



Eat Well, Live Well

Brought to you by:



Dietitians of Canada
Les diététistes du Canada

Step Right Up

to Healthy Eating

Thanks for the great lunch!

Lunch helps to fuel healthy, growing children.

Children need regular meals and snacks to fuel physical activity, and for growth and development. Lunch provides the energy and key nutrients children need to take on the second half of their day.

Children are not little adults.

Because children are still growing, their need for energy (calories), nutrients and food will change over time. During growth spurts or when they are more active, children need more energy (calories) than usual. As a result, they may feel hungrier and eat more during these times. Lunches that offer foods that are power-packed with nutrients can help children get extra calories in a healthy way. Examples of nutrient-rich foods include: Raw vegetables (try serving them with yoghurt dip), whole grain muffins, cheese with whole grain crackers, milk, and fresh fruits.

Make it a family affair!

Children are more likely to eat a lunch that they have been involved in making and that includes foods they like. Try to actively involve your children in planning and making lunch. Younger children can help by doing simple tasks such as putting out lunch kits or food containers for packing. Older children can take a more "hands-on" role in food preparation.



Be creative!

Boredom is a common complaint about lunch. Avoid boredom and the "brown bag blues" by providing a wide variety of foods for lunch. Short on ideas? Try the following lunch solutions:

- Hummus, pita bread wedges, raw vegetables, yoghurt, 100% fruit juice
- Whole grain tortilla filled with tuna salad, celery sticks, grapes, chocolate milk
- Banana muffin, boiled egg, carrot sticks, milk
- Leftover pasta, meat sauce, melon cubes, milk
- Picnic Lunch: cut up cheese, leftover chicken or roast beef, fruit cocktail, whole grain roll, milk
- Cold pizza, milk, oatmeal muffin, dried fruit strip



Eat Well, Live Well

Brought to you by:



Dietitians of Canada
Les diététistes du Canada

Tips for great lunches

Practice safe lunching!

Food safety is always a concern. Ensure your child's lunch tastes great and is safe to eat by using insulated containers to keep hot foods piping hot. Cold packs or frozen juice boxes can be used to keep cold foods well chilled.

Get the gear

Invest in a collection of insulated containers, lunch bags or boxes, reusable drinking boxes, napkins and cutlery. Organize everything in one spot to speed-up the time needed to make and pack lunch.

Create a nutritionally balanced lunch

Aim for at least one food from each of the four foods groups of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating.

Advocate for healthy food choices in school canteens

Soft drinks, candy and greasy snack foods often dominate the choices available at school canteens. Work with your child's school to increase the number of nutrient-rich foods offered in the canteen.

Eat well when you eat out

Seek out restaurants that offer a variety of healthy alternatives for children. Examples include: salads or fruit instead of French-fries; 100% fruit juices, water or milk instead of soft drinks. Pay attention to portion sizes. Restaurants often provide larger portions of food than most children need.

Follow the rules

Different schools have different policies concerning lunch, and it is important, for safety reasons, to pack lunches that fit within these rules. Many schools do not allow peanuts, peanut butter, or other nut products to be sent for lunch. In addition, some schools do not allow children to eat at the playground during recess or lunch. Contact your school for specific information on their lunch policies.

Do it yourself

Pre-packaged lunch items or snack packs are typically high in fat, salt, and calories and low in essential nutrients. In addition, these items can be quite expensive, particularly if used on a daily basis. Create a more nutritious, less expensive version of this popular lunch solution by packing whole grain crackers, lower-fat cheese, 100% fruit juice, and raw vegetables into a divided container.

Dietitians provide food and nutrition information you can trust. Find a dietitian in your area at www.dietitians.ca/find or call 1-888-901-7776.

©2005 Dietitians of Canada; may be produced in its entirety provided source is acknowledged.

This Factsheet distributed compliments of: