



# Fort Carson-MEDDAC News

## Packing Nutrition in your Lunch Sack

First Lieutenant Ashley Carlson, EACH Nutrition Care Division

Do you think that packing your lunch day in and day out is exhausting and boring? It doesn't have to be! Planning ahead and packing your own lunch is a great way to add nutrient dense foods to your diet and gives you the freedom to choose healthy foods in preparation for the upcoming week. Here are some easy and creative ways to build healthy meals that won't bog you down!

Make a healthy sandwich, wrap, or burrito by choosing a variety of whole grain breads, including tortilla wraps, pita pockets, raisin bread, or English muffins. Whole grain breads contain more fiber and B-vitamins than their white counterparts and add a boost of flavor to your sandwich!

Be creative with the kinds of spreads you use on your sandwich. There are many options available that provide just as much flavor as mayo and mustard, not to mention give you more bang for your buck when it comes to nutrition! One option is the protein packed hummus which comes in a variety of flavors, including roasted red pepper, garlic and olive oil, and traditional. Hummus is a low-fat option and a great substitute for high fat dressings and spreads. It can be used to add flavor to sandwiches or as a dipping sauce for pretzels, celery sticks, carrots, peppers and other snacks. If you're not into hummus, try other healthy options, including avocado, salsa, or balsamic vinegar.

Low-fat dairy items contain calcium and vitamin D which help keep our bones strong. Spice up your sandwich with a piece of pepper jack, mozzarella, brie, or feta cheese. Pack low-fat cheese sticks, milk, or Greek yogurt as mid-day snacks to keep you from snacking on candy bars and potato chips. In particular, Greek yogurt has become a popular snack due to its low sugar and high protein content. It also contains calcium and a trendy choice for a mid-day snack!

Fruits and vegetables make a tasty snack and are simple, low calorie additions to your lunch meal. Fruits and vegetables come in a variety of colors. Each color contains a different nutrient which is why it is important to vary your fruits and veggies. Be adventurous! Go tropical with vitamin C packed mango, pineapple, star fruit and papaya! Or pack in the antioxidants with blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, and strawberries!

What better time than now to modify the foods you eat and create a healthier lifestyle? These tips are just a few tools to add to your nutrition toolbox but only you can put them into practice. Take advantage of this opportunity and be creative! This is just the start to a healthier you!