

# What's for Lunch?

## Tips for making lunches

- Plan ahead for lunch. Make extra portions of casseroles, stews, soups, or chili at supper. Keep leftovers in the fridge to use for lunches within 3–4 days. You can also freeze leftovers in single servings to use later.
- Get children involved! Have them help with planning, shopping, and packing. Children are more likely to eat their lunch when they help plan and prepare it.
- Make lunches in the evening for the next day so they are ready to go in the morning.
- Wash and peel enough vegetables for several days. Store in a closed container in the fridge.
- Slice leftover fish, poultry, or meat and use in sandwiches, wraps, or salads.
- Keep sandwiches interesting. Try whole grain breads, buns, small bagels, pitas, tortillas, or crackers, and a variety of fillings.
- Cut up sandwiches for young children. Make triangles, strips, circles, or other fun shapes.
- Sandwiches can be made ahead of time and frozen to make preparing lunches faster. Add the vegetables to the sandwich when you take it out of the freezer to pack it.

## Pack it up healthy

Pack a variety of foods from at least 3 of the 4 food groups from [Canada's Food Guide](#): [Vegetables and Fruit](#), [Grain Products](#), [Milk and Alternatives](#), and [Meat and Alternatives](#). Include a reusable water bottle to refill throughout the day.



## Vegetables and Fruit

Choose vegetables and fruit with no added sugar, salt, or fat:

- tomato, cucumber, grated carrots, or lettuce in a sandwich
- homemade vegetable soup or salad
- carrot or celery sticks, cucumber slices, snap peas, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower, or broccoli “trees”
- fresh, frozen, or dried fruit
- canned fruit cups or apple sauce



## Grain Products

Choose whole grains that are lower in fat, sugar, and salt most often:

- breads, bagels, buns
- flour or corn tortillas
- chapatti, naan, pita
- cereal bars
- rice cakes
- rice, barley, quinoa
- noodles
- homemade muffins
- crackers, breadsticks
- dry cereal
- plain popcorn

## Milk and Alternatives

Select lower fat milk products:

- skim, 1%, or 2% milk, or fortified soy beverage
- plain yogurt—add fruit or use as a dip for vegetables
- cheese slices or cubes
- soups made with milk

## Meat and Alternatives

Select lean meats and alternatives with little or no added fat or salt:

- meat, fish, chicken, turkey, or egg fillings in a sandwich
- chicken legs, boiled eggs, tofu
- chili, stew, meatballs, lentil soup, baked beans
- bean dips and spreads, such as hummus
- nuts and nut butters (if allowed), seeds

## Menu ideas



Tortilla rolled with turkey, shredded carrot and spinach, a banana, and milk



Pita wedges, hummus and fresh vegetables, yogurt, an orange, and water



Rice with vegetables and tofu, yogurt, and water



Oatmeal muffin, cheese, carrot sticks, apple, and water



Pasta salad with vegetables and cheese, blueberries, and water



Chilli with pita chips, fruit cup, and milk



Salad with tuna, crackers, a pear, and water

## Packing lunches

- Store lunch supplies together in the same cupboard or drawer for faster lunch preparation.



- Use an insulated container for hot or cold foods.
  - **For hot foods** (chili, soup, or stew), pour hot water into the insulated container for a few minutes to heat. Empty. Add very hot food and close tightly.
  - **For cold foods** (drinks, cold soups, or yogurt), chill the insulated container with cold water or keep in the fridge overnight with the lid off. Empty if needed. Add cold food and close tightly.
- Frozen containers of milk or water help chill sandwiches and will thaw in time to drink at lunch. A freezer pack can also keep items cold in the lunch bag. Keep lunches in the fridge if possible.
- Food that will be reheated in a microwave should be kept cold until lunch. Use only microwave-safe containers for reheating.

## Food allergies

Does your child bring lunch to school, a childcare centre, or sports facility? Before you pack lunch, check the facility's food allergy guidelines.

## Tasty recipes

Go to the websites and apps below:

[Inspiring Healthy Eating](http://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca) recipes found on [www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca](http://www.healthyeatingstartshere.ca).

[Cookspiration](http://www.cookspiration.com) website and phone app for healthy and tasty recipes. [www.cookspiration.com](http://www.cookspiration.com).