

Activity: Pack a Healthy Lunch

Facilitator's Guide

Target Audience:

- Parents of toddlers in daycare, or preschoolers

Preparation

Materials Needed:

- Gear to pack a healthy and safe lunch (insulated lunch bag, ice pack, assortment of containers with tight fitting lids, hot food thermos, leak proof drink container [insulated ones are great for milk]). If purchasing new, these items make great prizes or giveaways. Note: if actual items are not available you can use photos.
- Nutrition Booster Cards for Activity B. You will find these cards at the end of the facilitator's guide. Print one copy of the cards and laminate them for future use. Note, each card is labelled "Nutrition Booster Card"
- Balanced Meal Cards for Activity C. You will find these cards at the end of the facilitator's guide. Print one copy of the cards and laminate them for future use. Note, each card is labelled "Balanced Meal Card"

Handouts:

- Pack and Go Lunches www.interiorhealth.ca/childcarefood Print this handout from the link and make copies for participants.
- Pack a Safe Lunch www.interiorhealth.ca/childcarefood Print this handout from the link and make copies for participants.

Background Information for Facilitator

In preparation to lead this module:

- please review the fact sheet, "Boost Nutrition in Your Menu" available at www.interiorhealth.ca/childcarefood (information for activity B)
- you may want to review Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

Optional: Read these two short paragraphs out loud to the group

A healthy packed lunch should contain **at least** three of the four food groups, ideally all four. Include a high quality protein such as roasted meat or chicken, fish, egg or meat alternatives such as beans and lentils, tofu, or nut or seed butter (or nuts/seeds). Seeds and seed butters may still be an option if peanuts and tree nuts are restricted. Cheese, yogurt and milk are a source of protein, but they lack iron so they shouldn't regularly take the place of high iron protein foods (for example, a cheese sandwich is okay once in a while, but not every day).

Children ages two-three years old should have four servings of vegetables and fruit a day and four to eight year olds need five servings a day. It's difficult to meet these requirements if a lunch does not contain a vegetable and/or fruit.

ACTIVITY A: Gear for Healthy and Safe Lunches

Review the “gear” that makes it easier to pack safe and healthy lunches (listed below and in the “Pack and Go” handout). Show actual gear or use pictures. Acknowledge that it is an upfront investment, but will save money in disposable wrap and bags over the year.

- A variety of different sized reusable containers with lids
- Insulated lunch bag or box
- Small freezer (ice) packs (necessary to keep cold foods cold)
- Leak proof drink container
- Thermos for hot foods (necessary to keep hot foods hot)

ACTIVITY B: Lunch Nutrition Boosters

Set out the 7 Nutrition Booster Cards (face side down) on the table.

1. One at a time, have parents pull a card from the pile. (dark green vegetables, dark orange vegetables, whole grains, berries, eggs, salmon and other fish, beans and lentils).
2. Ask parents how they could offer this food.
What could they make with this food for their child’s lunch?
Refer to [“Boost Nutrition in Your Menu”](#) fact sheet for ideas.

ACTIVITY C: Packing a Balanced and Safe Lunch

Spread out food cards on table. For larger groups, have parents work in pairs or small groups.

1. Have parents pick out foods that would make up a balanced lunch (don’t need to come up with snacks, just lunch). Each parent can build a lunch or they can work in pairs.
2. One at a time, have parents share what food groups are present in the lunch they have created with the cards (aim for all four food groups)
3. Have parents say how they would pack this lunch to be food safe. [If applicable, let parents know about what your child care facility has to offer (fridge, microwave, ability to cut up whole pieces of fruit etc.)]

Note: Some parents may ask about how much food they should send. You can tell them to send the amount of food their child would normally eat at home. Try packing smaller portions with more variety. A child shouldn’t be expected to eat the same amount every day.

Balanced Meal Card



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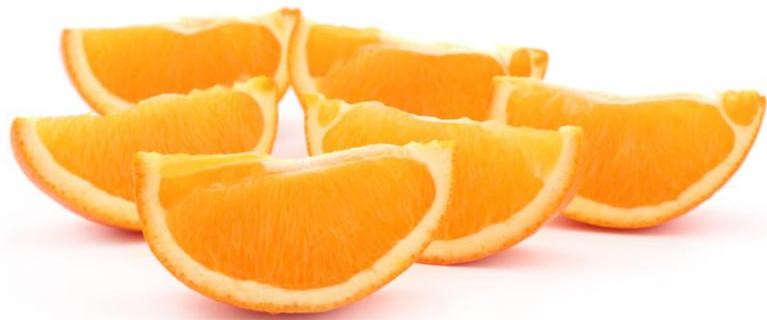
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Dark Green Vegetables

(e.g. spinach, romaine lettuce, kale, broccoli, green peas, etc.)



Orange Vegetables

(e.g. sweet potatoes, orange squash, pumpkin, carrots, etc.)



Whole Grains

(rolled oats, brown rice, whole grain pasta and bread, etc.)



Berries



Beans and Lentils



Salmon and Other Fish



Eggs



