

# PACKING FOR BALANCED SCHOOL DAY NUTRITION BREAKS



Balanced school day nutrition breaks offer at least 20 minutes in the morning and again in the afternoon, to sit and eat a nutritious mini-meal. Remember that children on the balance school day timetable need the same amount of food each day. The difference is the timing of when this food is eaten.

## WHAT TO PACK? THINK HEALTHY PLATE!

Offer a variety of healthy foods each day. Canada's Food Guide recommends offering:

- Plenty of vegetables and fruits; Offer 2-3 servings of vegetables at each meal to make up half your plate!
- Protein foods such as unsweetened milk or fortified soy beverage, beans and legumes, eggs, lean meats, seeds, fish, yogurt, cheese, hummus, tofu, kefir etc.
- Whole grain foods including pasta, rice, quinoa, breads, pitas, cereals, etc.
- Water as the drink of choice

## KEEP IT NUTRITIOUS...

- Limit highly processed foods by reading food labels and stay away from high in sodium, sugars or saturated fat choices.
- Chocolate granola bars, fruit drinks, salty snack foods, fruit gummies and other special goodies are fun treats every now and then.
- Menu planning is easier if your child learns early on that processed "treats" are "sometimes foods" and not the best choices for everyday.
- Few children get enough fibre or nutrition from vegetables and fruit each day. Try to include 2-3 choices daily.
- Try local, in-season produce as healthy, budget-friendly options.

## PLANNING TIPS...

- Sandwiches can be cut in half and wrapped separately - one half for each break.
- Foods that are packed in a thermos may be hotter and taste better if they are eaten during the first break.
- **Hydration options:** Pack water first. Water, unsweetened milk or fortified soy beverage and watery fruits and vegetables can be offered most often.
- For younger children you can mark #1, #2 on reusable containers to help them divide their food or use different coloured containers. You can also try dividing their lunch bag with a piece of cardboard; for 1st and 2nd break.

## PACK 'EM SAFELY....

- Pack foods like meats, tuna, egg salad and milk with a small freezer pack in an insulated bag.
- Use ice cubes, frozen water bottles and yogurt to help keep other foods cool.
- Prepare meat sandwiches and other foods to be kept cold the night before. Leave them in the fridge overnight to chill well.
- Make sure hot foods are steaming hot when they go in a thermos.
- Use fresh ingredients or leftovers that are not more than one day old.
- Clean lunch bags, food containers, water bottles and all utensils everyday.
- Food wrappings should not be re-used as they can carry bacteria.

# BALANCED SCHOOL DAY MENU IDEAS

Be sure to involve your children in the planning/packing their food for the day. They are more likely to eat what is packed when they contribute to their choices. Show your kids to be mindful of their eating habits. Healthy food choices gives them energy to learn, play and grow.

## MORNING BREAK

## AFTERNOON BREAK

<b>MONDAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oatmeal raisin muffin</li> <li>Milk</li> <li>Banana</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 1 serving Grain products: 1 serving Protein Foods: 1 serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole grain breadsticks wrapped with sliced turkey</li> <li>Water with lemon slice</li> <li>Vanilla yogurt</li> <li>Baby carrots</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 1 serving Grain products: 1 serving Protein Foods: 2 servings
<b>TUESDAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yogurt</li> <li>Apple</li> <li>Sunflower seeds</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 1 serving Protein Foods: 2 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leftover pizza with sliced chicken</li> <li>Cucumber slices</li> <li>Milk</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 1-2 servings Grain products: 1-2 servings Protein Foods: 2 servings
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trail mix (dry cereal, dried fruit, sunflower seeds)</li> <li>Celery Sticks, broccoli pieces + hummus</li> <li>Milk</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 2 servings Grain products: 1 serving Protein Foods: 2 servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cold chicken strips</li> <li>Whole wheat roll</li> <li>Green + red pepper rings</li> <li>Yogurt or lower sugar milk pudding</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 1 serving Grain products: 1 serving Protein Foods: 2 servings
<b>THURSDAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheese and whole grain crackers</li> <li>Sliced berries and grapes</li> <li>Water</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 2 servings Grain products: 1 serving Protein Foods: 1 serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hard boiled egg</li> <li>Whole wheat bread</li> <li>Unsweetened applesauce or fruit cup</li> <li>Milk</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 1 serving Grain products: 1 serving Protein Foods: 2 servings
<b>FRIDAY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Popcorn</li> <li>Unsweetened Chocolate Soy beverage</li> <li>Veggies and dip</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 1-2 servings Grain products: 1 serving Protein Foods: 1 serving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leftover homemade macaroni &amp; cheese mixed with ham and vegetables</li> <li>Orange segments</li> <li>Whole grain mini-carrot muffin</li> </ul> Vegetables and Fruit: 1-2 servings Grain products: 2 servings Protein Foods: 1-2 servings

EAT WELL. LIVE WELL. HEALTHY EATING IS MORE THAN THE FOODS YOU EAT.  
 DISCOVER YOUR FOOD GUIDE AT [Canada.ca/Food/Guide](https://Canada.ca/Food/Guide)

