



# Viva Tysons!

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# Autumn

## CELEBRATION

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# WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

As the weather begins to cool and the telltale signs of autumn appear, most moms swear they hear the wind whispering, "It's time to think about packing lunch again."

This age old ritual is usually approached with a mixture of love and dread. Dread because not only does it take time but also because it is hard to find healthy foods the kids will actually eat. Instead of trepidation, think of this as a great opportunity to upgrade the health quotient of your children's lunches.

Start by setting a few nutritional goals for the school year. *Two or three can make a huge difference in your child's health.* It is not necessary to commit to a major overhaul. Here are some suggestions:

- **Increase whole grains with breads and snack foods**
- **Avoid partially hydrogenated fats**
- **Increase fresh fruits and vegetables**
- **Avoid processed meats**
- **Cut down on refined sugar**
- **Reduce sodium**
- **Increase healthy fats**

Let's start with sandwiches, a major staple of kids' lunches. These can be made healthier by using whole grain breads.

Look for soft products where the first ingredient is 100% whole grain. If your child balks, tell him that whole grains are good for his/her heart and are full of fiber and will help him/her poop! You can try white whole wheat bread, but it is best to get kids used to eating hearty whole grains that are naturally brown in color.

If your child eats a lot of processed meats such as hot dogs, bologna, ham, and turkey, switch to brands that are nitrite-free.

Studies show an increase in childhood cancers in heavy consumers of processed meats. Giant, Whole Foods, and Trader Joe's all carry brands that are free of these chemicals.

While your wallet may feel the difference, your kid's will not notice a change.

Add veggies. Even a few spinach leaves or a tomato between two lettuce leaves can add fiber and phytochemicals to their diets. Veggies are low in calories and great disease fighters.

Pack snacks made from whole grains like Snyder's Honey Wheat Pretzels, Guiltless Gourmet Baked Tortilla Chips, Whole Grain Wheat Thins, or cheesy popcorn. Avoid snacks made with white bleached flour and hydrogenated vegetable oils. While the 100 calorie packs are good for calorie control, they are loaded with these less than ideal ingredients.

Kids need fat for brain function. They need monounsaturated fats like olives, olive oil, natural peanut butter, almond or cashew butter, avocado, and canola mayonnaise. These fats are important to counteract the over abundance of trans fats and saturated fats in fried and processed foods which are sadly, often the mainstay of many kids' diets.

Pack cut up veggies with cheese sticks or ranch dressing, fresh fruit

While the 100 Calorie packs are good for Calorie Control, they are loaded with less than ideal ingredients.



with a small yogurt, or whole grain crackers and veggie dip. A small container of black olives and cut up carrots is always fun. Child sized Cliff Bars are a good choice for after school athletics if the workout is intense. Hummus, whole wheat quesadillas, and baked beans all make good filling snacks.

Don't worry that you take the time to pack a healthy lunch and then your child eats other kids' less healthy food. The important point is that you are modeling what healthy eating looks like. In the long run, a little junk food never hurt anyone! In fact, don't completely eliminate their old favorites, just pack them less frequently.

If your children are resistant to the new foods, engage them in the process. Bring them to the store and start reading labels to find foods that meet the goals you have set. Tell your kid's that you care about their health and together embark on new tastes and textures. Model good eating habits by eating the foods you want them to eat. When kids see you eating fruits and veggies, they will be more likely to try them. It turns out that packing lunch is really a family affair!



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Judy Caplan is a registered dietitian with a private practice in preventive health in Vienna, VA. Her children's book, *Gobey Gets Full – Good Nutrition in a Nutshell*, is now available. Visit [www.GoBeFull.com](http://www.GoBeFull.com) for more information about Judy and her company, Nutrition Ammunition.



## Exercise Helps Your Heart Even If You *DON'T* Lose Weight

**M**aybe you've been exercising some and pretty regularly, but the bathroom scale hasn't budged and your middle is still about the same size.

You have probably made an improvement in your cardiovascular health, and that could be even more important than your pants size.

Researchers at Harvard University and Brigham and Women's Hospital report that moderate amounts of exercise is associated with as much as a 41 percent reduction in cardiovascular risk. While their study was done entirely on women, men can assume they have a similar benefit.

In various study subjects, Body Mass Index changes accounted for just 10 percent of the reduction. Blood biomarker improvements accounted for about one-third of the risk reduction, and blood pressure changes were accountable for 27 percent of the improvements. Reduced cholesterol accounts for a 20 percent improvement.

The benefits of regular moderate exercise outweigh what the scale will tell you. The researchers found that the more study subjects exercised, the greater their cardiovascular health improved.

The surprise was that cardiovascular risk dropped by 27 percent for those whose activity burned just 200 to 599 calories per week.

The risk was reduced by 32 percent for those who burned 600 to 1,499 calories per week, and 41 percent for those who worked off 1,500 calories a week.

