



K-State Extension Connection

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The mission of K-State Research and Extension Family and Consumer Sciences is to link education with life experiences to help people improve their lives, their families and their communities. Family and Consumer Sciences professionals support essential life skills including Community Development, Healthy Lifestyle Choices, Leadership & Volunteer Development, Relationship Development and Resource Management.

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Save Money on Home-Packed Lunches

Lunches provided at school are affordable options. But if your family members choose packed lunches to tote to school or to work, here are some ways to keep the costs down.



Use reusable containers. Using paper lunch sacks, disposable plastic wrappers and sandwich bags, and other single-service items is like throwing money away every day. Instead, buy durable food containers with tight-fitting lids in a variety of sizes to fit your lunchbox needs. You will save money and help the environment by using reusable lunch boxes, sandwich and other food containers, beverage bottles, napkins and eating utensils.

Avoid single serving packages. You will save money and also help the environment if you buy large containers of common lunch box foods and beverages instead of buying packaged lunch meals or single serving sizes. A home-packed lunch not only costs less than pre-packaged lunch meals, but typically provides more food and more nutrients. Portion out a lunch-sized amount of each food (such as fruit, cut-up vegetables, yogurt or beverages) into reusable containers.

Prepare, cook and bake ahead. In the evenings and on weekends, prepare extra servings of cold foods, such as chopped vegetables, pasta salads, and puddings. Similarly, cook larger batches of soups, casseroles, spaghetti, stews or other healthy main dishes. In addition, bake healthful breads, muffins, and cookies. Pack in nutrition by using recipes that call for whole wheat flour, rolled oats, pumpkin puree, bananas, shredded carrots or zucchini, raisins, or other fruits, vegetables, seeds and nuts. Freeze in small portions in tightly-sealed reusable containers.

Plan ahead. Pack at least part of each lunch the night before, or even over the weekend. This will help you avoid rushing to throw the meal together minutes before you or your child have to leave home, and you'll be more likely to choose economical and healthy options. Make packing lunches a fun family affair. Direct tasks to children based on his or her age and skill level. When kids are involved, they'll be more likely to try new foods and it raises their interest in nutrition, which earns everyone an A+!

For additional information, contact the Wildcat Extension District, Crawford County, 620-724-8233, Labette County, 620-784-5337, Montgomery County, 620-331-2690, Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Our website is <http://www.wildcatdistrict.k-state.edu/> or follow us on Facebook: Wildcat Extension District.

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