

## RESEARCH SHOWS THAT SCHOOL MEALS ARE HEALTHY MEALS:

Compared to lunches brought from home, school lunches provide more vitamins, calcium, iron zinc, protein and fiber. School lunches also have twice as much fruit and seven times the amount of vegetables as lunches brought from home.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Eastern Michigan University Study



The National School Lunch Program provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. School lunches must meet Federal and State nutrition requirements.

### OTHER USDA PROGRAMS UNDER IDAHO CHILD NUTRITION:

- School Breakfast Program
- After-School Snack Program
- Special Milk Program
- Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Summer Food Service Program



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# Why Should Students in Idaho Eat School Lunch?



STUDIES HAVE SHOWN THAT SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAMS ARE ESSENTIAL TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT.

Child Nutrition Programs  
Idaho State Department of Education

Tom Luna  
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## IDAHO SCHOOLS OFFER SEVERAL HEALTHY OPTIONS

Idaho students have many options when it comes to choosing what to have for lunch. The school lunch program offers balanced, low cost meals that appeal to students' tastes.

Many Idaho schools offer fresh salad bars, fresh fruit and vegetable bars, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products, along with other healthy options. Have you eaten at a school recently? If not, you should try it. Adults are welcome to eat at most schools. School meal programs have made numerous improvements over the last few years offering a variety of healthy, great tasting foods.

### NUTRITIONAL COMPARISON OF LUNCHES

In the three lunch examples only school lunch provided adequate nutrients. Studies show that under nourished children score lower on achievement tests and fall behind in class<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> American Journal of Clinical Nutrition

Percent of nutrient recommendation comprised in each Elementary Lunch represented below:

#### Sample Meals

##### School Lunch:

- Spaghetti w/Meat Sauce
- Salad w/dressing
- Oatmeal Cookie
- Garlic Bread
- Orange Slices
- 1% Milk

#### CALCIUM



100% +

#### FIBER



100% +

#### VITAMIN C



100% +

#### VITAMIN A



100% +



##### Pre-Packaged Ham/Cheese/Cracker Boxed Lunch:

- Ham
- Cheese
- JuicePouch
- Crackers
- Mini-Candy



70%



0%



40%



18%



##### Sack Lunch\*:

- Peanut Butter/Jelly Sandwich
- Apple
- Pop
- Chips
- Cookie



36%



100%



57%



25%



\* Items that were chosen represent foods commonly seen in sack lunches. <sup>1</sup>

#### FOOD GROUPS INCLUDED IN MEALS

School meals provide a well rounded meal including foods from all food groups.

### WHY BUY A SCHOOL LUNCH?

Compare a lunch brought from home with a school lunch and you will see that school lunches are a wholesome meal at a reasonable price.

|                          | School Lunch  | Pre-Packaged Ham/Cheese/Cracker Boxed Lunch  | Sack Lunch*   | SUMMARY   |
|--------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| <b>Approximate Cost</b>  | \$1.58  | \$2.50   | \$1.70  | School lunch is a great deal.   |
| <b>Nutrient Content</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low fat</li> <li>• Low sat. fat</li> <li>• Low in sodium</li> <li>• High in calcium</li> <li>• High in fiber</li> <li>• High in Vitamin A &amp; C</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher fat</li> <li>• Higher sat. fat</li> <li>• Higher sodium content</li> <li>• Low in fiber</li> <li>• Low in Vitamin A &amp; C</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher in calories</li> <li>• Higher in fat</li> <li>• Low in calcium</li> <li>• Low in Vitamin A &amp; C</li> </ul> | School lunches must meet federal and state nutrient standards and are usually more nutrient dense than meals from home.           |
| <b>Variety of Entrée</b> | Numerous choices  | Limited choices  | Limited choices   | Schools offer several entrée choices including home cooked items, sandwiches and wraps, and salad bars.                           |
| <b>Fruit / Vegetable</b> | Variety of choices  | Lacks fresh fruit and vegetable  | May contain fruit but usually lacks a vegetable   | Most Idaho schools have fruit and vegetable bars that offer a variety of fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables daily    |
| <b>Beverage</b>          | Variety of low fat milk   | Fruit drink  | Often contains high sugar juice or can of pop   | All school meals offer milk which is high in calcium, a nutrient needed by children   |
| <b>Food Safety</b>       | Prepared under strict sanitary conditions   | May not be held at correct temperature (in classroom)  | May not be held at correct temperature (in classroom)   | Food service personnel are required to be trained in Food Safety and cafeterias are regularly inspected by the health department. |
| <b>Service</b>           | Fast and easy   | Quick and easy   | Requires preparation at home  | School lunch is accessible to all students throughout the school year.  |