



Home Links

Kindergarten Newsletter

Nutrition Matters



Healthy Eating

Children in Kindergarten can begin to understand the relationship between healthy eating and healthy living. Simply stated, food gives us energy to learn, work and play. Our bodies need good food to keep working and growing. Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating guides us in the selection of all foods or a "total diet" approach from the following food groups: Grain Products, Vegetables and Fruits, Milk Products and Meat and Alternatives. All children are different, lead different lives and have different energy needs. The amount of food children need vary with gender, body size, activity levels and growth rates. As a general rule, if children eat according to their appetites and choose food from the four groups, they will get the nourishment they need.

A Healthy Start to the Day: Children and Breakfast

Breakfast is a very important meal, especially for young children. Over night the body has been using its reserved nutrients and energy sources and by the morning, it is ready for

more fuel. Without something to eat in the morning, a young child may be drowsy, irritable and inattentive at school thus inhibiting learning.

Mornings are also a hectic time in many households. Preparing for both the workday and school day can be hurried and stressful. A healthy start to the morning can include something quick like fruit, fruit juice, milk, hard-boiled eggs, cheese, yoghurt, toast or a muffin. Foods served at breakfast do not have to be "traditional" breakfast foods. All kinds of food can be eaten- soup, rice, tortilla, even pizza. If breakfast can't be eaten at home, pack a travelling breakfast and talk to your child's teacher about it.



Snack Time

Snacks are important for young children especially if they attend school most of the day. Snacks that go to school should be a **nutritious** and **quick** treat. Yoghurt, fruit, cheese, rice cakes, crackers, muffins, vegetables, breadsticks and plain popcorn are excellent snacks. Cake, cookies, granola bars, potato chips and candy should be moderated.

Healthy Lunches for Kids

Children want lunches that are satisfying and appealing. No meal is a good meal if it is thrown away or not eaten. Consider the following:

- When making sandwiches try a variety of different breads. Crusty rolls, bagels, rice cakes, crackers, English muffins, tortillas and pita bread all add variety.
- Sandwiches are convenient but they are not the only way to have a delicious lunch. Try cold pasta salad, a slice of pizza, a chicken leg, or a hard-boiled egg. Soups, stews, spaghetti or rice can be brought to school in a wide-mouth thermos bottle.
- Vegetables add colour, texture and flavour to a meal. Include red and yellow pepper rings, carrot, zucchini or celery sticks, and broccoli or cauliflower flowerets.
- When adding drinks consider fruit juice, milk or water. Look for labels that say "100% fruit juice." A fruit "punch" or "drink" is always less than the real thing. Avoid sodas.



Involve Your Child

Children are more willing to eat their own creations. Try to involve your child in preparing lunches and snacks. Teach them the difference between snack food and lunch food.

- Add interest by combining new foods with old favourites.
- Include some favourite foods. If you insist on packing food that your child does not like, it probably won't be eaten.
- Ask your child to bring home all uneaten food. This will limit wasted food and help you monitor eating patterns and preferences.
- Be creative. Cut sandwiches into different shapes or decorate them with raisins, fruit or vegetables.