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## [Healthy Lunch Box Ideas!](#)

from Nutritionist Nancy Anderson

Though my mind and my electric bill still say, "Summer," it's time to wrap our heads around the back-to-school routine, like it or not! With the start of school also comes the daily challenge of packing a healthy lunch that your kids will actually eat. My kids, though not especially picky at home, have strong preferences for what can and cannot go into the lunchbox. In particular, they are not sandwich eaters. Back in January, Audra asked for your lunchbox ideas and y'all provided a lot of great suggestions! I thought I'd build on that by exploring some non-sandwich fare. Here are some of the ideas that I have in mind for my kiddos. I'd love to hear your ideas too! Please, [leave a comment!](#)



Just remember some simple guidelines when putting together a balanced lunch: About half of your child's plate should be comprised of fruits and/or vegetables, one quarter lean protein, and one quarter whole grains, with lowfat or nonfat milk, cheese or yogurt on the side. You can go to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) for more information on your child's nutrition needs.

### **Lunchbox Ideas:**

**Peanut Butter and Fruit Roll-Up:** Spread 2 tbsp peanut or almond butter on a whole-wheat tortilla. Sprinkle with chopped banana, apple or strawberries. Add 1-2 tsp. of mini chocolate chips, if desired, then roll and slice in half. Serve with a granola bar, baby carrots and a low fat yogurt.

**Pasta Salad with Tortellini and Pesto:** Cook any type of tortellini according to package directions. Toss with green peas and pesto. This can be served hot or cold. Include a piece of fruit, ¼ cup of almonds, and a pudding cup.

**Lunchbox Pizza Quesadillas:** While heating a whole-grain tortilla in a pan over medium heat, top with pizza sauce, turkey pepperoni, and mozzarella cheese (you can also include veggies!) followed by another tortilla. Heat on both sides until cheese is melted and tortillas are lightly browned. Cut into wedges. Serve with edamame and sliced apples.

**Bento Taco Bar:** Along with 1 or 2 soft taco tortillas, include a healthy assortment of taco fillings, like ground turkey, cheese, lettuce and pico de gallo in separate compartments. Your child can assemble the meal at school and avoid the soggy taco problem. Add some diced pineapple and nonfat milk to complete the meal.

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