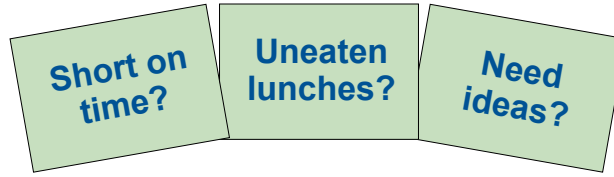


Display: What's for lunch?

Suggested Display Set-up



Build a balanced lunch

Lunches power up our busy days!
Include foods from three or more food groups of Canada's Food Guide:

- Vegetables and Fruit**
- Carrots, spinach, dried seaweed, apples, berries, bananas, etc.
- Grain Products**
- Whole grain bread, pasta, crackers, muffin, etc.
- Milk and Alternatives**
- Milk, yogurt, cheese, fortified soy beverage, etc.
- Milk and Alternatives**
- Eggs, beans, lentils, nut butter, fish, chicken, lean deli meats, etc.

What's for lunch?

Tips for packing a healthy lunch.

Time-saving tips

- ✓ Stock up on nutrient dense grab-and-go items such as apples, snap peas, yogurt cups, mini tuna cans, and whole grain crackers.
- ✓ Make planned extras at dinner for a quick lunch tomorrow.
- ✓ Add leftover meats, tofu, or beans to wraps, sandwiches or salads.
- ✓ Freeze homemade muffins and portions of soup for future lunches.

Sample lunch ideas

Wraps or sandwiches with:

- tuna salad and shredded carrot
- nut butter and banana slices
- turkey, lettuce and cranberry sauce

Crackers or bannock with hard-boiled egg and veggie sticks

Pasta salad with black beans, cheese, corn and tomatoes

Fish with rice and cucumber slices

Waffles or pancakes with yogurt and fruit

Pack a snack (or two)

Snacks provide key nutrition in between meals. Include at least two food groups:

- Carrots sticks and hummus dip
- Whole grain muffin and milk
- Dried seaweed and dried fish
- Apple slices and cheese cubes

Grab a healthy drink

Drink water for thirst. Also try:

- Milk with lunch or snacks
- Sparkling water for some fizz

Jazz up water by adding berries, mint leaves, or cucumber slices.

Uneaten lunches?

- ✓ Involve kids. Let them choose between options such as an apple or banana.
- ✓ Make it fun! Try build your own tacos or pizza.
- ✓ Pack new foods alongside favourites.
- ✓ Plan for a sit-down afternoon snack, at least one hour before dinner.
- ✓ Continue doing a great job with feeding. Trust kids' appetites. Overtime, they will eat the right amount for their growing bodies.

Helpful lunch gear

- Leak-proof water bottle
- Insulated lunch bag and freezer pack to keep foods cold
- A wide mouth thermos to keep hot food hot
- Reusable food containers

Roles for adults and kids

Adults decide	Kids decide
What foods to offer in a lunch	Whether to eat What to eat

With your help, older kids can learn to pack their own lunch. For example, let them choose items from within a food group.

Recommended client resources to accompany display:

- Lunches to Go (Vancouver Coastal Health)
- Snackmaster (Document Source: [10-421-6045](#))
- Peanut & Nut Aware Lunches & Snacks (Document Source: [10-421-6044](#))
- Refresh Your Drink (Document Source: [10-421-6047](#))

Other related resources:

- Canada's Food Guide website (Health Canada)
- Canada's Food Guide –Educational Poster (2019 Health Canada)
- Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide – First Nations, Inuit and Metis

Other resources for parents and caregivers:

- Coaching Kids to Become Good Eaters (Document Source: [10-421-6048](#))
- Talking to Kids About Food (Document Source: [10-421-6053](#))
- Picky Eater?: Kids are Eaters in Training (Document Source: [10-421-6038](#))
- Cooking With Kids ([10-421-6042](#))
- Vegetables A Kid-Friendly Approach (Document Source: [10-421-6072](#))

over...

What's For Lunch Backgrounder

The Population Health Nutrition team created this display to support adults and families to feel more confident with packing lunches. This display includes strategies and tips to support adults with packing their own lunches for work, school, and other outings. It also aims to address common questions and concerns from parents and caregivers about how to approach their children's lunches. It is suitable for use with various audiences and in multiple settings including child care centers, schools, workplaces, health fairs, community centers, and health care facilities.

Key messages

- Lunches provide us with energy to grow, learn, work and play.
- For a nutritious lunch, include foods from at least three of the four food groups from Canada's Food Guide.
- Pack a balanced snack that includes foods from at least two food groups. Snacks provide important nutrition in between meal times. This is important for children, who have smaller tummies and variable appetites, but it can be helpful for adults too.
- Include a beverage (i.e. water, milk, or fortified soy beverage).
- Plant-based beverages such as soy, coconut, almond and rice beverages are not recommended for children younger than two years old, as they are low in many nutrients.

Suggestions for supporting parents and caregivers

- Engage in conversation by asking "How are you finding packing lunches?" or "What questions or concerns do you have about packing lunches?"
- Invite them to peruse the display "What's for Lunch? Tips for packing a healthy lunch your family will enjoy". Ask what strategy they may wish to try at home.
- For more lunch and snack ideas, refer clients to the handouts "Lunches to Go", "Peanut & Nut Aware Lunches & Snacks", and "SnackMaster". See above links for recommended handouts.
- For beverage suggestions, review "Refresh Your Drink".

Additional suggestions for parents and caregivers

- Discuss the *Division of Responsibility in Feeding* and how it applies to packing lunches: It's up to parents and caregivers to decide what to include in the lunch. Kids decide whether, how much, and in what order to eat from the foods provided.
- Involve children in packing their lunch by offering some specific choices when packing a lunch. For example, "For your fruit, do you want an apple or an orange?" or "For your milk and alternative, do you want yogurt or a cheese string?"
- Invite parents to review strategies for uneaten lunches. Reassure parents that it's normal for kids to have varying appetites. We can trust that, over time, kids will eat the right amount for their growing bodies.
- For questions or concerns related to feeding roles or "picky eaters", refer clients to the handouts "Coaching Kids to Become Good Eaters", "Talking to Kids About Food" or "Picky Eater?"
- If appropriate, consider a referral to a clinical dietitian at your local hospital, health centre or to Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC (Dial 811 or 604-215-8110).

Questions about these resources?

NH staff can connect with the Population Health Nutrition team at PopHthNutrition@northernhealth.ca or 250-649-7011.