

HEALTHY LUNCHES FOR YOUR CHILD



- Healthy foods give your child the energy and nutrients needed to grow, feel full, and concentrate in school.
- Healthy foods can be tasty, fun and fit your budget.
- This pamphlet has tips for lunches at home and school!

**Make sure to include items from
3 of the 4 food groups:**

- 1. Breads and Cereals**
- 2. Fruit, Vegetables, Berries, Greens**
- 3. Meat, Fish, and Alternatives**
- 4. Milk and Calcium Foods**

5 Ways to Cut Costs and Boost Nutrition

- 1. Plan meals ahead - Make a list!**
Look for store discounts on healthy foods that you can work into your meal plans.
- 2. Use staple, unprocessed food items.**
Pre-packaged foods usually fall in the **least often** item category and can cost more than buying plain items and preparing them yourself.
- 3. Choose store brands.**
Store brands tend to be less expensive than other “name” brands. Compare the prices of larger packages and bulk items to get the most value out of your dollar.
- 4. Eat more meat alternatives.**
Enjoy meat alternatives like eggs, dried or canned beans, canned fish in water, and peanut butter more often. They are usually healthier and less costly than meat.
- 5. Eat a more traditional diet.**
Try having left-overs of fish head soup or lean meat stew for lunch instead of ready-to-eat foods that offer little nutrition.



Healthy Lunches Tips

- Have whole vegetables and fruit more often than juice.
- Limit junk foods that are high in calories and low in nutrients. These include candy, chocolate, chips, and fries.
- Make lunch together with your children. Give them healthy options to choose from (see next page). They are more likely to eat it if they make it!
- Give water or milk (with 2% milk fat or less) instead of pop or fruit-flavoured drinks.
- Set a good example. Pack yourself the same lunch. Children often follow the examples they see around them.



Ontario

Cancer Care Ontario
Action Cancer Ontario

The Best Buys

Try these options to save money and eat healthy!

Breads and Cereals

The more fibre and whole grains, the better!



- Plain whole grain oats and breads instead of instant packaged oatmeal, baked goods and fancy breads (e.g., raisin, cheese).
- Packaged bags of whole grain rolls and bagels; use what you need and freeze the rest.
- Whole wheat (brown) noodles, pasta and rice without seasoning and sauces.

Fruits, Vegetables, Berries and Greens

Canned, frozen and fresh fruit and vegetables all count!



- Fresh (when in season), frozen and canned (when not in season).
- Fruits and vegetables in bulk (e.g., a bag of apples, carrots).
- Discounted vegetables and fruits make great buys for use in stews, sauces and baked goods.

Meat, Fish, and Alternatives

Products with less fat and salt are healthier options!



- Meat alternatives like eggs, dried or canned legumes, canned fish in water and peanut butter.
- Plain fish instead of battered and seasoned fish fillets
- A whole chicken or turkey instead of pieces.
- Lean and less expensive cuts of meat for soups and stews (e.g., stewing beef, chuck, blade, or pork shoulder).

Milk and Calcium Foods

Items with 2% milk fat (%M.F.) or less are the best choices!



- Bags of milk (can be frozen up to 6 weeks) instead of milk cartons.
- Plain yogurt in containers (sweetened with fruit) instead of individual flavoured yogurt cups.
- Powdered or tetra shelf-stable (UHT) milk which does not need to be refrigerated until used.



Sample Menu



Pick one from each column, add water or milk.

Breads and Cereals	Fruits, Vegetables, Berries and Greens	Meat, Fish, and Alternatives	Milk and Calcium Foods
Energy	Vitality	Healing	Strength
Bread: brown, whole grain, enriched	Sandwich filler: lettuce, tomato, cucumber, shredded carrot	Lean, cooked meat: venison, duck, moose, turkey, or chicken	Yogurt or unsweetened applesauce with added calcium
Bannock, roll or bun: whole wheat (brown)	Fruits: apple, banana, pear, berries	Hard-boiled egg	Yogurt drink or milk/yogurt-based fruit smoothies
Crackers or breadsticks: whole grain	Veggie sticks: celery, carrot, peppers, cucumber	Canned fish: tuna, salmon in water	Cheese: cubed, sliced, shredded
Pasta or noodles: whole wheat (brown), enriched	Frozen or canned veggie: corn, peas, carrot, mixed vegetables	Canned beans: mixed bean salad, kidney beans, chickpeas	Nuts: almonds, walnuts, pecans
English muffin, tortilla, or pita: whole wheat (brown), whole grain	Canned fruits in water or juice: peach or pear	Ground meat: lean or with fat drained off	Leafy green veggies: dandelion leaves, spinach or broccoli
Rice: Wild, brown	125 mL 100% fruit juice: orange, apple	Canned meat: chicken, turkey	Soy beverages with added calcium

* Note: Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

