

Price Comparison as of January 2009:

Which is better, a packed lunch from home or a school lunch?

? **Question:** Is it **less expensive** to prepare a packed lunch at home or buy a school lunch?

? **Question:** Is it **more nutritious** to prepare a packed lunch at home or buy a school lunch?

! Answer: *Families can save time & money while providing more nutrition for their children with school lunch!*

In a recent **Packed Lunch vs. School Lunch Survey** conducted at two of our elementary schools by three dietetic interns*, our Charlotte County Public Schools' *Champ's Cafe* "school lunches" came out **ON TOP!**

These interns observed what 130 kindergartners through 5th graders brought to school in their packed lunches and analyzed **how many more nutrients** are in a **USDA school lunch**:

- **only 5** out of 130, not even 4%, had packed or purchased a milk
- **only 4** out of 130, just 3%, brought vegetables
- most juices brought from home were **not 100% juice**
- the most common packed lunch items were **35% higher in fat** than the school lunch;
- the packed lunch had more calories, which could translate into an extra 7.5 pounds in one school year for a child or 45 extra pounds over a 6-year span in elementary school, depending upon the child's level of activity and growth
- the school lunch had 1/3 more fiber than the packed lunch, contributing 1/3 of the daily recommended 25 grams
- the packed lunch had just 7% Vitamin A and 42% Vitamin C, whereas the school lunch had more than 100% of both nutrients



Typical
packed
lunch:
\$2.63
as of
January
2009



Champ's Cafe Meal: \$1.90
elementary price as of January 2009

Chicken Nuggets & Honey Mustard Sauce, Rice Pilaf, Peaches, Broccoli, Peas & Lowfat Milk

***Special thanks to dietetic interns Caitlyn Kraszewski, Julie Wilkinson and Andrew Ashelford for their efforts to evaluate packed lunches and school lunches from a cost and nutrient perspective.**

Parents and Guardians can pay for school lunches with cash, check made payable to Champ's Cafe, or credit card via an online prepayment system. Families may qualify for free or reduced-price lunches and can apply for meal benefits any time throughout the school year. Please call the food service office at 941-575-5400 for more information.