

Pack a Waste-Free Lunch



What is a waste-free lunch?

Simply put, a waste-free lunch is a lunch brought from home that generates zero waste when finished. Everything in a waste-free lunch can be eaten, reused, recycled or composted. To create your waste-free lunch:

- Begin with a reusable lunchbox or bag.
- Pack your food items in reusable containers.
- Bring a drink in a refillable container, such as a sports bottle or thermos.
- Remember reusable utensils, if needed.
- Don't forget a cloth napkin.

Plan a Waste-Free Lunch

Day at school

1. Work with school administrators, custodians and cafeteria staff to get permission and make arrangements for recycling and disposal for the waste-free lunch.
2. Choose the date and get the word out. Enlist the help of students and teachers to help make posters to promote the event. Have the event announced over the intercom or in the newsletter.
3. A week before the event, send home a flyer or checklist on tips for packing a waste-free lunch.

4. On the day of the event, have each student bring their waste-free lunch. Work with the cafeteria to make sure students who don't bring a lunch from home will have a waste-free lunch as well.
5. At the event, set up a display table with two arrangements of items: "Use Me" items such as reusable containers, reusable drinking bottles, a lunch box, cloth napkin, reusable utensils; and "Avoid Me" items like disposable drink containers, plastic sandwich bags, paper napkins, disposable cutlery, paper sack. Specify items that are recyclable if not reusable.
6. Invite students and teachers to share how they made their lunch waste-free.
7. Measure the success of your event by asking each student and teacher to fill out a waste-free lunch worksheet to compare before and after waste-free lunch practices.
8. Encourage waste-free lunch habits every day.

A waste-free lunch will have you spending less, wasting less and eating well!



Reasons to make your lunch waste-free

- Prevent pollution and save landfill space
- Conserve natural resources such as coal, oil, natural gas and trees
- Save energy
- Save money
- Reduce the need for disposal
- Reduce processed, packaged foods
- Empower kids to be good stewards and make a difference in their environment



Did you know that the average student creates 67 pounds of trash per year from their school lunches?