-free lunches for your family, visit www.wastefreelunches.org

The EPA also has a page dedicated to this subject at

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/education/lunch.htm>

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