

# Lunch and Learn

## Planning Ahead is the key to Healthy Lunches

Often the biggest obstacle for lunch preparation is time. Planning ahead by having nutritious foods pre-prepared and on-hand can make this a faster process (ex cut and wash fruit, vegetables; grate cheese, etc). Also many families save time by making lunches the night before.

It is very important that the healthy snacks and lunches provided are eaten. Try the snacks at home first to be sure your child likes it. Allowing children to choose food items or to help create their lunches makes it more likely that they will eat it.



- Children need healthy foods to help them grow and learn.
- Use Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating as your guideline for nutritious choices.
- For a healthy lunch, aim for at least one serving from each of the 4 food groups. Include foods that are lower in salt, fat and/or sugar.

# The ABC's of a Healthy Lunch

## A. Choose a Main Dish

### Sandwich Ideas

Tuna	Egg Salad	Chicken
Salmon	Roast Beef	Ham
Apple & cheese	Turkey	Peanut butter & jam

(Note: the jam could also be replaced with applesauce, raisins, sliced banana, pear, apple, or even grated carrots)

### Soup Ideas

Vegetable	Beef Barley	Clam Chowder
Tomato	Chicken Noodle	Hamburger
Cream of broccoli, mushroom, celery		

### Salad Ideas

Be creative add eggs, finely grated carrots, cucumbers, mushrooms, spinach, raisins, raisins, nuts, or even add fruit and use a low fat yogurt as dressing

### Other Ideas

Homemade meat cheese and crackers  
Leftovers make a great lunch

## Tips

### Sandwich

- Use whole grain
- Pitas or Wraps can be used instead of bread
- Try adding different vegetables like sweet peppers, onions, cucumbers, spinach, pineapple etc.

### Soup

- Add fresh or frozen vegetables to soups
- Use a lower fat milk when preparing cream soups

*A healthy lunch includes 3-4 food groups and a healthy snack consists of 2-3 food groups*

## B. Choose 2 Sides

- Apple
- Orange
- Banana
- Kiwi
- Apple sauce
- Canned Fruit with no added sugar
- 100% fruit leather (Fruit to Go)
- Grapes
- Kiwi

- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Pear
- Watermelon
- Cantaloupe
- Hard boiled Eggs
- Yogurt or yogurt tubes
- Sliced cheese
- Milk Pudding
- Carrots

- Cucumbers
- Broccoli
- Beans
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Tomatoes
- Mushrooms
- Zucchini
- Trail mix (nuts, seeds, and dried fruit)

## C. Choose a Beverage

Milk or flavored milk	Yogurt beverages
100%fruit or	Water
Vegetable juice	

*A+B+C = a healthy lunch*

# Make it Happen!

## Snack and Lunch Recipes

### **Crunchy Cheese Wafers**

Mix crushed walnuts and processed cheese spread. Spread on whole wheat crackers.

### **Tuna boats**

Take half a pepper and fill with tuna salad. Top with cheese on toothpick for a sail

### **Mini-Pizza**

Spread top half of whole wheat bun or pita bread with tomato sauces and top with favorite toppings.

### **Yo-Yo-Yogurt Crunch**

Mix together  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of low sugar cereal,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup yogurt,  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup of fresh or frozen fruit.

### **Fruit Shake**

Blend 1 part milk, 2 part plain or sweetened yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit. (100% unsweetened fruit juice can be added and crushed ice cubes).

### **Caterpillars or Ants on a Log**

Spread peanut butter on celery sticks and top with alfalfa sprouts or raisins.

### **Stuffed Apples**

Core apples and stuff with peanut butter then slice.

### **Pasta Salad**

Mix together 2 cups whole wheat macaroni,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup cubed cheese,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup frozen mixed vegetables, and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup low fat Italian dressing.

### **Banana Dog**

Peanut butter and a banana on a whole wheat hot dog bun.

### **Sandwich Roll-ups**

Whole-wheat tortilla topped with lettuce, cheese, lean meat, a low-fat dressing and then roll up tightly. Or create a pizza wrap using pizza sauce, grated cheese, ham and pineapples. Use your imagination!

### **Additional Resources:**

1. Contact a Registered Dietitian at your local Community Health Centre.

2. Websites:

[www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

[www.5to10aday.com](http://www.5to10aday.com)

[www.healthyalberta.com](http://www.healthyalberta.com)





Between grades  
1 and 12, a  
student may eat  
more than 2400  
lunches at  
school.

## Tips on getting kids to meet their vegetable and fruit recommendations

1. Top off a bowl of cereal with some fresh, dried or frozen fruit like bananas, raisins, blueberries, strawberries, etc.
2. Make frozen fruit kabobs using pineapple chunks, bananas, grapes, berries etc.
3. Go shopping with your children and let them pick out a new, unique fruit or vegetable to try
4. Make your own fruit smoothies by blending together frozen or fresh fruit, yogurt, milk and/or 100% fruit juice
5. Have cut-up fresh vegetables and fruit in the fridge ready for a nutritious snack

## Don't Forget Fluids

Children need lots of fluid. Not getting enough fluids can lead to dehydration, headaches, fatigue and difficulty concentrating. Have plenty of fluids available throughout the day.

**WATER:** It is important to drink plenty of water throughout the day. Encourage teachers to allow individual water bottles in the classroom.

**MILK:** Children between the ages of 4-8 years old need 2 servings and those between 9-18 years old need 3-4 servings of milk products daily. One cup of milk equals a serving and contains 15 essential nutrients to help children build healthy bones and teeth, especially calcium and vitamin D.

**JUICE:** Try to limit juice to no more than  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup per day, and make sure you choose 100% fruit juice.

## Safety Tips:

1. Pack a cold source to help keep the lunch chilled and safe from bacteria.
2. Chill foods overnight to ensure they are cold throughout
3. Use an insulated lunch bag to help trap the cold air inside
4. Do not use plastic that is not designed for the microwave for any foods that will be heated at school
5. Encourage your child to wash their hands before and after meals

## Dental Tips:

- Sticky snacks like dried fruit, or sweetened drinks can cause tooth decay
- The greatest damage is done within the first 20 minutes after eating
- Brush your teeth after meals as often as possible. Try sending a toothbrush to school.
- Try to pair sticky snacks with natural toothbrushes like cheese, raw veggies or rinse your mouth with water