



## WASTE-FREE LUNCH TIPS

### Did you know:

- Each year, American school children toss out **4.6 billion pounds** of lunch waste.
- Lunchtime trash is second only to office paper as the leading source of school waste.
- Americans discard about **2.7 million tons** of aluminum yearly, the largest source being used beverage and packaging containers.
- Almost **4 million tons** of tissues and paper towels wind up in landfills each year.
- Americans produce enough non-biodegradable styrofoam cups annually to circle the earth 436 times.
- **40 billion** plastic utensils are used in the US every year. Most are thrown out after one use.
- Toxic levels of lead exist in over 40 different juices and juice boxes.
- Most juice boxes cannot be recycled due to the inseparability of the cardboard, plastic, and aluminum foil used in the product.

### It's easy to pack a waste-free lunch, even for high school students. Here's how:

- ♻️ Use a lunch box/pail/bag instead of a paper bag. Look for a container that is lead and PVC-free for the safest option. If you do use a paper bag, ask your student to bring it home so that you can reuse it again.
- ♻️ Reusable lunch containers that can hold soups/stew/pasta/sandwiches come in all sizes, shapes, colors, and materials (plastic, stainless steel, glass, and fabric) and can be purchased easily and locally at ACE Hardware, Whole Earth, and Whole Foods. Use a reusable bag or container for snacks. Many bags can be tossed in the washing machine or rinsed in the sink, and they're ready to re-use for another lunch.
- ♻️ Consider buying larger bags of snack items, and placing them in a reusable container for your student's lunch.
- ♻️ Pack beverages in a reusable bottle, or include a drink in a container that can be recycled at home or school. It is less expensive to purchase a large bottle of juice/water than purchasing individual bottles. Juice pouches are not recyclable, but juice boxes can be recycled at home (**NOT at school**).
- ♻️ Include a cloth napkin and reusable utensils that can be brought home to be washed.
- ♻️ Avoid single use straws; consider reusable stainless or silicone ones instead of those made of plastic.
- ♻️ Remind your student that food scraps can be composted in the PHS cafeteria in the labelled collection bin.

**Packing a waste-free lunch doesn't take any additional time, and remember that every small step/change that each of us can make makes a big difference for our planet. Visit the websites below for more tips.**

<https://earth911.com/home-garden/waste-free-lunch/>

<https://earth911.com/food/zero-waste-lunch/>

<https://zerowastechef.com/2014/08/17/how-to-pack-a-zero-waste-lunch/>

