

# Back In Action Chiropractic

20416 Bowfonds St, Ashburn, VA 20147  
Office: 703-858-3575 / Fax: 703-858-3876 /  
Cell: 703-673-6333  
<http://www.back-n-action.com/>

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## The Parent's Quick Reference Guide to School Lunches Made Simple

### 4 Easy Steps

1. The Container(s)
2. The Timing
3. The "What to Insert" or "What to Eat"
4. The Post School Snack

### Basic Principles

1. Recommend not introducing a new food in a lunch pail for 2 reasons; 1. Child might not eat it not because they do not like it but just because it is unfamiliar 2. You do not want your child to starve; instead you would prefer them to be nourished
2. Recommend not STRESSING over food prep; relax and focus on what will create the least amount of stress for you and your child (see food prep suggestions)
3. You do not have to be creative with lunches; you just have to be CONSISTENT
4. Get your child involved. If old enough 3 years or older get them engaged in helping you put lunches together; this does several things 1. Gets the child excited about their lunch 2. Gets the child interested in food; "good" food 3. In the long run saves you time because as they get older they will be more efficient and be able to put the entire lunch together, and 4. Confidence in themselves with this important task

### Food Preparation

1. Timing. Figuring out the "right" time for you to put together lunches is the key
  - a) A. Several options exist; instead of just going with one method, methodically think about your day and which one is easier to incorporate; that is the method you should use
    - Post grocery shopping
    - During A Meal Prep (I find dinner is the easiest for 100% working parents; mornings are good for those parents who work later in the morning or afternoon part- or full-time)
  - b) Break Up the Week into 2 parts; You can use any variation you choose; below are several variations  
Basic principles: make 3 lunches at a time; I find if you try to make more than 3 days worth it is too overwhelming; likewise if you have more than 2 children you might want to make 2 lunches at a time. Simple concept here is "Time Chunking" if you can put together 2 days worth of lunches in 15 minutes or less it will not seem overwhelming
    - Sun-Mon-Tues; Wed-Thurs-Fri (prep day on Sun & Wed) This is an example
    - Set up the routine...Pick the hard core days you will prep food; have an alternate plan; for example
      - Prep on Sun for lunches on Mon, Tues, Wed
      - Prep on Wed for lunches on Thurs, Fri
      - OR ALTERNATIVE... Prep on Sun for lunches on Mon, Tues
      - Prep on Tues for lunches on Wed, Thurs, Fri
      - OR ALTERNATIVE...Prep on Sun for lunches Mon, Tues
      - Prep on Tues for lunches on Wed, Thurs &
      - Prep on Thurs for lunches Fri, Mon (this gives you an extra lunch you can use over the weekend on the run with "weekend errands"
2. The Container for Food or Drink
  - a) Please make sure your containers are BPA free (Bisphenol A free). If the container has a number "7" on the bottom and says "PC" with a triangle than it is not BPA free
  - b) Look for the following numbers on the plastic containers "1", "2", "4"
  - c) Never microwave plastic
  - d) Wash your plastic containers on the top shelf or handwash
  - e) Bottles

- Some metal water bottles are lined with an epoxy based enamel coating which can leak out BPA
- Alternative bottle. Please make sure you get a stainless steel bottle with no liner
- Old and scratched plastic bottles send to recycling

### Food Texture

1. Absolutely if you know your child prefers a certain food texture, for example crunchy over soft than always include a crunchy food

### Food to Include in the Pail

1. Protein
  - a) Lunch meats seem to be the easiest. Not on bread. No nitrates, nitrates.
    - Applegate
  - b) Cook a roast either chicken breast, whole chicken, hamburgers on the grill or in oven, or grassfed meat preslice and/or precut it during a dinner meal or time convenient for you; this is an excellent alternative meat option
2. Vegetable
  - a) Clinical note: Most parents say “my child refuses to eat vegetables”
  - b) Start with the following: carrots, broccoli
  - c) Consider introducing but not initially for first time in the lunch box but at a meal time the following: brussel sprouts, avocado, sweet peas, sweet potatoes, parsnips, celery, cauliflower, green beans
  - d) Cooking versus raw? In the raw state is better; I do find children rarely like it raw (maybe carrots); here is your work around, absolutely do NOT cook vegetables in the microwave because it denatures the food; consider the following:
    - Precut and wash (vinegar fruit/veggie spray) and put in zip lock bags ready to precook
    - Throw into pot with ¼ cup filtered water (preferred), teaspoon olive oil on low to low-medium heat for no longer than 15 minutes
    - Vegetables will be mildly cooked and yet soft enough for a child to eat
3. Fruit
  - a) Remember fruit slows down the digestion process; kids need nutrients throughout the day that keeps them going; recommend keeping fruit in moderation
  - b) What fruit to consider?
    - Frozen fruit; please make sure there is no sugar added; read your label even though it might say on the front that no sugar is added still read the label; great alternative for spring
    - In season fruits recommend (Jun - Aug are the best months in Virginia for a variety of fruits)
    - Web site to see what is in season specifically for Virginia. [www.simplesteps.org](http://www.simplesteps.org)
4. Starches
  - a) Recommend keeping to a minimum for several reasons; makes the brain sluggish, slows down digestion (hard to eliminate), often physically fatigues the body
  - b) The Crunch
    - Most children like to have some crunchy in their lunch here are some alternatives
      - Non-GMO chips (they do make vegetable chips—great option if you are having a hard time getting your child to eat vegetables)
      - Gluten free Options (see GF handout)
5. Drink
  - a) Always pack water BPA free bottle
  - b) If you know your child will not drink water initially try a low sugar drink; avoid fat free drinks; Please reference sugar handout to avoid high sugar content hidden; absolutely make sure no “high fructose corn syrup”, “aspartame”, “splenda”
  - c) If your child is not a water drinker as of to date do the following:
    - Start introducing water at the dinner table (family meal time) and on the go
    - If water is the only drink of choice and it is hot and they are thirsty they will drink!
    - Flavor the water with fresh lemon or lime squeezed
    - Consider kombucha brewing as an alternative; recommend going to grocery store to try it first before brewing; it tastes like soda but has amazing digestive enzyme properties
    - As your child begins to drink more water than start replacing the low sugar juice drink for the water they love now to drink
    - Clinical note. If I do not purchase the pellagrino flavored or the juice drink and water is the only drink in the house available, I find children will drink it

Often I find parents forget about the post school snack. It is important to do 2 things post school.

1. What was eaten at lunch
2. Feedback from your child as to what they liked/would like to change

Please note: If you are working full time and you have no ability to see what was eaten at lunch, I encourage you to talk to the after school program and ask them to do the following:

1. Check to see what was eaten
2. If all the food was not eaten, then before snack is provided food from the lunch pale should be eaten first
3. Have them follow the post snack options recommended (this can be tricky; you might have to ask them for a list of what they provide for a snack and what you will and will not allow your child to eat; you also might have to pack an extra item in the lunch pale and label it as snack food only or just include it into the lunch pale); children are resourceful so they will eat what is a treat first regardless of labeling

### **Snack options**

1. Shake smoothie (supplements included) with frozen fruit; can add ice to keep chilled; please see our web site for recipe alternatives under purification; there are loads of variations vitamix has an excellent resource <http://www.vitamix.com/foodservice/recipes/beverage.asp>
2. Fruit (as listed above)
3. Nuts (if no nut allergy); walnuts, almonds, pistachios, cashews in small quantities good
4. Seeds (pumpkin seeds)
5. A crunchy chip (non-GMO) small quantity; veggie chip preferred