

Healthy Eating Tips
From the
PEI Healthy Eating Alliance
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September

Well, summer is over and it's back to school time and packing lunches! Need some ideas? The Healthy Eating Alliance (HEA) will once again be providing some helpful tips through your school newsletter to help you with this challenging task!

Packing Healthy Lunches

It's that time of year when lunches have to be made and we scramble for some new ideas that are nutritious and easy to prepare. Here are some tips for packing healthy lunches:

- Get kids involved in planning and preparing lunches. They are more likely to eat them.
- Go for color and variety! When planning your child's lunch, include 3 of the 4 food groups — fruits and vegetables, grain products, milk products, and meat and meat alternatives.
- Read food labels. Limit desserts or treats in lunches that are high in sugar as these foods can cause tooth decay. Any ingredient that ends in 'ose' such as sucrose or glucose, is a sugar. For example, many packaged fruit rolls/ fruit snacks contain little fruit but lots of sugar.
- Crunchy vegetables and fruit or a piece of cheese are great additions to a lunch and will help clean and protect kids teeth.
- Kids love dessert! Add some homemade desserts like oatmeal cookies or banana bread. Try to use ½ whole wheat flour to increase fibre. If you are purchasing dessert, try fig newtons, lower fat cookies, and granola bars.
- Add a fruit serving to the lunch by packing juice containers.

Here's a sample menu that includes all four groups:

Chicken and Pineapple Sandwich — Chop up left-over cooked chicken and mix with crushed pineapple and a little bit of low-fat mayonnaise. Make a sandwich with whole grain bread, pita or bagel. For variety, add lettuce, tomato or sprouts to the sandwich.

Also include an apple for a snack and some milk, and your child will have a healthy and balanced lunch.

October

Packing Healthy Lunches

Looking for some more ideas on packing healthy lunches? Try these:

- Tuna salad with sliced apples or celery, or egg salad with grated carrot or green pepper make delicious sandwiches
- Hot soups, stews or chili packed in a thermos
- Cheese strings or shredded cheese with pretzels, Cheerios or low-fat crackers
- Left over pizza makes a satisfying lunch
- Make a healthy trail mix with nuts and dried fruits like raisins, apricots, bananas, figs, and other fruits.

Some schools have peanut-free policies. Check with your child's school to find out if there are any such food restrictions. ***Here's an idea that is filled with fibre, and fun too.....***

Halloween Pumpkin Seeds

When you're making Jack-O-Lanterns or cooking with fresh pumpkins, don't throw out the seeds. Roasted pumpkin seeds make great snacks that are rich in fibre, Iron, phosphorus and Vitamin A. Fibre helps keep the digestive system healthy and promotes regularity.

Preheat your oven to 300 degrees F. Clean the strings and pulp from the seeds. Place the seeds on a lightly greased cookie pan, sprinkle with a little bit of salt, and bake til golden brown, about 45 minutes. Other variations include sprinkling with garlic powder, cayenne pepper or seasoning salt. Your kids will love eating their Halloween seeds!

November

Strive for Five To Ten!

Fruits and vegetables are important foods for vitamins, minerals and fibre. Canada's Food Guide says we should eat 5-10 portions of fruits and vegetables each day. That may sound like a lot, but it's easier than you think. For example, here are some examples of one fruit or vegetable portion:

- one medium sized apple or an orange
- ½ cup of 100% fruit juice
- ½ cup raw or cooked vegetables such as carrots, red peppers or green peppers
- 1 cup green salad

Here are some ways that you can easily add these portions to your family's daily meals.

- Have a glass of 100% juice at breakfast.
- Put some fresh or canned fruit on cereal.
- Pack a piece of fruit in lunches.
- Scoop some berries on ice cream.
- Add vegetables to spaghetti sauce, chili, soup, or cooked rice, such as carrots or peppers or peas.
- Add vegetables to potatoes eg. broccoli to baked potato.
- Keep a bowl of washed fruit on the counter for a quick and handy snack
- Keep a tempting fruit salad or cut-up vegetables in the refrigerator at eye level and easy to reach.

