



Healthy Lunch Checklist—What's in Your Pantry?

It takes a little planning, but bringing a homemade lunch to work is an easy step toward a healthier lifestyle. If you want to make packing lunch a quick and easy task, stock your kitchen with healthy options, such as those listed below. Pick a few foods that you like and keep them on hand. Also, make sure you have storage containers, plastic sandwich bags, a thermos, and an insulated lunch bag or cooler to transport and store your lunch.

Vegetables

- Fresh vegetables—baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, snap peas, and precut vegetables are quick to pack
- Whole vegetables, such as broccoli, bell peppers, and celery—chop them when you get home to use throughout the week on sandwiches, wraps, and salads
- Fresh mixed greens or spinach—pile these onto sandwiches, wraps or use in salads
- Frozen vegetables—try those you can steam in the package in a microwave oven

Fruit

- Whole fruit such as apples, bananas, oranges, clementines, pears, nectarines, grapes, and peaches
- Canned fruit (canned in juice, not syrup)—try individual serving cups or cans of mandarin oranges, peaches, and fruit cocktail

Whole Grains

- 100% whole wheat bread, pitas, and/or wraps—if you're cutting back on carbohydrate, consider a low-carb versions
- Quinoa or quick-cooking barley

Protein Foods

- Water packed light tuna in a can or pouch
- Reduced-sodium canned beans (rinsed and drained)
- Reduced-sodium lean deli meat—try roasted turkey, chicken, or roast beef
- Rotisserie chicken—buy a whole chicken and use it throughout the week
- Eggs—hard boil these ahead of time
- Unsalted nuts/nut mix

Dairy

- Skim or 1% milk—soymilk or almond milk are also good options, especially for those with lactose intolerance
- Light yogurt or nonfat Greek yogurt—plain is best, flavored varieties sweetened with sugar will have more carbohydrates
- Cottage cheese—try 1% or 2% low-fat cottage cheese to trim calories

Some Extras for Flavor

- Hot sauce
- Hummus
- Light salad dressing
- Mustard
- Salsa
- Balsamic vinegar
- Olive oil
- Lime and/or lemon juice