What's For Lunch?

Tips for packing a healthy school lunch!

Make it Balanced

- Include one fruit and one vegetable.
- Pack at least 1 food from each of the 3 food categories every day - vegetables and fruit, protein foods, and whole grain foods!

The foods children eat during the school day give them the energy and nutrients they need to learn and play at school!

Make it Kid-able

- Children are more likely to eat meals and snacks they helped make – let them help prepare and pack their lunch.
- Use easy to open containers, and remove peels and packaging. Pack bite-sized and finger foods.
- Pack portions of foods matched to your child's appetite. Large portions can be overwhelming.
- Involve children in lunch packing. Visit **www.unlockfood.ca** for ideas.

Be Temperature Safe

Keep Cold Foods Cold

- Use an insulated lunch bag – paper and plastic bags do not keep foods cold.
- Pack an ice pack or a frozen water bottle.
- Keep lunches in the fridge until your kids are leaving for school.

Keep Hot Foods Hot

- Use a thermos. Heat the thermos before using it by filling it with hot water. Leave it for 3-5 minutes, and then empty it before adding steaming hot food.

Be Food Safe

- Wash hands, utensils and surfaces with hot, soapy water before and while preparing food.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables thoroughly.
- Do not re-use perishable foods (sandwiches, hot foods, milk products) or plastic wrappings and foil.
- Wash reusable containers and water bottles daily with soap and hot water.

HEALTHY DRINKS

Choose Every Day	**Plain Water**	Skim, 1%, 2% Milk		Unsweetened Fortified Soy Beverage
Choose Sometimes	Chocolate Milk	100% Fruit Juice	Sweetened Fortified Soy Beverage	Nut & Rice Beverages
Choose Less Often	Pop/Diet Pop	Sports Drink/Vitamin Water	Slushie	Fruit Flavoured Drink

ALLERGY ALERT!

Check with your school to find out which foods aren't allowed. Be sure to read the ingredients list.
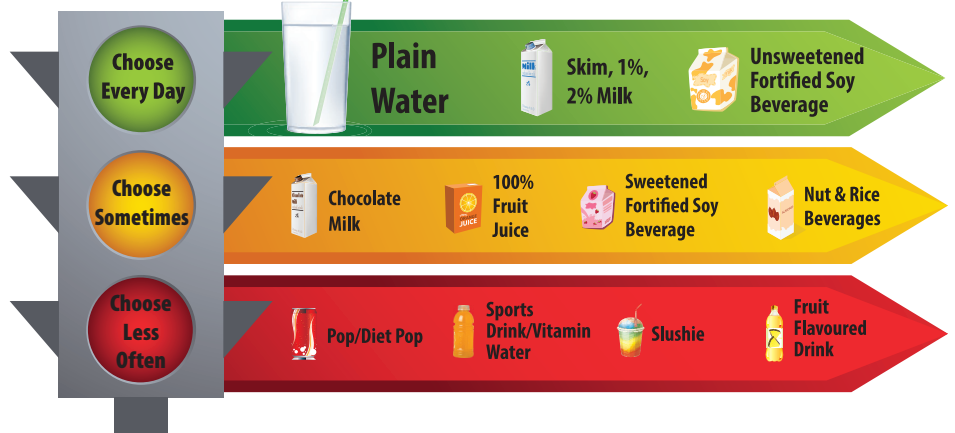
Get Creative!

Tips for packing healthy and tasty lunches with the 3 food categories:

Whole Grain Foods

- Whole grain bread, buns, pitas, wraps, bagels
- Whole grain pasta
- Brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat couscous, oatmeal

TIP:
Mix up the grain products to keep it interesting! Choose whole grains most often!

Protein Foods

- 1% or 2% milk
- Plain yogurt/Greek yogurt (add fresh or frozen fruit)
- Cheese cubes
- Unsweetened fortified soy beverage
- Cottage cheese
- Slices of leftover skinless chicken, turkey, beef, or pork
- Hard-boiled egg, peeled
- Hummus or other bean dip
- Canned light tuna

Vegetables & Fruit

- Baby carrots
- Celery sticks
- Pepper strips
- Cucumber slices
- Cherry tomatoes
- Roasted squash
- Leftover stir-fried vegetables
- Orange slices
- Banana
- Apple slices
- Grapes
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Canned fruit packed in water

TIP:
Pack a rainbow of colours for a variety of nutrients!

TIP:
Buying in-season and frozen produce helps cut costs.

TIP:
Keep flavoured milks (e.g., chocolate) for an occasional treat (½ cup per week).

TIP:
Make your own yogurt-based dip with plain Greek yogurt, fresh or dried herbs, lemon juice and garlic.

Putting it all together:

Chicken and Veggie Pita
Stuff a whole grain pita with shredded cheese, sliced chicken breast and cucumber slices. Pack with a banana and a homemade whole grain muffin.

Oatmeal with Berries
Pack cooked oatmeal with fresh or frozen berries in a thermos. Pair with a container of milk and some assorted sliced vegetables with hummus for dipping.

Quinoa Stir Fry
Match leftover stir-fried veggies with quinoa and chickpeas for a twist on a stir fry. Add grapes and cheese cubes for a balanced lunch.

Pizza Lunch
Top a whole grain English muffin with pizza sauce, cooked bell peppers, mushrooms and shredded cheese. Pack with an unsweetened applesauce and a homemade nut-free granola bar.

TIP:
Plant-based proteins can be less expensive. Try vegetarian chili, hummus for dipping veggies or falafel wraps

For more information, call 1-800-660-5853 or visit www.healthunit.org

Leeds, Grenville & Lanark District HEALTH UNIT

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