

Make Today and Every Day a Waste-Free Lunch Day

Get the Ball Rolling—Organize a Waste-Free Lunch Day!

- 1. Plan a Waste-Free Lunch Day.** Before holding a Waste-Free Lunch Day at school, check to see if cafeteria space will be available. Work with the school administrators, custodians, and cafeteria staff to arrange for the proper composting, recycling and disposal services for the waste-free lunch. Make sure they schedule a pick-up time on the day of the event. A week before the event, send home flyers or checklists with tips on how to pack waste-free, along with sample menus.
- 2. Get the Message Out!** Before the Waste-Free Lunch Day, educate students and teachers about the event. Students can make their own waste-free lunch posters in art class or an announcement can be made over the school intercom system. Use the school newsletter and website to educate parents about the event and how they can help.
- 3. Have a Waste-Free Lunch Day.** On the Waste-Free Lunch Day, have each student and teacher bring in a waste-free lunch (or as close to waste-free as possible). Work with the school cafeteria staff to plan a “waste-free lunch” for students who don’t bring in their own from home. During the school-wide waste-free lunch, have students and teachers share how they made their lunches waste-free.
- 4. Don’t Stop Here.** While planning the Waste-Free Lunch Day, work together with school administrators, teachers, support staff, and community public health services to put leftovers to good use:
 - **Reduce** wasted food: Feed hungry people with unspoiled, wholesome food. Donate this food to local food banks, soup kitchens, and shelters.
 - **Provide** food to animals, farmers or zoos: Ask your parents to help you find local farmers and zookeepers who can feed their animals with leftover food.
 - **Compost** food to fertilize plants: Composting is a good way to convert food scraps that cannot be fed to people or animals into a valuable nutrient source for plants and soil organisms. For school environments, worm composting, also known as vermiculture or vermicomposting, may be the best method to use. Composting on a large scale is a complicated task. Please work together with school officials and local solid waste and health authorities if you would like to undertake such a task.
- 5. Measure Success.** Use the charts to the right to determine the success of the Waste-Free Lunch Day. Make note of the items included in each lunch before the Waste-Free Lunch Day to be able to compare the success of the day.
- 6. Share Your Story!** Help others join the waste-free lunch craze by sharing your success story! Share your story and pictures from your Waste-Free Lunch Day on social media and tag EPA (@EPA). Make sure you follow your parents' and school’s rules before posting anything on social media.