



HCSF Newsletter

October
2010



It's **October** and we hope you and your family are feasting on fall's bounty – **apples**, **squash**, and **pumpkins** galore! As the nights grow cooler it's a great time to pull out the slow cooker for some healthy soups and stews. Has lunch box fatigue set in? Check out our suggestions below for some new ideas. For a *ghoul-icious* Halloween family meal, try **Frankenpeppers** – see page two for the recipe!



Pack a Fun and Healthy Lunch Box!

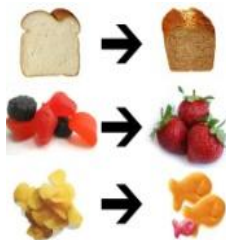
A good nutritious lunch will help keep your student focused during the school day as well as providing energy for after-school play. Packing a lunch allows you and your child to make healthy choices that you know they will enjoy. Here are some tips and ideas to get you started on creating your own lunch box specials!



First, although paper bags are convenient, consider upgrading to an insulated lunch box. This will ensure that cold foods stay at the temperature they need to be at (with cold packs or a frozen water bottle), allowing you more variety in the foods you can pack!

Sandwiches are always a popular choice. Keep things interesting by using **tortilla wraps**, **pitas** or **mini bagels made from whole grains** instead of bread. Then choose a **lean protein** such as sliced turkey, lean roast beef, grilled chicken, or peanut butter. For lunch-meat sandwiches, try adding some fun veggie toppings – try **cucumber slices**, **strips of peppers** or even **radishes**. Instead of mayo – try using Laughing Cow spreadable cheese, or try hummus. For a twist on the same old PB&J, try adding banana slices, apple slices or sliced strawberries instead of jelly. *Sick of sandwiches?* Try sending a thermos full of soup, a container of veggie pasta salad or try an 'all snack' lunch box – veggies with humus or salsa, crackers with low fat cheese spread, fruit salad and some trail mix or granola bar.

Sides & Snacks - Avoid cookies, chips, and other processed foods that are high in fat and calories. These tend to have few nutrients and will only lead to that after lunch sleepy feeling! Instead try:



- Mixing up 2 or 3 of your kids' favorite fruits to make a fruit salad.
- Baby carrots or raw green beans with a small side of low-fat ranch dressing.
- String cheese - it's a great source of calcium and protein.
- Nuts such as almonds, cashews, or walnuts provide *crunch* along with fiber and good fats.
- Pack whole grain snack crackers, baked chips, air-popped popcorn, or trail-mix. These will have less calories & fat than regular chips and also have some fiber.
- Low-fat yogurt or no-sugar added individual applesauce cups.



Drinks - Skim or 1% milk, water, or sugar-free flavored water. Try freezing the water bottle to use instead of a cold pack...it will thaw in time for lunch. Avoid sugary juice boxes or sports drinks!

Preparation Tips - Use the weekends or one week night to portion out veggies in plastic bags or containers, cut up fruit, or make a bulk amount of trail-mix so everything is ready and easy to pack in the morning before school. **Get the kids in on the action**, so it's not just you in the kitchen!

COOK WITH YOUR KIDS



If the kids balk at eating the bell pepper “skulls”, rinse them well after serving, then cut into strips for snacks later on.

C
O
O
K

Frankenpeppers!

- 6 small bell peppers (any color)
- 8 oz whole wheat spaghetti
- ½ cup chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons peanut butter
- 1 ½ tablespoons honey
- 1 tsp minced garlic (use pre-minced garlic from a jar)
- 1 large carrot, shredded
- 1 cup diced cucumber (peel, cut in half and scrape out seeds before chopping)
- Tops of peppers, chopped
- 1 tsp red pepper flakes (optional)
- ¼ cup chopped peanuts (optional)
- 3 slices of white or yellow cheddar cheese



Directions

1. Slice the tops off the peppers and scoop out the seeds and veins. Chop the flesh from the tops and set aside to add to the cooked pasta.
2. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add noodles and cook until tender according to package directions. Drain. **[Kids can fill the pot up with water – mom or dad can carry it to the stove.]**
3. Meanwhile, combine chicken broth, soy sauce, peanut butter, honey, and garlic in a large saucepan. Cook over medium heat until peanut butter melts and is heated through. Add cooked noodles, and toss to coat. Stir in the cucumbers, carrots, red pepper flakes and the reserved chopped bell pepper. **[Kids can measure out the chicken broth, pb, soy sauce and honey. They can also be in charge of stirring in the noodles and adding the cukes, carrots and reserved pepper pieces to the pot.]**
4. Cut mouth shapes, nose shapes, and eye shapes from the slices of cheese using a knife. A straw works well to make the circles for the eye shapes. **[All hands on deck!]**
5. Adhere the mouths, noses, and eyes to the face of the pepper using a dab of peanut butter.
6. Fill each pepper with the spaghetti mixture and serve. Garnish with chopped peanuts.



Outdoor Scavenger Hunt!



With leaves on the ground, it's the perfect time of year to get outside for a scavenger hunt! Check each item off as you go and the first person to find all (or the most) objects wins! Find the list of items below:



Item	Found	Item	Found	Item	Found
Acorn/Walnut		Piece of bark		Red leaf	
Feather		Yellow leaf		Y-shaped twig	
Orange leaf		Lady bug		Small pebble	
Pine cone		Bird's nest		Pine needle	



Dinner Table Game Thumbs Up



At the count of three, everyone puts one fist out toward the center of the table with their thumb either up or down. If everyone but one person has a thumb up (or down), that person must take a bite of his or her veggies. If everyone does the same thing, or your family is split, count to three and try again!