

# "Lunches to Go"

## Cool and Hot Lunch Ideas



*Bringing variety & fun to packed lunches!*

**Allergy Aware:** This resource is not a list of "allergen aware" choices. See the Community Nutritionists Council - School Age Committee's handout titled "Allergy Aware School and Childcare Settings - Tips for parents whose children attend allergy aware settings" for information on how to pack allergen aware lunches. Also, check with the school's policies for guidance.

### Lunchbox Tips:

- ✓ Keep it simple and easy to eat but healthy and appetizing.
- ✓ Try to include foods from each of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide (Vegetables and Fruit, Grain Products, Milk and Alternatives and Meat and Alternatives)
- ✓ Kids love to eat what they create. Let your child choose from a healthy list of choices to create his or her own lunch.
- ✓ Speed-up the process by cutting extra veggies when you're preparing dinner or by making extra at meals to use as 'Re-Runs' for lunches the following day.
- ✓ On a cold day, a small thermos of soup, pasta, or other hot item can be satisfying.
- ✓ Freeze yogurt tubes and juice boxes. This will keep them cool until your child is ready to eat.
- ✓ A child's taste seems to change on a whim, try new things regularly and don't be afraid to try them again and again. It can take many exposures to new foods before children learn to like them.

### Wrap or Pita Pocket Combos

(moisten with plain yogurt mixed with salad dressing)

- Hard cooked egg, chopped cucumber, onion
- Chicken chunks, sliced seedless grapes
- Turkey or marinated cooked tofu chunks, grated carrot, shredded lettuce
- Salmon or tuna or cooked fish, red and green pepper slices
- Ricotta cheese, fruit
- Chopped ham, pineapple
- Hummus (tahini and ground chickpea dip), vegetables
- Shredded cheese, sliced cucumber
- Cheese, lettuce, tomato (wrapped separately)
- Instead of a tortilla, try a "lettuce leaf" wrap with any of the above combos

### Instead of Sandwiches

- Whole grain pancakes or waffles with fruit and yogurt
- Build your own pizza with English muffin or pita, tomato sauce, toppings and grated cheese
- Falafel, whole wheat pita, veggies
- Pasta salad, milk, fruit
- Hard cooked egg, whole grain crackers, red pepper strips
- Soft taco with bean dip, veggies
- Unsweetened dry cereal with milk or yogurt and fresh fruit
- Homemade whole grain muffins:
  - Banana bran muffin and cheese
  - Oatmeal carrot muffin and cottage cheese
  - Cornmeal muffin with BBQ chicken or chili
  - Bran muffin with yogurt and veggie sticks



### A Change from Bread...

Choose whole wheat or whole grain:

- Tortillas, flat bread
- English muffins
- Bran or oatmeal muffins
- Rice cakes, crackers
- Melba toast, bread sticks
- Chapatti or roti

### Dunk a Lunch

Finger food and dunking are always fun! Try these combinations for a healthy choice:

- Hummus, bean or cottage cheese dip served with assorted veggies and pita bread cut into triangles
- Fresh cut fruit and yogurt
- French toast with yogurt or applesauce
- Whole grain bread sticks with fresh tomato salsa and guacamole

## More Lunch Ideas...

### Follow the Milky Way...

- Carrot, celery or bread stick wrapped in cheese
- Cored apple filled with cheese chunks
- Finely grated cheese rolled into small balls
- Chilled milk or fortified soy drink
- Milk-based pudding
- Yogurt parfait: Layer plain yogurt, fruit and granola or a high fibre cereal



### Pack a Safe Lunch

- Use clean kitchen equipment to prepare lunches
- Refrigerate lunches that are prepared ahead of time
- Use an insulated bag with a freezer pack or chilled thermos to keep food cool. Chill milk or freeze drinking water or juice in plastic containers to keep food cool.
- Use a wide mouth thermos to keep hot food hot. Pre-heat the thermos with hot water before filling.
- Wash all vegetables thoroughly, even those in packages labelled "pre-washed".
- Wash lunch containers every night to keep bacteria from growing and clean them with baking soda once a week to get rid of odours.
- Don't reuse plastic bags - they can hold bacteria.

### Cold Re-runs

- Left over pizza
- Kabobs (e.g. meat or chicken, cheese, fruit, veggies)
- Burrito with refried beans, cheese, tomato
- Whole wheat steamed Asian bun
- Homemade baked samosas,
- Vietnamese salad rolls
- Chicken drumstick

### Hot Re-runs

- Stew
- Curry
- Chili
- Casserole
- Stir fried vegetables with tofu
- Perogies/pot stickers
- Spaghetti and meatballs
- Macaroni and cheese
- Baked beans
- Soup or chowder



### Versatile Veggies & Fast Fresh Fruits

- Choose in season produce when possible
- Freeze summer fruits to enjoy all year round
- Try a fruit smoothie served in a thermos

Offer a variety of different choices over the week such as:

Cauliflowerettes, broccoflower trees  
Baby corn, fresh sweet radishes  
Pepper strips (yellow, green, red, orange)  
Turnip or zucchini sticks  
Peas in a pod or snow pea pods  
Cherry tomatoes  
Melon balls, cherries, berries  
Kiwi, pears, peaches  
Papaya, mango



### Recipes

#### Bean Dip

Mix together:

1 small can (398 mL or 14 oz) refried beans  
1/3 cup (75 mL) yogurt  
2 green onions, chopped  
2 tbsp (25 mL) cilantro or parsley, chopped  
1/2 tsp (2 mL) each cumin & chili powder  
1 clove garlic chopped or 1/8 tsp (0.5 mL) garlic powder (optional)

#### Fruit Smoothie

In a blender mix equal parts 100% fruit juice, milk or fortified soy drink, frozen fruit and yogurt or soft tofu. Blend until smooth.

#### Cottage Cheese Dip or Spread

Mix grated cheddar, parmesan and cottage cheese with plain yogurt

### Little Extras: Non-food treats are special and long lasting...

Special napkin or straw  
Sticker, picture  
Funny joke, poem or other note

### For more information:

Dial-A-Dietitian:

604-732-9191 (Greater Vancouver), 1-800-667-3438 (toll free)

Dietitians of Canada fact sheets and resources: [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)