

Lunches To Go

Quick and easy ideas for packed lunches



Tips

- Include a variety of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, and protein foods. See [Canada's Food Guide](#).
- Encourage children to participate in food preparation. Children enjoy eating what they create and leftovers make great lunches.
- Let children help pack their lunch from options you provide.
- Let your child eat as much or as little as they like from their lunch. Teach them to follow their appetite.
- It's ok if your child wants to eat the same foods every day. Try new foods at home and add them gradually to lunches.
- Make water your drink of choice. Send a reuseable water bottle. Limit sugary drinks including juice, sweetened milks and sweetened plant-based beverages.

Lunch Ideas

Wraps, pita pockets, and sandwiches	Rice or noodles	Other ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg salad with cucumber slices • Tuna salad roll-ups • Hummus, salad greens and cheese • Chicken, tomato, lettuce • Salmon, cream cheese, cucumber • Falafel with cucumber and tomatoes • Burrito with salsa • Grilled cheese • Salad rolls • French toast strips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sushi bowl (carrot, cucumber, edamame, salmon or marinated tofu, seaweed) • Fried rice • Spaghetti • Stir-fried vegetables and tofu/chicken • Vegetable curry • Macaroni and cheese 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homemade pizza • Chili with corn bread • Dumplings or perogies • Quinoa or barley salad • Steamed meat or vegetable bun • Baked beans • Stew • Soup with bread (chowder, tomato, chicken noodle, split pea) • Scrambled eggs, potato and sausage • Morrocan chickpea stew • Mashed potatoes, peas and beef

Snack Ideas

Vegetables	Fruits	Other ideas
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Carrot/bell pepper sticks with dip• Steamed/raw broccoli or cauliflower with hummus• Sliced cucumber, radish• Baked sweet potato wedges• Snow peas/cherry tomatoes• Kale chips• Roasted squash• Roasted seaweed• Celery sticks with nut/seed butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)• Tangerine or orange• Pear, or bananas• Peach, nectarine, plums• Kiwi, melon, grapes• Fruit cups/fruit sauce (canned fruit)• Apple slices with cinnamon	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Yogurt parfait• Homemade smoothie• Cheese with whole-grain crackers• Fortified soy drink or milk• Roasted chickpeas, edamame• Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, nuts if permitted• Granola bar or muffin

Food Safety

- Wash vegetables and fruit with water, even if labelled “pre-washed”.
- Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot
 - Pack cold foods in an insulated bag with a lunchbox icepack.
 - Pack hot foods in an insulated wide-mouth food container. Preheat the container with hot water before filling with food.
- Use reusable containers instead of plastic bags.

Are cookies and chips “forbidden” foods?

Avoid “good food – bad food” thinking.

Variety and moderation is important.

Healthy eating is an overall pattern of eating and includes a positive relationship with food to meet individual needs.

Offer foods, such as cookies and chips, occasionally and at a meal or snack time so that they do not become “forbidden” foods.

Did you know?

Processed meats can be high in sodium and saturated fat.

Use luncheon meats less often when packing school lunches.

Allergy Aware

Some schools have rules about the types of foods brought to school to help keep students with potentially life-threatening food allergies safe. Check with your school to see if there are foods that should not be brought to school.

For more information

Contact Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC (call 8-1-1 to speak a dietitian) or email a [dietitian](#).

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