

Health & Safety Tip #96

Healthy Lunches & Snacks for Kids

What do you pack for a school lunch that is nutritious, tasty and - most importantly - that kids will want to eat? Keep a good supply of healthy foods on hand to help your child be successful in school. Here are some simple tips for creating homemade lunches that are quick, inexpensive, tasty and nutritious:

- Pack a variety of foods of different colours, textures and flavours including something from all 4 food groups of Canada's Food Guide – vegetables and fruit; grain products such as whole wheat bread and pasta; milk and alternatives such as yogurt and cheese; meat and alternatives such as hard cooked eggs or hummus.
- Make large batches of muffins or cookies and freeze them for quick snacks or lunches on-the-go.
- Whole grain crackers and cheese are easy to put together and portable.
- Think outside the sandwich! Using pita, flatbread, tortilla, bread sticks or cereal instead of bread can make lunch more interesting for your little eater.
- Put those leftovers to good use. Homemade pizza is always a favourite – or put some leftover chicken in a wrap with some veggies and salad dressing.
- Package foods separately to keep them fresher. This will help to keep veggies and fruit crispy, and crackers won't get soggy.
- A small thermos to keep warm or cold foods at the proper temperature can help add variety to meals. A small ice pack in the lunch bag will also help keep food cold and safe.
- An occasional treat is okay, as long as it's occasional.
- Remind kids to stay hydrated by drinking lots of water. A light-weight stainless steel water bottle is great to have.
- Remember to regularly clean out your child's lunch box to avoid the possibility of food contamination.

For some great ideas on stocking your cupboards, fridge and freezer with everything you will need to make healthy lunches in a hurry, check out Dietitians of Canada's Great Food Fast Pantry List and the Healthy Lunch Checklist at:

www.dietitians.ca.

To learn more about nutritious eating and Canada's Food Guide, visit:

www.hc-sc.gc.ca

