



School Lunch Your Kids Will Munch

Eating for Learning

Studies show that well-nourished children are able to concentrate longer and perform better at school. Children are ready to learn and are more alert when they eat a variety of healthy choices according to Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide.

What to Include in a Healthy School Lunch

Foods from the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide give the nourishment kids need to grow and learn. A balanced lunch includes at least one choice from each food group. Get your kids involved in planning what will go in their lunch. They have probably talked about the Food Guide in class!



Follow these easy steps:

- 1 Start with a choice of Meat or Alternatives: for example, sliced lean meat, a hard-cooked egg or bean dip.
- 2 Add a Grain Product to go with it, such as whole wheat bread, crackers or pita.
- 3 Don't forget a Vegetable or Fruit choice!
- 4 Milk or Milk Alternatives like chocolate milk, cheese, yogurt or fortified soy beverage balance out the meal.
- 5 Finish up with some dessert. A choice from the Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives food groups or some fruit are all healthy options. (See page 4 for dessert suggestions).

Allergy Alert!

Peanut butter, peanuts, and other nuts are healthy food choices. However, there are children with an allergy to these foods in almost every school in Brant County. A number of schools have banned foods containing peanuts or nuts from lunch boxes to protect the safety of children with allergies. Check with your school about foods that are not allowed in your child's classroom.

All foods have the potential to cause an allergic reaction. To avoid an unexpected reaction, children should never trade their lunch with another child.



Balanced Fuel for a Healthy Weight!

A growing number of Canadian children are overweight. To help your child keep a healthy weight, pack lunches that include fruit, vegetables, whole grains and lower-fat milk products. Avoid artificially-flavoured drinks, pop and other snacks that do not provide good nutrition such as chips, chocolate bars and packaged snack cakes in your child's school lunch.

Tips for Packing a Safe School Lunch

- Use insulated lunch bags and a thermos to help keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot. Warm thermos with hot water before filling it with steaming hot food.
- A frozen juice box, a freezer pack or sandwiches made with frozen bread can help to keep lunch foods cold.
- Wash all vegetables and fruit before packing.
- Do not resend sandwiches or hot foods. Fruits and other snacks can be safely repacked. Do not re-use wrappings.
- Teach children to wash their hands before eating.
- Wash reusable beverage container at the end of the day with soap and hot water.

Did you know?

Children may have less than 20 minutes to eat lunch at school. For younger children with smaller appetites, keep portions small. Peel fruit when possible and cut up foods into smaller bite-sized pieces. Ask your child's school principal about allowing students to eat healthy snacks like veggies and fruit, and having a water bottle in class.

Make Your Own "Lunch Kits"

Kids often want fun, packaged foods they see on TV or in their friends' lunches. When pressed for time, convenience foods are helpful. But, packing these in your kids' lunches most of the time won't give them what they need to be healthy and stay energized all day long.

Ready-to-eat lunch "kits" are easy, portable and kids like them. But what are you paying for? They contain lots of fat, sodium and added sugar and few of the nutrients kids need to grow and learn. They are an expensive and less nutritious choice.

Store bought lunch kits contain:

- 300-600 calories
- up to 35 grams (9 tsp) of fat, including up to 17 grams (4 tsp) of saturated fat
- less than 1 gram of fibre
- 1000+ mg of sodium



Make your own lunch kits using reusable containers with compartments. The chart below offers some ideas for packing healthier choices.

| Grain Products | Vegetables / Fruit | Milk & Alternatives | Meat & Alternatives |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| Graham crackers | Baby carrots | Yogurt (fruit-flavored or add fruit to plain yogurt) | Rolled-up sliced meat such as turkey, ham or roast beef |
| Bagels | Celery sticks | Cheese cubes or slices | Cubes or slices of leftover ham, chicken, turkey or beef |
| Tortillas / wraps | Strips of sweet pepper | Yogurt dip | Hard-cooked egg, sliced |
| Pita pockets | Slices of cucumber | Cheese strings | Hummus or bean dip |
| Dry breakfast cereals | Cherry or grape tomatoes | Pudding made with milk | Sunflower or pumpkin seeds |
| Whole grain crackers | Broccoli or cauliflower florets | Mini yogurt | |
| Pasta salad | Salsa for dipping | Yogurt tubes | |
| Rice | Dried fruit such as raisins, apricots and cranberries (see "Snack Attack" back page) | | |
| Couscous | | | |
| English muffins | | | |
| Whole grain bread, buns or muffins | | | |



What's to Drink?

