



# Eat Well, Play Well – At School!

**School is where children go to learn, play and develop skills that will last them a lifetime. Help your children to be their best at school by fueling their days with healthy food choices.**

## Lunch Matters for Children

Between grade one and the end of high school, a student may eat more than 2,400 lunches at school! Creating tasty, nutritious school lunches is a challenge for many parents. The good news is that with a little bit of planning and a few ideas, you can put together a lunch that not only tastes great, but also packs a nutritional punch:

- **Recruit some help** - Children are more likely to eat a lunch that they have been involved in creating. Let your children choose some of the foods that will go into their lunch bags. Plan or prepare school lunches together - make it fun!
- **Get organized** - Speed up the preparation process by organizing lunch supplies such as insulated containers, lunch bags or boxes, reusable drinking boxes, napkins and cutlery in one spot.
- **Lay a solid foundation** - Teach children to include at least one choice from each of the four food groups of *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* for lunch.
- **Mix it up** - Offer a variety of foods to prevent boredom and make lunch a meal that your child looks forward to. Short on ideas?

Try the following:

Hummus, pita bread wedges, raw vegetables, yogurt, 100% fruit juice	Whole grain tortilla filled with tuna salad, celery sticks, grapes, chocolate milk
Banana muffin, boiled egg, carrot sticks, milk	Leftover pasta, meat sauce, melon cubes, milk
Picnic Lunch: cut up cheese, leftover chicken or roast beef, whole grain roll, fruit salad, milk	Cold pizza, yogurt, oatmeal muffin, 100% fruit juice

Find more ideas in our "**Cool**" [Lunch Guide](#).

**Trusted advice from dietitians. [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)**

**Did You Know..?** Your child may have less than 15 minutes to eat their lunch at school.

**Put safety first** - Keep foods fresh and safe to eat. Use insulated containers to keep hot foods, such as soups or casseroles piping hot, and to keep cold foods cold. Chill items such as pudding, coleslaw or potato salad before placing them in the container. Use a small freezer pack or a frozen container of milk or juice to keep sandwiches that are filled with meat, egg, cheese, fish, mayonnaise or poultry cold.

**Make their day!** - Surprise your child - write a special note and tuck it into the lunch bag. Add a colorful napkin or a cartoon.

### **Don't Forget Fluids**

Growing, active children need lots of fluids. Not getting enough fluids can lead to dehydration, headaches, fatigue and difficulty concentrating. Have plenty of fluids such as water, milk and juice available throughout the day. Encourage teachers to allow individual water bottles in the classroom. To ensure the beverage is safe, have your child bring the water bottle or refillable beverage container home daily so it can be washed.