

Power Packing

[Announcer] This podcast is brought to you by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC - safer, healthier people.

[Karmen] Hi kids! Welcome to CDC Kidtastics Radio! I'm Karmen Kidtastic. Today, we're talking about how to be smart when we pack a lunch!

[Caydan] Right, Karmen. You *could* be carrying more than your lunch. Germs that grow on food can make a lot more germs in a little over two hours. Pack smart or some of your sandwiches and snacks could end up making you sick.

[Kaya] Yeah! We need to make sure our lunch gives us energy, not a stomach ache.

[Chris] How do we do that?

[Karmen] Those puffy, insulated lunch boxes or bags keep cold food cold and hot food hot, so germs don't multiply quickly. If you use a regular lunch box or a paper bag, here's what you need to know...

[Caydan] Double bag your lunch. The layers of paper and air help keep the cold in. Even better, put an ice pack or frozen juice box in a zip-up plastic baggie and make your lunch a mini-cooler. If you go for a frozen juice box, ask your mom to get 100 percent juice. Don't worry; your drink will thaw by lunchtime. You might even get a slushy! If you make sandwiches the night before, keep them in the refrigerator or freezer until you are ready to go to school.

[Kaya] On cold days, nothing can warm you up like hot soup, pasta, or chili. The key is to keep the hot lunch hot until it's time to eat — that makes it hard for germs to grow in it. Try using a thermos.

[Chris] Keep your food wrapped up and make sure to wrap each part separately so they don't leak onto each other. Use zipper plastic bags or plastic containers made for carrying food, or get one-serving packs, like yogurt, pudding, or fruit cups. You can skip wrapping up fruit like apples, oranges, and bananas — Mother Nature already did it for you.

[Kaya] Food isn't the only thing that can carry germs — you can too — and even your pets. So, wash your hands with soap and water, especially if you have fed or played with your pets. Wash them before you make your lunch and before and after you eat. Also, wash fruits and vegetables under cold, running water before packing them. Pack your lunch with the amount of food you think you'll eat and throw away leftovers when you're done. And make sure that you wash your containers and lunch box every day, or get yourself a new paper bag. You know what happens if you don't...they start to stink.

[Caydan] Some stuff is okay to keep because it doesn't go bad quickly. You can save fruit, raw vegetables, bread, crackers, peanut butter, jelly, pickles, nuts, pretzels, graham crackers, trail mix, and fruit cups for later.

[Karmen] Thanks for listening to CDC Kidtastics Radio. We'll talk to you again soon. Until then... be a safer, healthier kid!!

[Announcer] For more health information, go to www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.