Give some careful thought to what is packed for a lunch-time drink. Beverages should also give kids nutrients they need for growth and development. There are many kinds of packaged drinks in boxes, cans, and plastic bottles. Read labels carefully to be sure you're making a healthy choice. Or, pack a healthy beverage in a reusable beverage container.



✔ Drinks to Grow On:

- Milk - white or chocolate
- 100% fruit juice*
- Vegetable juice cocktail
- Water

✘ Drinks to Pass on:

- Pop
- Fruit punch, fruit cocktail and fruit drink - these usually contain less than 10% real juice plus 9 teaspoons of added sugar. These are more like pop.
- Sports drinks

* 100% fruit juice is a healthy choice for kids, but too much juice is not good. Limit 100% fruit juice to 125 mL (½ cup) per day and serve with a meal or snack to decrease the risk of cavities.

Sandwich Suggestions

Avoid the sandwich slump! Here are a few fresh ideas for the most common lunchtime food. Cut sandwiches or wraps into smaller pieces. Children usually like “finger foods” that can be easily picked up and eaten in two small bites!



BASE

(Grain Product)

FILLING

(Meat or Alternative)

TOPPER

(Milk Products or Vegetable & Fruit)

mini pita pockets

multi-grain bagel or whole wheat bread

whole wheat or flavoured wraps

rye bread

whole grain roll or mini submarine bun

hummus (see recipe page)

egg salad or tuna salad

bean spread or grilled chicken slices

shaved black forest ham

chicken salad, turkey or lean roast beef

lettuce, cucumber

cucumber slices, lettuce leaf, grated cheese

grated cheddar cheese, chopped tomato or salsa, sweet pepper and lettuce

Swiss cheese slice, sliced pickle or tomato

chopped tomato, sprouts, lettuce leaf, grated cheese



Recipes for Kids



Parmesan Popcorn

| | | |
|--------|----------------------------------------------|-------|
| 8 cups | popped popcorn | 2 L |
| 2 tbsp | butter or non-hydrogenated margarine, melted | 30 mL |
| ¼ cup | grated Parmesan cheese | 50 mL |
| 1 tsp | dried oregano | 5 mL |
| 1 tsp | garlic powder | 5 mL |

DIRECTIONS:

1. Place popcorn in a large bowl.
2. Drizzle melted butter or margarine over popcorn and mix well.
3. In a small bowl, mix together Parmesan cheese, oregano and garlic powder.
4. Sprinkle seasoning mix over popcorn and mix well.
5. Store in an airtight container.

Makes 8 cups



Banana Bread

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| ¾ cup | all-purpose flour | 175 mL |
| ½ cup | whole wheat flour | 125 mL |
| 1 tsp | baking soda | 5 mL |
| ½ tsp | baking powder | 2 mL |
| ½ cup | white sugar | 125 mL |
| 1 | egg | 1 |
| ¼ cup | lower-fat plain yogurt | 50 mL |
| 3 tbsp | canola oil | 45 mL |
| 1 tsp | vanilla | 5 mL |
| 2 | ripe, medium-sized bananas | 2 |
| ⅓ cup | fresh or frozen blueberries or frozen or dried cranberries (optional) | 75 mL |

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (180°C).
2. Sift together all-purpose flour, baking soda and baking powder. Mix in whole wheat flour. Set aside.
3. In large mixing bowl, thoroughly mash bananas. Add sugar, egg, yogurt, oil and vanilla. Mix well.
4. Add dry ingredients and frozen or dried fruit (if desired) to banana mixture. Mix just until dry is combined.
5. Pour batter into a lightly oiled 8" x 5" loaf pan (2 litre).
6. Bake for 1 hour or until a tester inserted into the centre comes out clean.

To make muffins, spoon this batter into paper-lined muffin tins. Bake at 350°F (180°C) for 18-22 minutes.

Makes 1 loaf, 8 medium muffins or 12 small muffins.



