

"Lunches to Go"

Cool and Hot Lunch Ideas



Bringing variety & fun to packed lunches!

Always follow the allergy guidelines that are in place at your child's school or child care centre. Whole peanuts, tree nuts and nut butters are excluded from the ideas listed below because it is common for allergy guidelines to require 'nut free' lunches and snacks. Reading food labels is also very important.

Lunchbox Tips:

- ✓ Keep it simple and easy to eat but healthy and appetizing.
- ✓ Try to include foods from each of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide (Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives and Meat and Alternatives)
- ✓ Kids love to eat what they create. Let your child choose from a healthy list of choices to create his or her own lunch.
- ✓ Speed-up the process by cutting extra veggies when you're preparing dinner or by making extra at meals to use as 'Re-Runs' for lunches the following day.
- ✓ On a cold day, a small thermos of soup, pasta, or other hot item can be satisfying.
- ✓ Freeze yogurt tubes and juice boxes. This will keep them cool until your child is ready to eat.
- ✓ A child's taste seems to change on a whim, try new things regularly and don't be afraid to try them again and again. It can take many exposures to new foods before children learn to like them.

Instead of Sandwiches

- Whole grain pancakes or waffles with fruit and yogurt
- Build your own pizza with English muffin or pita, tomato sauce, toppings and grated cheese
- Falafel, whole wheat pita, veggies
- Pasta salad, milk, fruit
- Hard cooked egg, whole grain crackers, red pepper strips
- Soft taco with bean dip, veggies
- Unsweetened dry cereal with milk or yogurt and fresh fruit
- Homemade whole grain muffins:
 - Banana bran muffin and cheese
 - Oatmeal carrot muffin and cottage cheese
 - Cornmeal muffin with BBQ chicken or chili
 - Bran muffin with yogurt and veggie sticks



A Change from Bread...

Choose whole wheat or whole grain:

- Tortillas, flat bread
- English muffins
- Bran or oatmeal muffins
- Rice cakes, crackers
- Melba toast, bread sticks
- Chapatti or roti

Wrap or Pita Pocket Combos

(moisten with plain yogurt mixed with salad dressing)

- Hard cooked egg, chopped cucumber, onion
- Chicken chunks, sliced seedless grapes
- Turkey or marinated cooked tofu chunks, grated carrot, shredded lettuce
- Salmon or tuna or cooked fish, red and green pepper slices
- Ricotta cheese, fruit
- Chopped ham, pineapple
- Hummus (tahini and ground chickpea dip), vegetables
- Shredded cheese, sliced cucumber
- Cheese, lettuce, tomato (wrapped separately)
- Instead of a tortilla, try a "lettuce leaf" wrap with any of the above combos

Dunk a Lunch

Finger food and dunking are always fun! Try these combinations for a healthy choice:

- Hummus, bean or cottage cheese dip served with assorted veggies and pita bread cut into triangles
- Fresh cut fruit and yogurt
- French toast with yogurt or applesauce
- Whole grain bread sticks with fresh tomato salsa and guacamole

More Lunch Ideas...

Follow the Milky Way...

- Carrot, celery or bread stick wrapped in cheese
- Cored apple filled with cheese chunks
- Finely grated cheese rolled into small balls
- Chilled milk or fortified soy drink
- Milk-based pudding
- Yogurt parfait: Layer plain yogurt, fruit and granola or a high fibre cereal



Versatile Veggies & Fast Fresh Fruits

- Freeze summer fruits to enjoy all year round
- Try a fruit smoothie served in a thermos
- Kids often like small pieces of fruit instead of whole fruit such as orange wedges, melon chunks, apple or pear slices (to prevent browning toss in a bit of lemon juice)

Offer a variety of different choices over the week such as:

Cauliflowerettes, broccoflower trees
Baby corn, fresh sweet radishes
Pepper strips (yellow, green, red, orange)
Turnip or zucchini sticks
Peas in a pod or snow pea pods
Cherry tomatoes
Cherries, berries, peaches,
Kiwi, papaya, mango



Pack a Safe Lunch

- Use clean kitchen equipment to prepare lunches
- Refrigerate lunches that are prepared ahead of time
- Use an insulated bag with a freezer pack or chilled thermos to keep food cool. Chill milk or freeze drinking water or juice in plastic containers to keep food cool.
- Use a wide mouth thermos to keep hot food hot. Pre-heat the thermos with hot water before filling.
- Wash all vegetables thoroughly, even those in packages labelled "pre-washed".
- Wash lunch containers every night to keep bacteria from growing and clean them with baking soda once a week to get rid of odours.
- Don't reuse plastic bags - they can hold bacteria.

Cold Re-runs

- Left over pizza
- Kabobs (e.g. meat or chicken, cheese, fruit, veggies)
- Burrito with refried beans, cheese, tomato
- Whole wheat steamed Asian bun
- Homemade baked samosas,
- Vietnamese salad rolls
- Chicken drumstick



Hot Re-runs

- Stew
- Curry
- Chili
- Casserole
- Stir fried vegetables with tofu
- Perogies/pot stickers
- Spaghetti and meatballs
- Macaroni and cheese
- Baked beans
- Soup or chowder

Recipes

Mexican Mash Bean Dip

1 small can (398 mL or 14 oz) refried beans or rinsed kidney beans mashed with a fork
1/3 cup (75 mL) plain yogurt
2 green onions, chopped
1 clove garlic chopped (optional)
2 tbsp (25 mL) cilantro or parsley, chopped
1/2 tsp (2 mL) each cumin & chili powder
1 tbsp (15 mL) lime juice

Mix together and chill. Makes ~2 cups

Fruit Smoothie

In a blender mix equal parts 100% fruit juice, milk or fortified soy drink, frozen fruit and yogurt or soft tofu. Blend until smooth.

Cottage Cheese Dip or Spread

Mix grated cheddar, parmesan and cottage cheese with plain yogurt.

For more information:

Healthlink BC - Dietitian Services:
Call 8-1-1

Little Extras: Non-food treats are special and long lasting...

Special napkin or straw
Sticker, picture, funny joke, poem or other note