

# The 15 Worst Things In Your Lunch Bag

from [Prevention Magazine](#) by Jean Nick

Pack a healthier lunch and save a little cash when you ditch these

**Tasty - healthy** - in just minutes but don't add these.

And it starts with your lunch box/bag **vinyl** (page 36 in **Volume 2**) **FREE** please and here is why. 'Brightly colored and patterned plastic lunch bags and boxes may appeal to kids, but they often contain high levels of lead and other toxins and can be nearly impossible to clean (been there and tried that—yuck!).

**Better:** Choose a reusable, washable lunch sack made from either cotton or nylon, and toss it in the machine every weekend. Pack a small cloth napkin and reusable silverware, and you are ready to dine in style.

If you don't have access to a refrigerator at work or school, frozen ice packs inside a vinyl-free insulated bag might help keep perishables cold, but test it out first. Pack a jar of cold water in the bag along with the ice pack, seal it, and let it sit at room temperature for however many hours it will sit out between packing it and lunchtime. Then open the bag and take the water's temperature. If the water is warmer than about 45 degrees, test again with two frozen ice packs, or just plan on packing only room-temperature-safe foods.

**NO plastic** - The average lunch contains a staggering amount of single-use plastic packaging. And reusable plastic containers, inexpensive and unbreakable though they may be, may contain hormone-disrupting chemicals like phthalates and **BPA** (page 50 **Volume 4**) that you'd rather not rub against your food.

**Pre-made Sandwiches** -- Trust the food industry to turn the humble sandwich into a processed food. Pre-made sandwich-like products are loaded with high-fructose corn syrup, trans fats, preservatives, and other additives, but are short on real food. And most of the time, they cost more than their easy-to-make counterparts.

**Lunchables** -- Don't get us started on overpriced, over-packaged lunch fodder packed in plastic trays containing a few tidbits of this and that, most of it loaded with salt and preservatives. We even saw one shaped like Mickey Mouse the last time we were in the supermarket. Argh!

**Better:** Pack similar, healthier ingredients in small containers. Do a bunch at once and keep them on hand for quick packing, and let the eaters pick their own combos every evening or morning. Typical choices like cheese cubes or shreds, salsa or pizza sauce, cut-up veggies and fruits, and real cooked meats are great, and the possibilities are endless..

**Lunch Meats** - Processed lunch meats tend to be high in sodium, nitrates, fats, and fat-soluble pesticides.

**Better:** You can save a bundle on lunch meat by spending a little time over the weekend roasting a chicken or a larger cut of beef. Shred it or slice it thin for easy sandwich-fixings.