

Brown Bag Lunches the Quick, Easy and Healthy Way!

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Lunch Time Money Saving Tips

In this month's newsletter, I wanted to give you ideas for brown bag meals while saving money at the same time. Did you know that you could save up to \$3,000 (maybe even more in big cities) per year just by bringing your lunch to work? If the average lunch costs \$10-\$15 per meal and a brown bag lunch costs between \$2-\$3 per meal, then you can save \$8-\$12 every work day. Over 50 weeks, you could save between \$2000 and \$3,000!

I often get asked the dreaded "left over" question. Sometimes your favorite lunches are great meals from the night before. I love reheating soups, stews and casseroles the next day for lunch. I also will eat leftover cold chicken and steak cut up on top of a salad. In addition, with leftovers, you can prepare your lunch the night before so all you have to do in the morning is grab and go.

My wife Mary, myself and our two sons are brown baggers by choice. My wife and I made this decision



long before the boys started school. The only way I know we all are getting the best nutrition is by bringing lunch from home. So in this issue of *Monthly Tastings*, I will be sharing some tricks and meal ideas to get you eating healthfully and saving money at the same time by brown bagging!

Cook Smart...
Chef Dave Fouts

“Life is like a sandwich - the more you add to it the better it becomes.”

- Anonymous



Keeping It Easy!

- ◆ If you have a bunch of sandwiches to make, lay out the slices of bread, spread each slice with mustard, mayo or any other spread you are using. Go down the line and add toppings, finish with the top slice and then wrap!
- ◆ Use frozen ice packs to help keep cold foods cold. Freeze drinks like juices, water and iced teas and use them as an ice pack to keep foods cold. The containers are likely to sweat while thawing, so wrap with a napkin to keep your food dry, not soggy.
- ◆ Remember “5 A Day” of fruits and vegetables. Pack some raw or lightly steamed (then chilled) vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, or carrots. Add a small container of low fat dip and you've got a great snack or lunch addition.
- ◆ My personal favorite, hummus, whether used as a dip or sandwich spread, is a great addition to any lunch box.
- ◆ I love thin crust, cold pizza for lunch with a side salad.
- ◆ Mary, my wife, gets pre-made, fresh sushi rolls from the grocery store! These are a fun way to change up your daily lunch routine.

10 Tips for Better Brown Bag Lunches



- Splurge** - If you are bringing your lunch to work, you are automatically saving money by not eating out. Make your food more enticing than the local fast-food chains and splurge to include your favorite item in your brown bag lunch!
- Go Grilled** - Nothing adds more flavor than grilled foods. Add cold grilled meats, fish, and veggies to your bagged meals.
- Lunch Buddies** - Form a lunch group at work with five other people. On one day of the week, one person makes lunch for all. It's easier to make five of the same lunches than to make five different ones every morning! *Plus, it adds variety (but be sure you all share the same tastes in food).*
- Awesome Beverages** - Beverages are one of the most costly lunch items when purchased at a restaurant or even a vending machine. A number of canned and bottled beverages are now on the market and cost less. Give your lunches some style with iced coffee, flavored sugar-free lemonades, or hot beverages such as sugar-free spiced apple cider.
- Yuck...Soggy** - If you are using moist vegetables or condiments, bag them separately.
- Condiments Galore** - Explore new condiments on your sandwich. I like pesto and low-fat herbed mayonnaise.
- Don't Forget Your Lunch** - Drop your car keys in the bag. You will never get to work without them!
- Wash Your Lunchbox** - Bacteria can grow anywhere, so be sure to clean your box or bag out regularly.
- Thermos** - A thermos is great for chilled or hot foods. Prepare your thermos by filling it with either iced or boiling water beforehand. It will more efficiently keep your foods at the correct temperature. Remember to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold to avoid food poisoning.
- I Love Nuts!** - One of the most boring things about brown bag lunches is the lack of variety and texture. Adding 1 teaspoon of nuts or sunflower seeds to salads, soups or even sandwiches makes for crunch appeal.

Kid Approved

- ◆ Core and cut a pear in half and stuff the inside with crunchy peanut butter. Top with raisins and toasted coconut.
- ◆ Peanut butter and strawberry preserves sandwich on whole wheat bread.



- ◆ Mash a banana together with fat free cream cheese and top with fresh apple and pineapple.
- ◆ Fresh cubed fruit mixed with light vanilla yogurt.
- ◆ Homemade Lunchables...cubed cheese, sliced ham, wheat thins and bottled water.

Pesto Chicken Salad with Mozzarella

Servings: 1

Ingredients:

- 1/2 teaspoon pesto (pre-prepared)
- 2 teaspoons fat free mayonnaise
- 1 ounce fresh part skim mozzarella, sliced thin
- 3 ounces cooked chicken, chopped
- 2 slices tomato
- 1/4 cup alfalfa sprouts
- 1/2 whole wheat pita

Directions:

- Mix pesto and mayonnaise in a small bowl.
- Spread pesto mixture inside the whole wheat pita.
- Add cheese, chicken, tomato and sprouts.
- Serve and enjoy!

Note: *If packing for lunch, place pesto mixture in a small container. Place tomatoes and alfalfa sprouts into a separate container and assemble sandwich just before eating.*

Nutritional Information:

250 calories; 29g protein; 10g fat (4g saturated fat); 60mg cholesterol; 12g carbohydrate; 2g fiber; 730mg sodium

Cobb Salad

Servings: 1

Ingredients:

- 2 cups romaine lettuce, chopped small
- 1/4 cup ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1/4 cup avocado, diced
- 1 slice turkey bacon, cooked and chopped
- 2 teaspoons blue cheese, crumbled
- 1/4 cup cooked turkey or chicken breast, diced
- 1/2 hardboiled egg, chopped
- 1 tablespoon low-fat balsamic vinaigrette

Directions:

- Place all ingredients into a small mixing bowl and toss.
- Serve and enjoy!

