



Pack a Bite That's Right

If your family is prone to the “same old sandwich” syndrome, read on to find a collection of lunch box ideas for mid-day meals that have taste appeal for everyone. Use *Canada's Food Guide* to make sure everyone gets a healthy array of food choices.

*** Allergy Alert** Food containing life-threatening allergens (e.g., peanuts and other nuts) should not be available in schools or other settings where children are allergic.

Choose Vegetables and Fruit More Often

- Include two vegetables or fruits in the lunch bag daily. Vary the choices to prevent boredom.
- Keep unsweetened applesauce and canned fruit in the pantry for those days when you run out of fresh fruit.
- Pack carrot coins, cucumber sticks, zucchini circles, broccoli florets or red pepper rings for different colours and textures.
- Include a dip made with light sour cream, low-fat yogurt, or pureed beans for extra pizzazz.
- Include fruit to end a great meal - fresh or canned in its own juice.
- Add an occasional 100% fruit or vegetable juice for a refreshing alternative.

Enjoy a Variety of Foods

- Pack a variety of foods from each of the four food groups: Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives, and Meat and Alternatives.
- Include foods of different shapes, colours, textures and flavours.
- Pack a portable snack with every lunch. A morning snack is needed by most growing children.

Tips for Lunch Box Success with Children

- Involve children in planning meals, packing lunches and selecting snacks. Use this as an opportunity to talk about healthy choices. The more they help, the more likely they are to eat the lunch.
- Offer a selection of nutritious foods and let your child choose current favourites. Offer new foods from time to time.
- Give kids the occasional choice in drinks, like water, chocolate milk, 100% vegetable and fruit juices, so they can enjoy a variety.
- Leftovers from the night before can make a great lunch. Use a wide-mouth Thermos® for baked chicken, pasta dishes, meat and vegetable stew, soup, chili or casseroles.
- Add some fun to your child's lunch by tucking in surprises - a riddle, stickers, or a fancy napkin.
- Pack a treat; favourites include exotic fruits or vegetables, whole grain cookies such as oatmeal or date, cereal bars and popcorn.
- Use appropriate serving sizes, for example, a small apple for a small child.

Try New, Whole Grain Products

- Whole wheat pasta
- Brown or wild rice
- Quinoa
- Barley
- Steel cut oats
- Crackers
- Bread sticks
- Low-fat homemade muffin
- Whole wheat English muffin
- Bagel
- Whole wheat tortilla
- Whole grain roll
- Pita bread
- Millet

Choose lower fat milk and alternatives, legumes, leaner meats and foods prepared with little or no fat.

- Include milk, low fat yogurt or fortified soy beverages.
- Try a cold bean or lentil salad.
- Choose lean deli meat, like roast beef, ham, or turkey breast. Use mustard, relish or light mayonnaise for sandwich spreads.
- Include eggs, lower fat cheese or cottage cheese to give a high protein punch for long lasting energy.

Great Lunch Ideas

- Mixture of tuna, chopped celery and a little mayonnaise stuffed into a whole wheat pita pouch, topped with yogurt
- Low fat oatmeal muffin with cheese, sliced cooked ham, orange wedges, water
- Slice of cold leftover pizza, crunchy apple, milk
- Chili or favourite soup in a Thermos®, whole wheat roll, banana, milk
- Sliced chicken or beef with a little salad dressing, lettuce, chopped tomatoes rolled in a pita shell, milk pudding, 100% fruit juice.

- Pumpernickel bagel and cream cheese, cold hard boiled egg, carrot sticks, milk
- Salmon salad with chopped celery and onions on a multi-grain bun, milk pudding, cucumber slices, 100% fruit juice
- Pasta salad with chick peas or beans, sliced cucumber, broccoli and cauliflower florets, milk
- Fun with dip: vegetable sticks and crunchy bread sticks with hummus; sliced apples sprinkled with lemon juice and cinnamon, served with yogurt.

Lunch Box Safety

How you pack a lunch is just as important as what you pack in a lunch. Careful packing ensures the food and beverages are safe to eat.

Keep Foods COLD

- Use frozen bread to make sandwiches that keep better and taste fresher.
- Freeze juice boxes or plastic bottles with milk for use as cold packs in an insulated lunch bag
- Insulated lunch bags and small ice packs can be very useful if the lunch needs to be stored at room temperature for several hours.

Keep Foods HOT

- Vary your lunch by using a Thermos®.
- Preheat the Thermos® with boiling water. Heat foods to steaming hot, then pour into the Thermos®.

Keep Foods CLEAN

- Wash hands with soap and warm water before making lunch.
- Rinse fruits and vegetables well.
- Wash lunch boxes, thermal bags, containers and utensils with hot soapy water after every use.