

Waste-Free Lunch

Organize a Waste-Free Lunch Day (or Week)!

1. Plan Your Waste-Free Lunch Day/Week. Before holding your Waste-Free Lunch Day/Week, work with school administrators, custodians, and cafeteria staff to arrange for proper (and plentiful!) recycling and composting services, as appropriate/available at your school.

2. Get the Message Out. Before your Waste-Free Lunch Day/Week, educate students and teachers about the event. Have students make their own waste-free lunch posters or decorate cafeteria doors or bulletin boards, make an announcement over your school's intercom system, and/or promote the event on your school's message or reader board or on your school's Web site. Use your school's newsletter to educate parents about the event and how they can help (sample newsletter article enclosed).

A week before the event, send home letters to parents along with sample waste-free menus (samples enclosed). You may wish to have students develop their own waste-free lunch menus in class before sending the sample menus home.

Have students track the waste in their lunches using the *Did You Pack a Waste-Free Lunch?* Worksheet (enclosed).

3. Have Your Waste-Free Lunch Day/Week. On your Waste-Free Lunch Day/Week, have each student and teacher bring waste-free lunch(es) (or as close to waste-free as possible). Encourage students who normally purchase school lunches to bring lunch from home for the waste-free lunch day/week; however, even those that purchase lunch can participate by taking only what they will eat and recycling and composting what they can.

Have students track the waste in their lunches using the *Did You Pack a Waste-Free Lunch?* Worksheet (enclosed).

4. Measure Success. Use the *Did You Pack a Waste-Free Lunch?* worksheet (see Steps 2 and 3) to measure the success of your Waste-Free Lunch Day/Week.

5. Celebrate Your Success and Share Your Story! Calculate how much waste was saved by your class, grade, and entire school. Announce your success at a school assembly, in your school's newsletter, or on your school's Web site. Consider sponsoring a contest and rewarding those that created the least waste or made the best bulletin board/poster/decorations to promote waste-free lunches.

Help others join the waste-free lunch craze by sharing your success story! Email a description of your school's waste-free lunch experiences – successes and lessons learned – to the Department of Environmental Quality (amy.luft@deq.idaho.gov) or the person who brought you your waste-free lunch box.