Recipes for Kids

Chewy Oatmeal-Raisin Cookies

| | | |
|-------|----------------------------|--------|
| 1 cup | quick cooking oats | 250 mL |
| ¾ cup | all-purpose flour | 175 mL |
| ½ cup | packed brown sugar | 125 mL |
| ⅓ cup | non-hydrogenated margarine | 75 mL |
| ¼ cup | white sugar | 50 mL |
| 1 | egg | 1 |
| ½ tsp | baking soda | 2 mL |
| ½ tsp | vanilla extract | 2 mL |
| ½ cup | Sultana raisins | 125 mL |

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Place all ingredients except raisins in a large bowl. Beat all ingredients using a mixer at medium speed.
3. Stir raisins into batter.
4. Drop by teaspoonfuls, 1 inch (2.5 cm) apart on a cookie sheet.
5. Bake for 12 minutes, or until lightly browned.
6. Remove cookies from sheet and cool on a wire rack.

Makes 4 dozen small cookies



Yummy Hummus

| | | |
|--------------|-----------------|----------|
| 1 tin (19oz) | chick peas | 540 mL |
| ¼ cup | tahini | 50 mL |
| ¼ cup | lemon juice | 50 mL |
| ¼ cup | plain yogurt | 50 mL |
| 2 tbsp | olive oil | 30 mL |
| ½ tsp | ground cumin | 2 mL |
| 2 cloves | garlic, chopped | 2 cloves |

DIRECTIONS:

1. Drain chick peas and rinse.
2. In a blender or food processor, puree chick peas. Add a little water if necessary.
3. Add remaining ingredients and blend well.
4. Add salt and pepper to taste, if desired.
5. Place in an air-tight container and store in the fridge for up to 3 days.

Serve with pita bread or raw vegetables or use as a sandwich spread.

Makes 2 cups (500 mL)



No Bake Trail Mix

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|--------|
| 4 cups | Shreddies-type cereal | 1 L |
| 1 tsp | ground cinnamon | 5 mL |
| 1-1½ cups | chopped mixed dried fruit | 375 mL |
| ½ cup | shredded coconut | 125 mL |
| ½ cup | sunflower seeds | 125 mL |

DIRECTIONS:

1. In a large bowl, combine cereal and cinnamon.
2. Add remaining ingredients and mix.
3. Store in an air-tight container.

Makes 6 cups (1-½L)

What's for Dessert?

✓ Healthier choices include:

- Fruit of any kind - Cut up fruit in small containers to make it easier for younger children to eat.
- Home-made pudding made with milk
- Fruit-flavoured yogurt
- Unsweetened fruit cups or applesauce cups
- Cookies, such as Oatmeal Raisin (see recipe page) fig or other fruit bars, graham crackers
- Mini muffins with fruit
- Home-made gelatin with added fruit
- Dried Fruit



✗ Desserts to pass on:

- "Fruit" gel in cups - these contain water, sugar and artificial flavour and offer little nutrition other than calories
- Cookies with icing dip - loaded with unhealthy fat and lots of sugar
- Packaged cakes and brownies - loaded with unhealthy fats and lots of sugar

**Snack
Attack!**

Unless children can brush their teeth at school, limit snacks that are sticky and high in sugar.

✓ Healthy Snacks:

- Whole grain crackers, rice cakes, melba toast, bread sticks, or dry unsweetened cereal
- Plain popcorn, or popcorn seasoned with Parmesan cheese and garlic powder (see recipe page)
- Home-made baked goods, such as banana bread or oatmeal cookies (see recipe page)
- Cheese cubes or strings
- Raw veggies
- Any kind of fruit ... grapes, bananas, cantaloupe, berries
- Fruit cups or applesauce in a cup
- Home-made pudding made with milk
- Pumpkin or sunflower seeds, plain or seasoned
- Roasted soybeans or chickpeas
- Yogurt - try freezing containers or tubes for a fun treat!
- Baked tortilla chips with salsa
- Plain cookies
- Lower-salt pretzels

✗ Snacks to pass on:

- Granola bars that are chewy, coated in chocolate, or contain marshmallows or chocolate chips - These are often high in fat and sugar, and are more like candy
- Dry instant soup noodles - loaded with salt!
- Chewy fruit snacks - don't be fooled by pictures of fruit on the package and claims "Made with Real Fruit". There is only a small amount of fruit and these are more like candy
- Snack packs, such as cheese spread with crackers or breadsticks - high in fat and salt, and low in nutrients
- Potato chips, cheese puffs, flavoured tortilla chips - high in unhealthy fats and loaded with salt

For more tips & Info:

www.bchu.org

Produced and distributed by the Brant County Health Unit
(519) 753-4937 ext. 458. Adapted from School Lunch
Your Kids Will Munch, developed by Region of Waterloo
Public Health, 2010

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