Try this delicious vegetable soup recipe.

Lentil Vegetable Soup

1 tbsp vegetable oil
5 cups shredded cabbage
2 cups shredded carrot
1 cup chopped onion
3 cups cubed turnip or rutabaga
2 cups chopped celery
1 cup red lentils, washed
2 large cloves of garlic, minced
2 bay leaves
1 tsp dried marjoram
½ to 1 tsp chili powder
3 cups beef broth
1/3 cup tomato paste
Salt and pepper to taste
Low-fat plain yogurt

In a large pot, heat oil on medium-low heat. Add cabbage, carrot, and onion and cook for 15 minutes. Stir occasionally. Add turnip, celery, lentils, garlic, seasonings, beef broth and tomato paste. Cover and cook for about 1 ½ hours or until vegetables and lentils are tender. Stir occasionally. Taste and add salt and pepper as desired. Top each serving with 1 tbsp yogurt.

Recipe from 'Choice Menus' by M Hollands and M. Howard. Canadian Diabetes Association, 1993.

December

Variety for Vitality!

You've probably heard many times that we need to eat a variety of foods to keep healthy. In fact, we need over 40 vitamins and minerals every day for good health. Since there is no single food that contains all the nutrients we need, it is important to balance our daily choices.

How can you encourage a variety of foods for your family? Here are some tips:

- Go for color! Offer a variety of foods from the four food groups and foods with different colors and textures.
- Keep cut up raw vegetables in the refrigerator with healthy dips such as low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt.
- Encourage variety by letting children pick out a new fruit, vegetable, or pasta, rice or grain at the grocery store.
- Eat well yourself - show that you enjoy eating healthy foods by drinking milk and eating a variety of foods from the four food groups.

Holiday Breakfast

Merry Christmas! The holiday season is upon us and soon the children will be on Christmas vacation. Make the holiday mornings a special family time with these nutritious pancakes.

Oatmeal Pancakes

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup oatmeal
2 teaspoon. baking powder
1/4 cup frozen apple juice concentrate
1 1/2 cups milk
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla
applesauce (optional)

Mix ingredients together and cook over medium heat in non-stick or lightly oiled pan or griddle until golden brown. Top with applesauce or maple syrup.

January

Happy New Year!

The holiday season is always filled with many temptations to eat sweets and treats. Now that the season has passed, many of us are ready to turn over a new leaf and get back to our regular healthy eating regime.

Growing children often need more food energy than they can easily eat at a single meal. Providing nutritious snacks can provide the nutrients they need to grow, play and learn. Remember to include a variety of different types of snacks to have a balanced diet.

- Include 2 out of the 4 food groups for a healthy snack
- Offer easy to make foods that kids love, such as cereal with milk, pretzels and string cheese and fresh fruit and fresh vegetables with dip.
- Make healthy snacks easy and convenient for kids e.g. apples, grapes, juice boxes, cheese and crackers, homemade frozen juice pops, or low-fat popcorn.

Here's a healthy snack idea sure to make your child happy.

Fruity Arrowroot Cookies

Spread cream cheese on an arrowroot cookie and place a thinly sliced piece of apple or fruit on top of the cream. Put another cookie on top and eat like a sandwich. For an even healthier option, blend some vegetables such as carrots or tomatoes with the cream cheese.

This recipe idea were submitted by a reader of www.canadianparents.com

February

Healthy Snacks

Without snacks it is difficult for children to meet many of their nutrient needs to fuel their growing bodies. Unfortunately, many children often choose high calorie, low-nutrient snacks instead of more nutritious foods. Here are some easy to make snacks that are popular with kids:

- Offer peanut butter on whole wheat crackers and a glass of ice cold milk
- Try sliced peaches, bananas, or other fruit topped with milk or a spoonful of yogurt.
- Keep healthy snack choices up front in your cupboard and refrigerator. Cut up vegetables can be served with low-fat dressing or yogurt.

Here's a recipe for some healthy crunchy granola.

Crunchy Granola

3 cups regular oatmeal
2 tsp cinnamon
1 cup wheat germ
½ tsp. salt
½ cup shredded coconut
1/4 cup sesame seeds
3/4 cup honey
1/4 cup vegetable oil
2 tsp. vanilla

Mix dry ingredients in a large bowl. Mix liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix. Put mixture into an electric frying pan set at medium heat. Stir for 5 minutes, or until oatmeal turns golden. Cool. Store in a glass jar or plastic container.

Recipe from the Ontario Milk Marketing Board.

March

Go Big on Breakfast!

Breakfast skipping is a problem in PEI among school children. A recent survey in PEI found that 10% of elementary school students are not eating breakfast on a daily basis. By high school, 66% of PEI students are not eating breakfast. Breakfast is an important meal especially for growing children. After a long night's sleep, the body's energy stores are running low and eating a good breakfast will provide children's bodies with the fuel and nutrients they need to grow, play, and learn. Kids that eat breakfast are more likely to get the daily recommended amounts of the nutrients they need. Those who skip breakfast have shorter attention spans and do poorly on tasks requiring concentration.

Try these ideas to help your child get the best start to the day:

- Aim for at least three of the four food groups at breakfast.
- Add apple or banana chunks or berries to cold cereal, oatmeal, or yogurt e.g. blueberries are nutritious and delicious!
- Serve fruit or vegetable juice with breakfast and send kids off to school with an apple to eat on the way.
- Whole wheat toast with peanut butter and sliced banana with some milk makes a quick and nutritious breakfast.
- If time is a problem in the morning, try getting up 15 minutes earlier or pack a breakfast to take on the bus. Some schools have school breakfast programs as well.

Here's a delicious and nutritious pita recipe with a Mexican flavour.

Breakfast Egg Pitas

½ tsp. margarine or butter
1 tsp. green onion, chopped
2 large mushrooms, sliced
4 eggs, beaten
2 tbsp. shredded part-skim mozzarella or light cheddar cheese
1/4 tsp. dry mustard
1/4 tsp. dillweed
Pinch of salt and pepper
2 - 6 - inch whole wheat pita bread rounds, split in half
4 leaves of lettuce
4 tsp. Mexican salsa

In a non-stick skillet, melt margarine on medium heat. Add onion and mushrooms and cook for 2 minutes. Combine eggs, cheese, and seasonings. Add to skillet. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 3 to 4 minutes or until eggs are set and cheese is melted. Line pita halves with lettuce leaves. Divide cooked egg among four pita halves. Top each pita with 1 tsp salsa.

Recipe from 'Choice Menus' by M. Hollands and M. Howard. Canadian Diabetes Association, 1993.

April

What's in a Serving?

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating is a great guide that provides us with information about the types of foods and number of servings we need to keep healthy.

Ever been confused about serving sizes? Its easy. Try this matching game to see if you can match the correct amounts to the diagrams. Draw a line to the correct answer.

Serving of meat, poultry, fish	half a baseball (or size of small fist)
Serving of fruit, vegetables, pasta or rice	deck of cards
Serving milk products	
1 ounce of cheese	small hand holding a tennis ball
Serving of chopped greens	size of a thumb

(Answers: serving of meat, fish or poultry = deck of cards; serving of fruit, vegetables, pasta or rice(½ cup) = half a baseball; serving of milk products , one ounce of cheese = size of a thumb; serving of chopped greens = small hand holding a tennis ball)

Have a serving of tasty Chili. Here is a great recipe.

Chili Con Carne

1 lb lean ground beef
1 cup chopped onion
1 clove garlic, crushed
3 cups finely shredded cabbage
2 cups thinly sliced celery
½ cup chopped green pepper
1 -28 ounce can tomatoes
1- 7.5 ounce tomato sauce
1- 19 ounce can kidney beans, drained
1 tbsp chili powder
1 tsp. dried oregano
1 tsp. salt
1/4 tsp hot pepper sauce

In large nonstick skillet, cook beef over medium-high heat until brown and crumbly. Drain off fat. Add onion and garlic. Cook 5 minutes. Add cabbage, celery, green pepper, tomatoes with juice, tomato sauce, kidney beans, and seasonings. Cover and simmer over medium-low heat for 45 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Stir occasionally.

Recipe from 'Choice Menus' by M. Hollands and M. Howard. Canadian Diabetes Association, 1993.

May

Beneficial Beverages!

We all need to drink a lot of fluids to keep our bodies healthy. Children need about 8-12 cups of

fluids each day. Healthy beverages include water, milk or 100% juice. Over the past number of years, milk intake has declined while pop intake has increased. Pop is a source of calories and little else in the way of nutrients. What is the best way to convince kids to make better choices? Here are some tips:

- Keep healthy beverages on hand. Kids will consume whatever you have in the house.
- Keep water readily accessible - keep a cold pitcher in the refrigerator.
- Serve milk at mealtimes. If your children will not drink white milk, try chocolate milk.
- For an after-school snack, make milk shakes or yogurt smoothies.
- Serve your kids 100% juice. Fruit drink, juice beverage, juice cocktail means the product contains less than 100% juice. Read labels carefully. Some may contain as little as 10% juice, and have added sugar and/or other sweeteners.
- Resist the urge to say yes to super sized pop drinks offered in restaurants and turn down free refills. The economic value does not translate into nutritional value.
- It is best not to make pop and other sweetened beverages forbidden. Research tells us that over-restricting certain choices may make them more desirable to children. Instead, let them have them occasionally. Just set a limit on how much and how often they can consume them.

Here's a beverage that your kids are sure to enjoy!

Polar Bear Special

250 ml Chocolate Milk (1 cup)

1 Banana

3 Strawberries

Half-peel a banana. Put it on waxed paper and freeze it for approximately 30 minutes. Take the frozen banana out and peel completely. In a blender, combine the frozen banana (you may want to cut the banana into segments) with the chocolate milk. Top with a fresh strawberry. Makes 3 - 125 ml (½ cup) servings.

This recipe idea was submitted by the Milk~Dairy Farmers of Ontario www.canadianparents.com

June

Eating with the Family

Eating together as a family is a great way to enjoy food and to catch up on the days activities. It can also be a good way to encourage healthy eating among your children and help ensure that they get the nutrients they need to grow, develop and learn. Research indicates that family meals are associated with higher quality diets and better choices.

Enjoy these recipes and have a happy summer!!

Homemade Popsicles

For a healthy after school snack, substitute store bought popsicles for one of these healthier alternatives. Your child will enjoy making them and eating them too! If you don't have popsicle molds, just use a regular ice-cube tray.

Peachsicles

Canned peaches with some of their juice
A little honey
Blend together and freeze.

Yogurt Popsicles

2 cups plain yogurt
1 frozen juice, grape or orange (Use 100% real fruit juice for the healthiest choice.)
1 ½ cups milk
Partially thaw the juice, mix all ingredients and freeze.

Creamsicles

1 ½ cups orange juice (Use 100% real fruit juice for the healthiest choice.)
2 cups non-fat vanilla yogurt
A little honey
Blend together and freeze.

Strawberry Pops

Frozen strawberries (thawed a bit)
Plain yogurt
A little honey
1 tsp. vanilla

These recipe ideas were submitted by readers of www.canadianparents.com

Healthy Strawberry Shortcake

Summertime will soon be here, and with it strawberry season! But instead of piling your strawberries high with whipped cream, try this low fat version.

Cut up or puree 1 quart of strawberries and add 2 teaspoon of sugar.

Biscuit:

1 cup whole wheat flour
1 cup white flour
3 teaspoon. baking powder
½ teaspoon salt
4 tablespoon margarine
¾ cup of milk.

Put dry ingredients in a bowl, blend by stirring and then add margarine and with a fork cut in the margarine, until pea sized. Add milk. Mix lightly and knead for about 10 or 20 strokes on a floured board. Then cut as for biscuits and bake at 450F for about 12 minutes. To serve cut biscuit in half and pour a few tablespoon of strawberry mix over it. Add a tablespoon or two of fruited yogurt as topping. Enjoy. Yummy, easy and healthy!