

INFORMATION BULLETIN
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Ministry of Education

Nutrition tips for back to school

VICTORIA - Science says that well-nourished children learn better, behave better and feel better, so ensuring that snacks and lunches are nutritious is important.

A Healthy Breakfast:

- * A good breakfast is the best way to start the day. The energy received from a nutritious morning meal is what jump starts our body and brain, and allows children to focus and learn easier in the classroom.
- * When planning breakfast for your children, try to include three of the four food groups from Canada's Food Guide - Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives and Meat and Alternatives:
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>
- * Here are some examples:
 - o An egg, slice of whole grain toast, sliced tomatoes.
 - o Whole grain toast with peanut butter and sliced banana.
 - o Yogurt, granola and fruit.
 - o Breakfast smoothie made with yogurt or alternative, and your favourite frozen fruit.

Healthy Snacks:

- * Snacking throughout the day at set times will help to keep children's blood sugar more stable, and provide lasting energy for physical activity at break times and focused learning in the classroom.
- * When planning snacks for your children, try to use whole foods as much as possible, limiting the amount of pre-packaged, processed foods in your child's lunches.
- * Pack healthy snacks which include at least two of the four Canada's Food Guide food groups.
- * Here are some examples:
 - o Yogurt with fresh fruit
 - o Sliced apple with cheese
 - o Banana bread with cream cheese
 - o Carrots with hummus or bean dip
 - o Hardboiled egg with sliced cucumber
 - o Small homemade bran muffin with orange wedges

Healthy Lunches:

- * Lunch is a great time for children to connect with their peers over food and fuel up for the afternoon.
- * Packing lunches can be challenging for families. Making lunches new and exciting, nutritious and desirable is no easy feat! Try to include foods from all four Canada's Food Guide food groups.
- * Here are some examples:
 - o Sandwiches are classic. Start with whole grain bread and choose your fillings:
 - * Tuna salad - add celery for extra crunch.
 - * Egg salad - add radish and green onions for extra crunch.
 - * Chicken salad - add apples, celery and curry spice for a spin on the original.

- * Veggie - add hummus, avocado and/or cheese to make these sandwiches more filling.
- o Salads are a great way to shake things up:
 - * Pasta salad - add cubes of cheese and/or leftover meat or alternatives with plenty of veggies! Marinate in dressing overnight for extra flavour.
 - * Taco salad - add lean ground beef, lettuce, tomato, grated cheese and salsa.
 - * Spinach salad - add a protein of some sort such as leftover salmon, nuts and/or seeds plus veggies.
 - o Mexican wraps - with grilled chicken, black bean spread, spiced rice and avocado in a whole wheat tortilla.
 - o Leftovers that can be eaten cold, think: quiche, homemade pizza, lasagna.
 - o Picnic lunch - with hard boiled eggs, sliced cheese, bean salad, veggies and dip.
 - o Homemade chilli or hearty soups in a thermos, alongside a whole wheat bun.
- * Sending sliced veggies with your child's lunch is a great idea. Whether they eat them as a snack or alongside their meal.
- * Fruit makes a great lunch time dessert!
- * Lunch is a great place to include 250 ml of milk or a fortified milk alternative beverage, such as soy or almond milk.
- * Talk to you children about staying well hydrated and drinking water throughout the day.

Tips for Preparing Snacks and Lunches:

- * Plan ahead! Take time to save time.
- * Washing and chopping plenty of fruit and vegetables to store in the fridge is a great way to save time. Sprinkling lemon juice over cut fruit and vegetables will help to keep them from turning brown.
- * Package foods separately to keep them fresher. This will help to keep veggies and fruit crispy, and crackers won't get soggy.
- * Packing lunches the night before can help make morning time less hectic.
- * For older children who have access to a microwave, dinner leftovers are an excellent lunch idea. When packing lunch for younger children, easy to eat foods work best.
- * Send your children to school with a refillable water bottle to keep them well hydrated throughout the day. Tap water can easily be flavoured with sliced cucumber, lemon, lime or other fruit.
- * Keep hot items hot and cold items cold. Insulated lunch bags/boxes with frozen packs work great, as well as thermos containers for hot items.
- * Remember to regularly clean out your child's lunch box to avoid the possibility of food contamination.

For more information, please visit the HealthyFamiliesBC website at <http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/>

This factsheet is available in French at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2011/tips-nutrition_fr.pdf

In Chinese at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2011/tips-nutrition_ch.pdf

In Punjabi at:

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/news/docs/2011/tips-nutrition_pu.pdf

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