

ORGANIC STYLE

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FRESHLIVING Food



An Apple a Day Thermos Apple-Shaped Lunch Kit, \$7.99, at Target. Snack cups, set of four, \$10, tupperware.com

A Healthier Lunch Box

This semester send your kids—and yourself—off with a nutritious and tasty midday meal. *By Daryn Eller*

6 Healthy-Lunch Hints

MIX COLORS. Green, blue-purple, yellow-orange, and red: Fruits and vegetables in different color groups have different disease-fighting compounds, says Cynthia Sass, RD, of the American Dietetic Association. Pack a variety and you'll expand your lunch's range of vitamins, minerals, and phytochemicals. A mix of protein, carbohydrates, and fats gives you nutrients for health and energy.

BIGGER ISN'T BETTER. Think about portion sizes and bulk, especially for young children, who have small stomachs. Although whole grains are good, packing super-high-fiber foods, such as bran muffins or cereals with extra fiber, may cause kids to get too full before they've had a chance to take in adequate nutrition.

MAKE IT EASY. Will your preschooler be likely to peel an orange? Will a middle-schooler go to the trouble of mixing fruit into his yogurt? Provide choices such as grapes, berries, sectioned oranges, or cut-up melon that are as uncomplicated as possible.

LET YOUR KIDS CHOOSE. "Give kids shopping and let them make some decisions," says Denise Fisk, author of *Take the Fight Out of Food: How to Please and Save Your Child's Extra Pounds*. "If you empower them, they'll be more motivated to eat well."

STOW SNACKS. David L. Katz, MD, founder and director of the Prevention Research Center at Yale Medical School, always carries something for between meals. "I consider it the nutritional equivalent of an umbrella," says Katz, a father of five. "An umbrella protects us from foul weather; the snack pack protects us from foul nutrition." Try nonfat yogurt, seven-grain crackers, cereal, dried fruit, or fresh fruit and vegetables.