

Guidelines and sample menus for preparing bag lunches which meet Canada's Food Guide

What's a good approach to building a healthy lunch? Think about the four food groups and aim to have at least 3 of the 4 food groups represented in your child's lunch.

Some ideas for lunches: mix and match fruit and vegetables based on your child's interests.

Leftovers

- Foods like leftover stew, spaghetti, soup, baked beans or cold pizza make tasty lunches. (Make sure leftovers are no more than one day old.)
- Vegetarian chili, small whole wheat roll with slice of hard cheese, fruit cup, water
- Curried beef with vegetables, pita wedges, kiwi, mini banana muffin, water
- Chicken, whole wheat couscous, raw carrots, cantaloupe, milk



Fun Sandwiches and Wraps

- Whole wheat bagel with sliced hard cheese and apples, yogurt, graham crackers, water
- Whole wheat hot dog bun, tzatziki as spread, leftover chicken with thinly sliced peppers, an orange, chocolate milk
- Leftover stir fry wrapped in a whole wheat tortilla, a nectarine, milk
- Tuna sandwich on whole grain bun, vegetables and dip, fruit salad, milk

For more information on food safety and lunch ideas please visit:

Health Canada

[http:// healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/safety-salubrite/seasonal-food-aliments-saisoniers/school-lunch_repas-ecole-eng.php](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/healthy-eating-saine-alimentation/safety-salubrite/seasonal-food-aliments-saisoniers/school-lunch_repas-ecole-eng.php)

Call a Registered Dietitian for free at:

EatRight Ontario 1-877-510-5102 or visit eatrightontario.ca

Dietitians of Canada:

dietitians.ca

Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide:

healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide



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It takes a community to raise a family...

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Bag Lunch Guidelines for School Age Programs



Milton Community Resource Centre provides a nutritious morning and afternoon snack for our PA day programs. The snacks are prepared by a contracted catering service that provides healthy, delicious, portion size snacks developed using Canada's Food Guide. Cultural diversity will be reflected in snacks and alternative selections will be provided to accommodate allergies and dietary restrictions where possible. MCRC strives to be a nut free facility. For all Camp programs, parents must provide the snacks.

Parents that register for care are required to provide their child with a nut free, nutritious lunch. Below are guidelines on how to keep your child's lunches safe. If your children pack their own lunches, you should help them understand how to handle food safely and be aware of food allergies.

Allergies

Food allergies are one reason that you need to be very careful when packing lunches for your child, peanuts and tree nuts are not the most common food allergy, however they are the most dangerous as the oils from the nuts are very hard to clean up and can stay on surfaces for an extended period of time, making it more likely for a child that has an allergy to come into contact with the allergen.



Safety tips

Please do not pack any peanut or tree nut products in your child's lunch (includes peanut butter, Nutella, trail mix or granola bars with peanuts or tree nuts). Some alternatives to nut products can include hummus or apple butter.

Remind your child that it is not safe to trade or share food. Read the label of the products that you are purchasing for "May contain..." and please refrain from packing them in your child's lunch.

Guidelines around procedures for refrigeration or the use of ice packs with bag lunches

Food Poisoning

Food can go unrefrigerated for long periods of time in proper lunch containers, but it is extremely important to keep cold food cold and hot food hot. Food should never reach the temperature "danger zone" between 4° Celsius to 60° Celsius where bacteria can grow quickly and cause food poisoning. Perishable foods like mayonnaise, tuna salads, chicken salads, egg salads, milk products, cold cuts and other lunch meats are possible targets for the bacteria that cause food poisoning.



Safety tips

Pack 'em safely

- Wash hands before, during and after food preparation.
- Pack foods like deli meats, tuna, egg salad and milk with a small freezer pack in an insulated lunch box or bag.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- Place an ice pack in the lunch bag to keep the food inside cold. You can also freeze a juice box, small water bottle or yogurt snack and pack in the lunch bag, this will keep lunch cold and by lunchtime it will have melted enough to give your child a cold refreshing drink or snack.
- Prepare meat sandwiches and other cold foods the night before. Leave them in the refrigerator overnight to chill well.
- Make sure hot foods are steaming hot when they go in a thermos. Preheat thermos with boiling water.
- Use fresh ingredients or leftovers that are not more than one day old.
- Clean lunch boxes or bags, food containers and utensils every day.
- Food wrappings should not be reused as they can carry bacteria.

Get Top Marks For Healthy Lunches:

www.halton.ca/common/pages/UserFile.aspx?fileId=21114

Some food options that do not need to stay cold are: whole and dried fruits, cereals, breads, crackers and pickles.