

# Nutrition Facts

## Balanced School Day



The balanced school day offers a balance between eating, physical activity and learning throughout the day. The day is split into three - 100 minute blocks of teaching time and two 40-45 minute nutrition/activity breaks.

### Planning Lunches for the Balanced School Day

Packing meals for the balanced school is easy. The amount of food your child needs doesn't change. It just means they will be eating at slightly different times.

#### Plan ahead:

- Involve your child. This may increase the chance that they will eat the food packed. Choose age appropriate tasks for your child to complete when helping with the lunch.
- Pack a variety of healthy foods. Pack lots of vegetables and fruits. Add in whole grains and protein foods. Limit highly processed foods and snacks.
- Don't overwhelm your child with too much food! If your child is always bringing food home, change how much food you pack.

#### Pack for easy eating:

- Use containers that your child can easily open.
- Offer foods that are ready to eat like a peeled orange divided into sections.
- Pack foods that are familiar to your child and they enjoy.

#### Organize the food:

- Ask your child how they would like their food divided. Try:
  - Breakfast foods for Break 1 and lunch foods for Break 2, or
  - Snacks for Break 1 and lunch for Break 2, or
  - A mini meal for each break.

#### Packing for nutrition breaks:

- Divide a thermal lunch bag into two sections – “Break 1” and “Break 2”. Use a piece of cardboard to separate the meals. Your child can eat food above the cardboard for the first break and then lift the cardboard and eat from below at the second break. A thermal lunch container with two compartments could also be used.
- Sandwiches can be cut in half and wrapped separately – one half for each break.
- Include one drink at each break. Consider using smaller containers. Include healthy drinks like water, white milk, unsweetened fortified soy beverage or unsweetened plant based beverage (e.g., almond, pea beverage).

#### Keep food safety in mind:

- **Be clean** - Start with clean hands and a clean preparation area. Wash hands and preparation area often during preparation.
- **Keep cold foods cold** - Make sandwiches the night before and keep them in the fridge. Pack items like potato salad and coleslaw in a thermos, and always use an ice pack to keep cold foods cold.
- **Keep hot foods hot** - Pack hot foods in a thermos: pour hot water into the thermos to heat the thermos up, then discard the hot water and add the hot food – it should be piping hot!

**When planning meals and snacks, make ½ vegetables and fruit, ¼ whole grain foods and ¼ protein foods.**

Vegetables and Fruit	Whole Grain Foods	Protein Foods
Baby carrots* Veggie sticks Cucumber slices Grapes* Berries* Cherry tomatoes* Unsweetened applesauce or apple slices Canned fruit in water/juice Dried fruit	Whole grain bagels, wraps or pitas Whole grain breakfast cereals & oatmeal Whole grain crackers Whole grain pasta salad Whole grain bread, buns, or muffins Whole grain rice Quinoa	Hummus or bean dip Chickpeas Cooked leftover meats Hardboiled eggs Canned fish lower fat yogurt White milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverage Lower fat cheese

\*Nuts, seeds, popcorn, some raw fruits, like grapes (cut into quarters), and some raw vegetables, like carrots, are good snacks but may cause choking in children under age three. Always supervise children when they are eating.

### A Week of Healthy Lunch Ideas for the Balanced School Day

Day 1	
Break 1	Break 2
Banana Oatmeal raisin muffin Cottage cheese Water	Baby carrots ½ sliced turkey sandwich with veggies on whole wheat bread White milk

Day 4	
Break 1	Break 2
Yogurt parfait (mixed berries, plain yogurt, high fibre cereal) Water	Homemade soup (with black beans, and vegetables) Whole grain crackers Unsweetened applesauce White milk

Day 2	
Break 1	Break 2
Orange sections Container with whole grain cereal White milk	Whole wheat tortilla or pita with salsa, black beans, cheese and diced peppers Cucumber slices Water

Day 5	
Break 1	Break 2
½ whole wheat wrap with vegetables and hummus Pear Unsweetened fortified soy beverage	½ whole wheat wrap with vegetables and hummus Blueberries Strawberries Water

Day 3	
Break 1	Break 2
Cheese Whole wheat crackers Watermelon cubes Celery sticks Water	Mini whole wheat pita with egg salad Raw peppers and dip White milk



**\* Remember that many schools are peanut/nut-safe!**

Source: Perth District Health Unit's One Month of Mini Meal for the Balanced School Day and Public Health Nutritionist/Dietitians in Ontario (2008) <https://food-guide.canada.ca>

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