



January 2007

Tips on Healthy Eating for Kids

Let's make the healthy choice the easy choice!

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The PEI Healthy Eating Alliance is here to help. Every month we will send Healthy Eating Tips to your school. Also, check out our newsletter. Both the monthly tip sheet and newsletter are full of practical advice about healthy eating.

Lunch Packing Tips

Packing lunches can be a trying experience. It is easy to fall into a grind and send convenient pre-packaged foods. Unfortunately, the foods promoted as “convenient” are often packed with fat, sugar, calories, and salt. Here are some tips on keeping the lunch packing experience fresh, interesting, and healthy.

- Planning ahead is one way to creating fresh ideas and increasing variety with lunches.
- Use Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating as a base for choosing foods that are rich in vitamins and minerals. Healthy lunches should include foods from 3 of the 4 food groups and healthy snacks should include foods from 2 of the 4 food groups.
- Avoid foods that are high in fat & sugar and low in vitamins and minerals (e.g. soft drinks, chips, candy).
- Food needs to be accessible for children—when they’re hungry they want food fast. Send food that is ready-to-eat. For example, send an orange that has already been peeled or a hard boiled egg that has been shelled.
- Use reusable lunch containers—we need to think about the health of our planet too.
- Pack lunches with a mini freezer pack or a frozen juice box (100% fruit juice is best) to keep food cool and reduce the risk of food spoilage.
- Involve children in the lunch packing experience— let them pick out their lunch bag, make a list with them of healthy foods they would like in their lunches, involve them in the grocery shopping trip, and get them to help prepare their lunch the night before.

Snacking Tips

Snacks are important for children because their stomachs are small and they need lots of nutrients and energy to meet the demands of their growing bodies. Healthy snacks can help a child meet their nutrition requirements. Schedule snacks between meals, at a time when the snack won’t spoil the child’s appetite for an upcoming meal. It helps if snacks are prepared ahead of time so they are easy for the child to access. One idea is to make a “snack spot” in the fridge or cupboard where children will know where to go to find a healthy snack. See the next page for ideas.



Remember: No food is forbidden; all foods can fit in a healthy diet. It is important to offer healthy choices more often and limit, but don't eliminate, less healthy choices.



Healthy Eating at Home

Healthy eating needs to be encouraged both during school and at home. Trying new foods is important because eating a variety of foods helps the body get all the vitamins and minerals needed. Here are some ideas to promote trying new, healthy foods with your family.

- ★ If children are allowed to help pick out new fruits, vegetables, and cheese at the grocery store/ farmers market they are more likely to eat these foods at home.



- ★ Use snack time as an opportunity to introduce a new food - let the child help prepare this new food
- ★ Try serving new foods when a child is hungry.
- ★ Serve new foods one at a time.

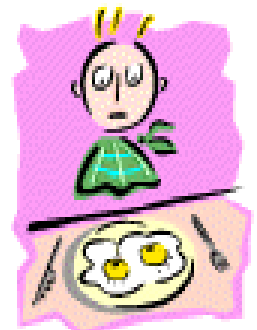


- ★ Serve new foods with more familiar, liked foods or serve with a familiar dip or sauce.



- ★ Introduce new foods on a regular basis. Make it a special night: 'Try a new food night'.

- ★ Forcing a child to try a new food doesn't usually work. Offer it on several occasions and place a small portion on the child's plate, but don't make a big deal if the child won't eat it. Don't expect the child to eat a new food if you aren't.



Adults are role models for the children when it comes to healthy eating, so think about what you're eating. Also, children will mimic older siblings and friends. One child's enthusiasm for healthy eating can be contagious.

Try not to use 'treat' foods as a reward for trying new healthy foods!



Snack Suggestions

These can also be used at school, but may be more practical for snacks prepared at home:

- ♥ make muffins with different fillings (e.g. cream cheese, jam, peanut butter, raisins, fruit) - use caution around nut allergies



- ♥ 'snack on a string' (string 'O' shaped cereal, popcorn, pretzels, dried fruit) or make a snack mix using similar combinations of dried cereal, pretzels, dried fruit, seeds, nuts, etc — again, use caution around nut allergies

- ♥ fruit kebabs

- ♥ fruit and cheese kebabs (such as grapes and cheddar)



- ♥ put some tuna, egg, or sandwich meat in a leaf of romaine lettuce and wrap it up for a wrap sandwich minus the bread

- ♥ use carrot sticks and broccoli florets to make trees (carrot sticks are the trunk and the broccoli florets are the leaves)



- ♥ frozen fruit cubes (cube cantaloupe, watermelon, pineapple, banana, or any of your other favourite fruits and spread on a cookie sheet to freeze; when frozen put in a plastic bag)

- ♥ shakes or smoothies made from fruit, milk, yogurt, ice, and/or fruit juice



- ♥ salsa with baked tortilla chips

- ♥ hummus and pita bread



Visit our website at
www.healthyeatingpei.ca for more
information on healthy eating .



This recipe was found at www.freggietales.com

Check out their website for other fun recipes and activities!

See below for other cool websites

Dole Foods Website. Fun kids section <http://www.dole.com/>

Canadian Egg Marketing Agency. Lots of recipes. <http://www.canadaegg.ca/english/>

Milk Maritime. Recipes and activities. <http://www.justaddmilk.ca/>

Canadian Cancer Society. Variety of information and recipes. <http://www.5to10aday.com/>

Child Care Nutrition Inc. Website is a bit difficult to navigate. Recipes found under "Resource Center" and "Foods and Nutrition." <http://www.childcarenutrition.com/>

National Network for Family Resiliency. Healthy meals on a budget. <http://www.nnfr.org/curriculum/topics/food.html>

Crunchy Vegetable Burrito Banditos

Ingredients:

- * 1/2 cup shredded carrots
- * 1/2 cup chopped broccoli
- * 1/2 cup chopped cauliflower
- * 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- * 4 oz shredded Cheddar cheese
- * 1/4 cup ranch salad dressing
- * 1/2 tsp chili powder
- * 4 7" flour tortillas
- * 1 cup shredded iceberg lettuce

Directions:

1. In a mixing bowl, combine carrots, broccoli, cauliflower and onions with cheese, dressing and chili powder.
2. Lay tortillas flat on the counter and spoon about 1/2 cup vegetable mixture and 1/4 cup of lettuce down the center. Wrap each tortilla around the vegetable mixture.

Makes 4 servings.


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