

Quick and Inexpensive Lunchroom Makeover Ideas

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Encouraging students to participate in the school lunch program and to partake of the healthy choices available to them improves their health and your bottom line. Here are some quick, easy, effective low- and no-cost interventions to “nudge” students toward these options:

Remember: YOU make the difference. Make a change. Be a hero.

Promote healthy options: If diners notice what you offer, they are MUCH more likely to buy it.

- Post menus BEFORE the students are in line for the hot entrée. List fresh-made salads, sandwiches, and yogurt parfaits before hot entrees.
- Inform students about how many fruits and vegetables come with their meal.
- Place salads and subs on eye-level in cooler. Make them easy to access.
- Place handheld fruits and veggie packs in an attractive, easy-to-reach bowl near the cashier. Wrap apples, pears, and other non-peelable fruits in cellophane for cleanliness.
- Spotlight fruits and veggies with small lamps or accent lighting.
- Place healthy snacks (fruits, low-fat chips, whole-grain cookies) at eye level.
- Use colorful, attractive signs to draw attention to “fresh fruit/subs/salads today!”
- Convenience sells: let diners jump ahead in line to take grab-and-go salads and subs.
- Cover ice cream coolers with an opaque lid. Place fruit juices and other healthy frozen options beside the ice creams.
- Place treats behind the counter so that students must ask for them.
- Place fruits, veggies, salads, and subs where students can grab-and-go.
- Make 50% of milk white. Place white milk in front of flavored milks. Keep milk cold.
- Rename items to add interest and “zest.” Ex.: “savory” coleslaw or “spiced” rice.
- Serve all meals before beginning snack sales.

Train servers and cashiers to help diners make healthy choices.

- Suggestive sell: ask diners “which” veggie they want or “if they want more veggies.”
- Be helpful: prompt diners to grab a fruit or veggie side when their meal is incomplete.

Sing your own praises: Let customers know what you are doing to promote healthy eating.

- Inform parents, staff, and students of the healthy options available in the lunchroom

