

HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS

Healthy Lunches & Snacks for School

Now that the school year is in full swing, the Vancouver Island Health Authority would like to remind parents to stock the cupboards and refrigerator with healthy options for packing lunches.

“As a busy parent, it is a constant struggle to come up with lunch and snack ideas that are creative, nutritious and quick,” says VIHA Nutritionist Janelle Hatch. “To keep things simple, use this basic rule of thumb: always include items from at least 3 of the 4 food groups for meals, and at least 2 of the 4 food groups for snacks as outlined in Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide.”

Quick tips for healthy lunches include:

- Instead of a basic bread sandwich, try wraps, bagels or crackers and cheese
- Leftovers such as mini-pizzas and casseroles make for excellent time savers
- Prepare fruits and veggies so that they are easy to pack and eat
- Include a small container of dip with cut up veggies
- Fix lunches after dinner (for the next day) and refrigerate

Tips to keep our kids lunches enjoyable and to encourage healthy eating:

- Mix & match colors, flavors and textures to make food appealing
- Cut veggies and sandwiches into fun shapes
- Throw in non-food items such as a fun note, stickers or a funky straw
- Remember it is OK to provide the odd treat such as a pudding made with milk or a homemade cookie
- Involve kids in making their own lunches – they are more likely to eat what they have helped prepare

And, of course – remember that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. It provides us all with important vitamins and minerals kids need to learn and play.

The provincial ActNow BC program provides plenty of ways for kids and families to eat healthier and integrate more physical activity into each day. For tips and tools, visit the website at www.actnowbc.ca

To learn more about nutritious eating and to view the Canada’s Food Guide, visit the Health Canada website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca