

Healthy Eating Tips from the Healthy Eating Alliance for 2004/2005



September

Packing Healthy Lunches

Summer time is over for another year. It's now time for kids to go back to school. Start the school year off right with healthy and creative lunch ideas. Here are some helpful tips from the Healthy Eating Alliance.

- ⇒ Make sure those drink boxes say 100% fruit juice NOT drink. If it's a punch, cocktail, drink or blend it has a lot more sugar and less nutrients than a juice.
- ⇒ Sports drinks are for athletes who exercise a lot, not for children. They contain a lot of sugar and salt, as well as unneeded calories.
- ⇒ Freeze five juice boxes on Sunday night. Pack one each day and they will keep lunches cold and will be refreshing at lunchtime.
- ⇒ Get kids involved in packing their lunch. They are the ones who are going to eat it so make sure to get their input.
- ⇒ Pack foods they like. Things like cereal, raw or cooked vegetables, eggs or anything that is nutritious and they like, try to find a way to put it in their lunch.

This Trail Mix is an excellent after school snack (adapted from a recipe in the Dietitians of Canada Great Food Fast cookbook). You can make it your own by throwing in whatever you have around the house or family favourites. Kids should brush their teeth after eating this because dried fruit can stick to teeth and cause dental caries.

Trail Mix

- ½ cup (125ml) Yogurt covered raisins
- ½ cup (125ml) Nuts (soy nuts, peanuts, walnuts, pecans) **caution around nut allergies**
- 1 cup (250ml) Pretzels
- 1½ cups (375ml) Dried fruit (pineapple, cranberries, apple, apricots, banana)
- 4 cups (1L) Cereal (cheerios, chex, shreddies, life, corn squares)
- ¼ cup (50ml) Sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup (50ml) Mini M&M's

Mix ingredients together and store in a airtight container to keep fresh.

October

Trying New Foods

We're all guilty of getting into a rut with our food choices. Tuna sandwich for lunch again? By eating the same foods all the time means we may be missing out on certain nutrients - this is true for both children and adults. That's why one of the key messages of Canada's Food Guide is to eat a variety of foods from all four food groups. Here are some ways to encourage variety by introducing new foods to children.

Introducing New Foods

- ⇒ Let children help pick out foods at the grocery store or local market. If they choose the foods they will be more likely to eat them.
- ⇒ Let children help prepare meals and snacks.
- ⇒ Be a good role model! Adults should eat the same foods that they are encouraging children to try.
- ⇒ Make trying new foods a regular thing for the whole family - every Tuesday is "New Food" day.
- ⇒ Serve only one new food at a time.
- ⇒ Serve new foods with familiar foods or with sauces and dips (e.g. cauliflower with ranch dip).
- ⇒ Make an adventure out of exploring where foods come from - visit an apple orchard, go berry picking or join a community garden project.
- ⇒ Repeat exposure is key! A child may need to be exposed to a new food up to 15 times before accepting it.

Hummus is a low-fat, high-fibre dip. You can buy it already prepared, but this is a really simple recipe that the whole family will love. Tahini can be found in major grocery stores and stores that specialize in bulk products. This recipe is from Dietitians of Canada Cookbook *Great Food Fast*.

Hummus Dip (Makes 2 cups)

- ⇒ 19oz (540ml) can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ⇒ 2 tbsp (25ml) tahini (sesame paste)
- ⇒ 3 tbsp (45ml) lemon juice
- ⇒ ½ tsp (2ml) salt
- ⇒ 2 cloves garlic
- ⇒ white part of 1 green onion
- ⇒ ¼ cup (50ml) boiling water

Blend until smooth and top with chopped green part of green onion.
Serve with veggies or pita wedges.

November

5 to 10 a Day During the Winter Months

Winter is quickly approaching. It can be challenging to get affordable, good quality, fresh vegetables and fruit during the winter months. Consider these tips to help you and your family get your 5 to 10 servings a day.

- ⇒ Buy fresh vegetables and fruit when they are in season and then freeze or bottle them for the winter months.
- ⇒ Buy frozen vegetables and fruit without any added sauces or sugar. In terms of nutrient value, frozen vegetables and fruit are almost identical to fresh vegetables and fruit.
- ⇒ Check out local farm markets that stay open during the winter months. The vegetables and fruit available are reasonably priced and helps to keep business local.
- ⇒ Watch the flyers for vegetables and fruit that are on special in a supermarket.
- ⇒ Buy frozen 100% juices.
- ⇒ Choose canned fruit packed in juice.
- ⇒ Take advantage of schools, sports teams, and other organizations that sell citrus fruit for fundraisers. You'll be supporting a great cause while getting excellent quality fresh fruit.

Sweet potatoes are packed with nutrients and fibre. White potatoes can also be used in this recipe, which is from [The Ultimate Healthy Eating Plan](#).

Oven Roasted Sweet Potatoes (Serves 4)

- 2 sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced into ¼ inch coins
- 1½ tbsp (22ml) vegetable oil
- 1 tsp (5ml) of onion powder
- 1 tsp (5ml) of garlic powder
- 1 tsp (5ml) of paprika
- ¼ tsp (1ml) cumin (or chili powder)

Preheat oven to 425°F/220°C. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or foil. Combine oil and spices and toss the sweet potatoes in the oil mixture. Spread sweet potatoes out in the prepared sheet. Roast for 15 minutes. Flip over. Continue roasting for another 15 minutes or until cooked through.

December

Holiday Eating

During the holiday season sweets and treats are often at hand. Here are some healthy holiday eating tips to get you and your family through the holiday season.

Healthy Holiday Eating Tips

- ⇒ Plan several healthy meals and have healthy snacks ready to grab.
- ⇒ Include daily physical activity as part of holiday gatherings (skiing, skating, sledding, carolling).
- ⇒ Instead of denying yourself during the holiday season, have smaller portion of your favourite dish or dessert.
- ⇒ Balance high fat, high calorie choices with lower calorie choices.
- ⇒ Have a snack before going out shopping or to a party.

Recipe Substitutions

- ⇒ Use skim milk or 1% milk instead of whole milk.
- ⇒ Use evaporated skim milk instead of heavy cream.
- ⇒ Use yogurt instead of sour cream.
- ⇒ Use 2 egg whites instead of 1 whole egg.
- ⇒ Use applesauce instead of oil in baking recipes.

Nothing sets the mood for holiday celebrations like the smell of freshly baked ginger cookies. The recipe is from the [All Recipes website \(www.allrecipes.com\)](http://www.allrecipes.com).

Big Soft Ginger Cookies (Makes 24)

- 2½ cups (550ml) flour
- 2 tsp (10ml) ground ginger
- 1 tsp (5ml) baking soda
- ¾ tsp (3ml) ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp (2.5ml) ground cloves
- ¼ tsp (1ml) salt
- ¾ cup (175ml) margarine, softened
- 1 cup (250ml) white sugar
- 1 egg
- 1tbsp (15ml) water
- ¼ cup (50ml) molasses
- 2 tbsp (25ml) white sugar

Preheat oven to 350°F/175°C. Sift together flour, ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, cloves, and salt; set aside. In a large bowl cream together the margarine and 1 cup white sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in the egg, then stir in the water and molasses. Gradually stir the flour mixture into the molasses mixture. Shape dough into walnut sized balls and roll in the remaining sugar. Place cookies 2 inches apart onto an ungreased cookie sheet, and flatten slightly. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes. Allow cookies to cook on baking sheet for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

January

Eating Out

Getting children to make healthy choices while eating out can be challenging. Children's special menus are often filled with high fat, high sugar foods. However, restaurants are starting to introduce more and more healthy choices to their menus. Here are some ways to make healthier choices when eating out with your children.

- ⇒ Choose restaurants that provide healthier options on their menu (e.g. grilled chicken breasts, veggie burgers, side salads, baked potatoes, sandwiches with lean meats, milk, juice and lots of veggies).
- ⇒ Select foods that are baked, broiled, steamed or barbequed.
- ⇒ Ask for sauces on the side, they may be a high source of fat.
- ⇒ Try lower calorie salad dressings and go sparingly.
- ⇒ Ask if the kid's meal can come with rice, salad or potato instead of the fries.
- ⇒ Drink water, 100% juice, or milk instead of pop.
- ⇒ Watch portion sizes - avoid the jumbo size options.
- ⇒ Added bacon, cheese, mayonnaise and special sauces greatly increase the fat content of the food item.
- ⇒ Chicken and fish choices that are breaded and deep fried have higher fat content than most hamburgers.
- ⇒ Also, children may choose a certain restaurant for reasons other than the food served - they may be more interested in the play area. If this is the case you may only want to stop for a snack rather than a high fat meal that the child isn't interested in eating.

These chicken burgers are better than anything you'll find at a restaurant. The recipe is from [The Ultimate Healthy Eating Plan](#).

Chicken Burgers (Makes 6)

- 2 slices whole-wheat bread
- ¼ cup (50ml) ketchup
- 2 tbsp (25ml) vinegar
- 1 tbsp (15ml) brown sugar
- ¼ tsp (1ml) cayenne pepper
- 1 onion - minced
- 1 egg
- 1 lb (450g) lean ground chicken

Preheat barbeque or fry pan. Use food processor to make bread into crumbs. Mix crumbs and remaining ingredients together in large bowl. Shape into 6 burgers. Grill until cooked through. Serve on whole-wheat hamburger buns.

February

The Most Important Meal of the Day!!

We've all heard that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Studies have shown that children who eat breakfast are better able to concentrate and have less behaviour issues. They also have less trips to the nurse's office and are more likely to meet their daily nutrient needs.

Here are some quick, nutritious breakfast ideas to send our students off smiling.

- ☞ Toasted waffles with strawberries or peanut butter and bananas.
- ☞ Fruit smoothie (milk, yogurt, fruit and ice in a blender).
- ☞ Muffins - try to choose those that are lower in fat and higher in fibre.
- ☞ Make it a sandwich. You can put anything between two pieces of whole wheat bread. Try eggs with a slice of ham and some ketchup.
- ☞ Add bananas, blueberries, strawberries or raisins to cereal.
- ☞ Have it on hand. Prepare some breakfast food in advance. Have some pancake batter in the fridge ready to go in the mornings. Make a batch of muffins and keep them in the freezer ready to pop in the microwave.
- ☞ Don't forget to add a glass of milk or 100% juice to wash it all down with.

Here's a great muffin recipe. A good idea is to make a double batch of muffins so that you can freeze some for later.

Apple Crunch Muffins (Makes 12)

- 1½ cups (375ml) flour, sifted
- ½ cup (125ml) sugar
- 2 tsp (10ml) baking powder
- ½ tsp (2ml) salt
- 1½ tsp (7ml) ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup (50ml) vegetable oil
- 1 large egg, slightly beaten
- ½ cup (125ml) milk
- 1 cup (250ml) chopped tart apples, cored and grated

Topping

- ¼ cup (50ml) brown sugar
- ¼ cup (50ml) chopped pecans
- ½ tsp (2ml) ground cinnamon

For *topping*, mix sugar, pecans, and cinnamon together and set aside. For *muffins*, sift together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon into mixing bowl. Combine oil, egg and milk. Add to dry ingredients all at once, stirring just enough to moisten. Stir in apples. Spoon batter into paper-lined muffin cups, filling each about 2/3 full. Sprinkle with topping. Bake in preheated oven (375°F/190°C) for 25 minutes or until golden brown.

March

Fabulous Fibre

March is Nutrition Month! This year the focus is on healthy weights. Physical activity and healthy eating are both important for maintaining healthy weights in children and adults. Eating fibre-rich foods is an important part of a balanced diet. A high-fibre diet can help reduce the risk of developing high cholesterol, diabetes, heart disease and colon cancer. It can also help to maintain a healthy weight. It is important for both children and adults to get plenty of fibre in their diets. By establishing healthy eating patterns as children they are more likely to continue them into adulthood.

What foods contain fibre?

- Vegetables (broccoli, carrots, peas, celery, corn, potatoes)
- Fruit (apples, pears, raisins, oranges, bananas, strawberries)
- Grain Products - especially "whole grains" (brown rice, whole wheat pasta, whole wheat bread, whole wheat crackers, granola, bran, oatmeal)
- Meat and Alternatives (beans, lentils)

Simple ideas to increase fibre intake...

- ⇒ Eat the skins on vegetables and fruit; they are a good source of fibre.
- ⇒ Eat more whole vegetables and fruit instead of 100% juices.
- ⇒ Eat whole grain products instead of white grain products.
- ⇒ Add granola to yogurt.
- ⇒ Sprinkle bran on top of cereal.
- ⇒ Choose muffin recipes that contain wheat germ, bran, oatmeal or flax seeds.
- ⇒ Add bran cereal to meatloaf or meatballs.

This burrito recipe is super quick and easy. Try freezing them individually for your own version of fast food. The beans in this recipe can be pureed for a different texture. This recipe is from Dietitians of Canada Cookbook *Great Food Fast*.

Hurry-Up Fill-Me-Up Burritos (Makes 10)

- 1 cup (250ml) cooked rice
- 14oz (398ml) can kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup (250ml) corn, canned or frozen
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175ml) salsa
- 10 large (10 inch) flour tortillas, warmed
- 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups (300ml) shredded cheddar cheese

In a non-stick pan over medium heat, stir together rice, beans, corn, and salsa. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes or until warmed through. Divide mixture evenly between tortillas. Sprinkle with cheese. Roll up tortillas.

April

Milk Products for Life

Milk products are an excellent source of many important nutrients that work together to promote good health, including strong bones and teeth, for both children and adults. Canada's Food Guide recommends that children aged 4-9 get 2-3 servings of milk products daily and children aged 10-16 get 3-4 servings of milk products daily. Adults also need 2-3 servings daily.

What counts as a serving?

- ⇒ 1 cup (250ml) white or chocolate milk
- ⇒ 1 cup (250ml) soy milk (calcium fortified)
- ⇒ 2oz (50g) cheese (the size of a 1" cube)
- ⇒ ¾ cup (175 ml) yogurt
- ⇒ 1 cup (250ml) frozen yogurt

To add variety, consider other milk products or foods made with milk products, such as, ice milk, cottage cheese, pudding or milk-based soups (tomato, mushroom, chowder).

Does chocolate milk really count?

Yes! Chocolate milk has the same amount of calcium and vitamin D as white milk. Chocolate milk has one third more calories than white milk and the same amount of sugar as 100% fruit juice.

Try this refreshing smoothie recipe from [Dairy Farmers of Canada](#).

Banana Split Smoothie (Makes 3 cups)

- 1½ cups (375ml) chocolate milk
- 1 banana, peeled
- 1 cup (250ml) strawberries, washed and hulled
- 2-3 ice cubes

Place all ingredients in blender or food processor. Blend until smooth.

May

Water - The Champion of Beverages!

You may have heard that adults need 8 cups (2L) of fluid a day to promote good health. Fluids are just as important for children, but they only need between 2-4 cups (0.5-1L) per day. If children and adults don't consume enough fluids they may become dehydrated. Dehydration can cause many problems such as headaches and fatigue. Also, dehydrated children tend to have trouble concentrating in the classroom.

Some of the signs of early dehydration include irritable behaviour; flushed face; dry, warm skin; dark yellow urine; cramping of muscles; headaches; dizziness; and extreme thirst.

Simple Ways to Stay Hydrated

Many studies have shown that very few children are drinking enough fluid throughout the day. The best way to stay hydrated is to drink lots of water. It's the cheapest, most accessible fluid and is effective at replacing lost fluids. Here are some ideas to make sure children are getting enough fluids.

- Have children carry a clean water bottle in their bag, for easy access to water throughout the day.
- Remember beverages other than water can also keep us hydrated too (e.g. milk, chocolate milk, 100% vegetable or fruit juice). Soups, stews, and chowders are also a source of fluids. It is a good idea to restrict juice to no more than 1 serving (½ cup/125ml) a day.
- Many vegetables and fruits also contain a lot of water to keep us hydrated (e.g. apples, grapes, watermelon, oranges, green peppers, broccoli, lettuce).
- Place a container of water filled with ice and slices of orange or lemon in the fridge; it gives the water a new great taste.
- Use caution around sweetened fruit drinks, iced tea and pop. These drinks contain a lot of added sugar which results in extra calories that many people don't need. Some of these drinks can even contribute to dehydration rather than prevent it. Even those added vitamins don't make these beverages a healthy choice.
- Don't be fooled into thinking that children need sports drinks to re-hydrate if they are physically active. Only endurance athletes (such as marathon runners) need sports drinks. They contain added sugar and salt. Children who take part in physical activities are best re-hydrated with plain old H₂O.

June

Healthy Snacking

Children have small stomachs, which can make it difficult for them to meet all of their nutrient needs in three meals. Snacks are a great way to help fill in the gaps. Some popular snack foods such as chips, cookies, chocolate bars, candy, fruit chews, some granola bars, pop and fruit drinks offer little more than empty calories. When battling these less healthy snack choices it is very important to make healthy snacks the easy choice.

Tips on Healthy Snacking

- ⇒ Have a “snack spot” in the cupboard or fridge, where the child can find healthy snacks quickly and easily.
- ⇒ Let the child pick or prepare their own healthy snack, they will be more likely to eat it.
- ⇒ Schedule snacks between meals, so their appetite is not spoiled.

Healthy Snack Ideas

- ⇒ Cut cheese and sandwiches into fun shapes with cookie cutters (e.g. hearts, stars).
- ⇒ Make a mini pizza on an English muffin with veggies, cheese and tomato sauce.
- ⇒ Have cut-up fruit and vegetables readily available and serve with dip.
- ⇒ Freeze cube sized pieces of fruit! They make a great frozen treats (e.g. melons, watermelon, strawberries, grapes).
- ⇒ Freeze 100% real fruit juice in popsicle holders (e.g. orange juice).
- ⇒ Make muffins with different fillings (e.g. cream cheese, peanut butter, fruit) or make mini-muffins - the perfect size snack for little tummies!
- ⇒ Make a “snack on a string” (string ‘O’ shaped cereal, popcorn, pretzels, dried fruit).
- ⇒ Make shakes or smoothies from yogurt, milk and fruit.
- ⇒ Let children make kabob’s out of vegetables, fruit and cheese.

Try this easy frozen fruit pop recipe for an after school snack - it’s from www.freggietales.com.

Banana Fruit Pops (Makes 6-8)

- 4 bananas, cut into chunks
- 1&¼ cups (300ml) 100% fruit juice (pineapple, orange, cranberry, etc)

Blend bananas and juice together. Divide among 6-8 paper or plastic cups. Place in freezer and when partially frozen place a popsicle stick in the centre of each cup. Freeze until firm. Let stand for 5 minutes before removing cups and eating.

Extra

5 to 10 a Day for Health!

Children and adults need between 5 and 10 servings of vegetables and fruit everyday to stay healthy. Vegetables and fruit contain many vitamins, minerals and fibre that are needed for the body to work properly and to help prevent diseases from developing.

5 to 10 servings may sound like a lot, but what counts as a serving?

- ⇒ 1 medium sized piece of fruit (the size of a tennis ball)
- ⇒ ½ cup (125ml) of 100% juice
- ⇒ ½ cup (125ml) of raw or cooked vegetables or fruit
- ⇒ 1 cup (250ml) of salad
- ⇒ ¼ cup (50ml) dried fruit

It doesn't take long to add up, especially if you follow these tips!

- ⇒ Top cereal with fruit (e.g. strawberries, bananas, blueberries).
- ⇒ Add vegetables and fruit to muffins, cookies, stews, soup and casserole!
- ⇒ Serve vegetables and fruit with dip (e.g. broccoli and ranch dip, peaches and vanilla yogurt).
- ⇒ Drink 100% juice, but try to limit this to 1 serving per day.
- ⇒ Keep washed fruit in easy to reach areas.
- ⇒ Prepare snack-sized vegetables and store in fridge for easy snacking.
- ⇒ Keep a mix of dried fruit on hand. Dried fruit is an excellent way to get vitamins and minerals, but be careful as it is also high in calories and can stick to teeth.

Here's a new twist on an old favourite. This recipe is from [Dietitians of Canada Cookbook *Great Food Fast*](#). Try serving it with plain yogurt.

Apple Berry Crisp (Serves 4)

- 3 large baking apples, cored and thinly sliced
- 2 cups (500ml) mixed berries
- 1 tbsp (15ml) cornstarch
- 3 large shredded wheat-type biscuits, crumbled
- ½ cup (125ml) packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup (50ml) butter or margarine
- 1 tsp (5ml) ground cinnamon

In a small bowl combine apples, berries, and cornstarch. In another bowl combine remaining ingredients until crumbly. Set aside 1 cup (250ml). Toss remaining crumble mixture with fruit and place in a baking dish. Sprinkle remaining crumb mixture over top. Cover and bake in a preheated 375°F/190°C oven for 20 minutes. Remove cover and bake for 10 minutes longer or until apples are tender.

Extra

Safe Food Handling at Home

Food safety is as equally important in the home as it is in a restaurant or any other food service establishment. The food industry is responsible for ensuring food is safe when we buy our food, yet it is our responsibility to ensure that food remains safe by using safe food handling practises in the home. Food safety risks can occur in the home when there are: poor handling/preparation of foods, bacteria contamination of foods and poor storage and refrigeration of foods. Here are some ways to keep foods safe for you and your family.

Did you know...

- ⇒ Thawing food at room temperature is a risk for food borne illness.
- ⇒ Symptoms of food poisoning can take from 2 hours to a week to develop.
- ⇒ Cutting the mould off of food does not make it safe to eat.
- ⇒ Food that is contaminated may be colourless, odourless and tasteless.
- ⇒ Bacteria grows well in places that are damp (e.g. mops, sponges, dishcloths).

Food safety tips for packed lunches

- ⇒ Wash hands before preparing the lunch.
- ⇒ Clean and sanitize the working area where the lunch is being prepared.
- ⇒ If using a reusable lunch container or water bottle keep it clean and sanitized.
- ⇒ Wash all vegetables and fruit before packing them in a lunch.
- ⇒ Do not use meat, chicken, seafood, eggs, mayonnaise and dairy products if the lunch can not be refrigerated or kept cold with an insulated lunch box with an ice pack.
- ⇒ Keep lunch containers away from sunlight and direct heat.

Check out the Fight Bac! website (www.canfightbac.org) for more great info!

This homemade muesli mixture is a great breakfast for those on the run. The recipe is from Dietitians of Canada Cookbook *Great Food Fast*.

Muesli to Go (Serves 2)

- 1 cup (250ml) large-flake or 3-minute oats
- 1 cup (250ml) lower-fat yogurt
- ½ (125ml) milk
- 2 tbsp (25ml) liquid honey or maple syrup
- 1 cup (250ml) assorted berries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 large banana, sliced

Combine oats, yogurt, milk and honey; gently fold in berries and banana.

Extra

Sandwiches - Giving an Old Favourite a New Look

A sandwich is a great way to get three or four of the food groups in one. After years of eating the same sandwich it may be time for a new twist.

- ⇒ Instead of plain bread, try using wraps of different colors - purple, red or green. Bagels, pitas, English muffins, baguettes or herb breads can also add a new twist.
- ⇒ Mayonnaise and mustard aren't the only spreads allowed in sandwiches. Use a dill or vegetable cream cheese instead. Hummus also works nicely.
- ⇒ Try adding different veggies like shredded carrots, cucumber, mushrooms, red tipped lettuce, pepper rings, alfalfa sprouts or dill pickles.
- ⇒ Make sure those meats are lean or experiment with different flavoured tuna!
- ⇒ Now that you have a new school sandwich you gotta take care of it. Put the wrap, sandwich or pita in a plastic container so it doesn't become a pancake!

For an alternative to sandwiches, give this recipe a try. It's from [Dietitians of Canada Great Food Fast](#) cookbook.

Lunch Box Chili Rice and Beans

- 1 cup (250ml) cooked rice
- ¾ cup (175ml) canned kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup (125ml) frozen corn
- 1 medium tomato
- ¼ cup (50ml) diced green pepper
- 2 tbsp (25ml) finely chopped onion
- ¼ to ½ tsp (1 to 2ml) chili powder

Combine ingredients and stir until combined. To serve, eat cold or heat in microwave until hot.