



GO BACK TO SCHOOL GREEN—FOOD

From NutritionWise for Hot Moms Club



Despite what Kermit the Frog says, being green can be easy!

Start with your lunchbox. Think about lunchboxes. Use metal or cloth lunchboxes. Recycle plastic containers from purchased foods. Yogurt and cream cheese containers are a perfect size so reuse them in the lunchbox. Or, consider an American-style bento box at www.laptoplunches.com, they make a great, portable, reusable lunch box with individual containers just the right size!

Pack appropriate portions to prevent food waste: Each time we waste food, we not only waste the food but we waste the water needed to grow the food, the paper or plastic used to package and the gasoline necessary for transporting the food. Each step of the production, packaging, and shipping adds to the current excess of greenhouse gases.

Don't over-pack. Talk with your child about how much they really DO eat. Ask your child to put uneaten food back in the lunchbox so you can get a good idea of about how much food to put in his/her lunch. Rather than pack a lot of food, think about foods that help provide long lasting energy such as protein foods and whole grains (whole wheat bread) rather than foods that provide short term energy such as refined grains (white bread) and sugary foods.

Watch your meat consumption. Eighty percent of agriculture's greenhouse gas production is caused by meat production. That includes transportation of livestock and their feed plus the methane produced by those livestock. No need to go vegetarian, the Lancet, a medical journal, reports that a reduction of the average meat consumption by just 10% would have a significant effect on global warming. Currently the average intake is about 4.5 lbs of meat per day. A reduction of just ½ lb per day would not just help the environment but would also reduce intake of saturated fat and cholesterol which contribute to the development of heart disease. So keep eating meat but consider nuts or beans as a substitute. Think about meats as part of the meal rather than as the main dish.

Consider organic for some of your foods. Traditional farming relies on chemicals and fertilizers that are usually derived from petroleum (yes, oil). Many of these pesticides have not been tested in children and some are known to have negative effects on the developing nervous system. Organic products are becoming more mainstream and you can find them at traditional markets.

Organic produce can often be more expensive. Consider buying organic produce when purchasing fruits and vegetables that tend to have the most pesticide residue. The "dirty dozen" include the following, always buy these organic:

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| Peaches | Strawberries | Apples |
| Cherries | Sweet Bell Peppers | Lettuce |
| Celery | Imported Grapes | Nectarines |
| Pears | Spinach | Potato |

The complete list is available at <http://www.foodnews.org/walletguide.php>



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Buy Local. Consider trips to farmer's market. Supermarkets often identify local produce.

Tap water! Yes, tap water. Bottled waters manufacturers do not have to follow the same rigorous standards that our city water districts do. In fact, bottled water has very few regulations in regards to contaminants. Most bottled water is not fluoridated (they are available though) and fluoride, usually in city water, is essential for strong bones and teeth. The concern is not just what is inside those bottles but also those bottles! In 2006 Americans drank 167 bottles of water each. Of those only 24% are recycled. So what to do instead? Consider buying a faucet filter (such as Pur) or a filter pitcher (such as Brita) and fill up reusable metal bottles such as Sigg or Kleen Kanteen. Both of these are available online, camping stores or natural food markets. Look for metal reusable cups with straws by Thermos at Target.

NutritionWise (www.nicolemeadow.com) is a group of Registered Dietitians, including Nicole Meadow, MPN, RD and Patricia Novak MPH, RD, CLE who specialize in working with pregnancy, infants, pediatrics and young adults and their families. Individual consultations, group classes, in-service training for agencies/schools and public speaking are some of the services that are offered.