Note: *If packing for lunch, pack salad dressing separately and add to salad when ready to eat.*

Nutritional Information:

250 calories; 19g protein; 15g fat (3g saturated fat); 75mg cholesterol; 15g carbohydrate; 7g fiber; 670mg sodium



All Aboard! Family-Based Approaches for Family Success

A Guide from Eating Behaviorist, Brie Moore, PHD

Odds are if you struggle with your weight you're probably not the only one in your family. Although genetics play a significant role, environmental influences can also be passed down through the generations. If your spouse, child or other family members are overweight, or if setting a good example for your children is important to you, a family-based approach may be just what the doctor ordered.

Families with busy schedules often find themselves short on time. It's not uncommon for families to resort to zipping through the drive-thru to grab dinner, then winding down in front of the TV. Given these challenges, it is not surprising that families continue to struggle to lose weight. Children cannot change their diets without a commitment from the family. Greater emphasis on family meals and family lifestyle physical activity is an essential foundation for improved health. Research shows that drastic changes and emphasizing restriction are ineffective for children and can be detrimental for development. Instead, moderate, sensible family approaches have resulted in significant weight loss for both children *and* their parents. This finding is good news for parents who want to set a good example for their kids and lose weight in the process.

Try these expert keys to success to make changes that can significantly impact your family's health...and your waistline!

FIT FAMILIES PLAY!

Play is a very important part of your child's development. Play is the primary way children learn about the world. Play also helps kids get along with others and form close relationships with those people that matter most to them. Lifestyle play is most effective for children and families.

Keys to Success:

- ◆ Choose activities your child enjoys like dancing, riding bikes, hiking or swimming
- ◆ Involve friends and siblings
- ◆ Focus on fun rather than winning, losing, or rules of the game
- ◆ Schedule a good time each day for physical activity, like right after school or work
- ◆ Prevent soreness and injury by not working too hard - start small and build on success
- ◆ Leave sports equipment out and easily accessible to kids to encourage play
- ◆ Limit screen time to 1 hour a day, kids will find other active things to do
- ◆ Make TV, video game, or computer time available only after play
- ◆ Cleaning their room, doing chores and other household tasks count as activity too
- ◆ Reward your child with gifts that encourage activity instead of treats
- ◆ Join in the fun!

Continued on next page...



Family-Based Approaches for Family Success *(continued)*

FIT FAMILIES EAT BETTER, NOT LESS

Children need to eat to grow, play and thrive. Parents often feel pressured to cut back on how much your child eats and what kind of foods you offer. However, getting too hungry and prohibiting your families favorite foods will surely lead to overeating and weight gain.

Keys to Success:

- ◆ Share planned, family meals at the table at least 4 or 5 times per week
- ◆ You decide what, when and where your child eats
- ◆ Limit eating to structured meal and snack times and only while sitting at the table
- ◆ Cut up fruit and veggies and place ready to eat, healthy snacks at eye level in the fridge
- ◆ Try fresh fruits, low fat frozen yogurt and sugar free jell-o for dessert
- ◆ Your child decides how much and whether or not to eat
- ◆ Let your child serve him or herself and leave serving bowls in the kitchen
- ◆ Banish the “clean-your-plate” rule
- ◆ Give your child something to look forward to, offer high calorie treats in small portions
- ◆ Keep temptations, like chips, candy, sodas and other treats out of the house on a regular basis (out of sight, out of mind!)

PARENTING POWER

Parents often struggle to get their child to obey new rules. Yelling, bargaining and other punishments are seldom effective and can provide kids with the attention they seek. Remember, even bad attention is attention. Instead, praise your child when he or she does something you like. Children quickly learn that this is the best way to get your attention and approval. The more you praise your child, the more good things he will do to get your praise.

Keys to Success:

- ◆ Catch your child being good
- ◆ Praise your child’s specific behavior rather than the whole child
- ◆ Communicate acceptance and caring to your child, regardless of his or her weight
- ◆ Use the “If, then” rule to let your child know expectations and consequences
- ◆ Use privileges such as a sleep over at a friends house, TV, or a movie as rewards when your child completes a task you ask him or her to do
- ◆ Use rules and reminders to help your child make better decisions when you are not around
- ◆ Work together as a team to parent consistently



For support and guidance, kid-friendly websites such as www.BAM.gov and www.mypyramid.gov/kids provide families with information about getting active, making healthy food choices, and the impact of lifestyle on overall health. www.fitandhealthykids.com is an interactive self-help site that teaches families the skills necessary to put common sense nutrition and exercise knowledge into practice. Fit and Healthy Kids also helps families to get motivated, manage stress, and develop parenting skills to help make changes to family behavior less of a struggle.



***Brie Moore, Ph.D. received her master’s degree from the University of California, Davis and her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from the University of Nevada, Reno. She completed her clinical internship at the University of California, Los Angeles, with an emphasis on the delivery of empirically-based interventions in primary and tertiary care settings. She is the Lead Eating Behaviorist at iMetabolic in Reno, Nevada where she enjoys helping individuals actualize their goals for weight loss and improve quality of life.*