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Brown Bag Test: Whatcha Got for Lunch?

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Created 03/03/2010 - 16:21

Best Bet is to Pack Your Own

We just go get what we think we want ... pizza, fries and chocolate milk.

If a lot of the people at your buffets look like a lot of the people at my buffets, you might also choose to never go again.

When my children were younger, I did everything I could to arrest their weight gain.

Overweight during both pregnancies, I knew each was born with more fat cells than average. That's my fault. My responsibility is to make sure those fat cells stay lean.

Years of elementary school lunches started showing up on Trey and Sky's stomach, hips and thighs. Their little faces rounded out quickly. Soon, I was shopping less at Macy's and Old Navy, more at Sears and Penney's, which had more "husky" and "plus size" kids' clothing. That went on for about a year before I got things under control by adding physical activities and packing their lunches all through middle and high school.

Sometimes, that was a tremendous pain. On the rare occasion I would run out of things to pack, I would send them to school with money for lunch on that day, only. **What would they select? Pizza, French fries and chocolate milk, without fail.** It was, after all, what their friends were eating – but not the physically active ones. The karate and cheerleading programs were not school-related. I don't know if having two different sets of peers helped make the healthy difference in their lives. I just know they grew less outward, more upward, and now the only reason I shop in Penney's juniors department is because their clothing is both fashionable and *modest* – **one of the few retailers that doesn't encourage our teen girls to dress like coke whores.**

Just sayin'.

But back to lunch: We adults are on our own. Mom's not in the kitchen bagging fruit cups and bottles of Lifewater. Come lunchtime, we just go get what we think we want – the equivalent of pizza, fries and chocolate milk.

For me, it's just part of the battle. My thing is Chinese food. The good stuff, not the meat-of-questionable-origin often found at cheap buffets. (Speaking of which ... There are four different Chinese buffets within a four-mile radius of my home. *FOUR*. First of all, I don't do

buffets. Golden Corral? Forget it. **And if a lot of the people at your buffets look like a lot of the people at my buffets, you might also choose to never go again.)**

It's just another thing that I now rarely have; a treat, not a staple. As the Queen of Water Retention, no longer consuming a week's worth of sodium in one meal is a good thing.

So, what's for lunch? I wanted to share something I found online last year: **The Lunch Food Lottery** ^[1] on **Lunchtaker.com** ^[2]. It is a fun and easy way to put together thousands of lunch combos, and it tallies all of the calories. Choose as many items as you want – main course, vegetable, fruit, snack/treat and a drink. What I love about it is that it has choices I never would have thought to throw into a brown bag, like starting with cooked shrimp as a main course. (I mean, can you seriously see my daughter whipping out a shrimp cocktail with a side of sliced peaches in the cafeteria? *I can totally make it happen.*)

There's a whole lot more on the site. If you join (free), you can create, store and print multiple menus.

Anyway, just wanted to share. There are probably similar sites out there, so if you know of any do tell.

I haven't trusted polls since I read that 62% of women had affairs during their lunch hour. I've never met a woman in my life who would give up lunch for sex. ~ Erma Bombeck

 [lunchtaker.jpg](#) ^[3]

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Links:

[1] http://www.lunchtaker.com/food_finder_surprise.php

[2] <http://www.lunchtaker.com/>

[3] <http://www.theroot.com/sites/default/files/lunchtaker.jpg>