



First Nations Health Authority  
Health through wellness

Children's Oral Health Initiative (COHI)

# Creating Healthy Lunches

## Lunchbox Tips:

- Keep it simple and easy to eat but healthy and tasty.
- Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide - First Nations, Inuit and Metis (vegetables and fruit, grain products, milk and alternatives and meat and alternatives).
- Kids love to eat what they create. Let your child choose his or her lunch from a healthy list of choices.
- It is normal for a child's taste to change often. It can take many exposures to new foods before children learn to like them.
- Speed-up the process by cutting extra veggies when you're preparing dinner or by making extra at meals to use as 're-runs' for lunches the following day.
- On a cold day, pack a small thermos of soup, pasta, or other hot item.



## Instead of Sandwiches

Build your own pizza with bannock or pita, tomato sauce, vegetables and grated cheese; Whole grain pancakes or waffles with fruit & yogurt; Falafel (chick peas) in a whole wheat pita, carrot sticks; Pasta salad, milk, small apple; a hard cooked egg, whole grain crackers, red pepper strips; a Burrito with salsa; Homemade, whole grain muffins, e.g., oatmeal carrot muffin and cottage cheese, cornmeal muffin with BBQ chicken or chili, Banana bran muffin with yogurt and veggie sticks. Eat traditional meats and wild game as often as possible!

## Wrap or Pita Pocket Combos

**(Mix one or more of the following with mustard, salsa, or other sauces/spreads)**

Hard cooked egg, chopped cucumber, green onion; Chicken chunks with sliced seedless grapes; Turkey with grated carrot and shredded lettuce; Salmon or another cooked fish with red and green pepper slices; Chopped ham with pineapple; Hummus (bean dip) and vegetables; Shredded cheese, and sliced cucumber. Instead of a pita or a tortilla, try a "lettuce leaf" wrap with any of the above combos.

## Traditional Food Treats

Fish, shellfish, moose or deer meat makes an excellent snack and provides a great meat and alternatives choice. You may also include berries, seaweed, various nuts and seeds but be sure to find out if your school has any food restrictions that must be followed as a result of food allergies to make sure it is safe.



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## Versatile Veggies & Fast Fresh Fruits

- Choose in-season produce when possible.
- Freeze summer fruits and berries to enjoy all year round.
- Pack a fruit smoothie in a thermos.



Offer a variety of different choices over the week such as: cauliflower, broccoli, baby corn, fresh sweet radishes, pepper strips (yellow, green, red, orange), turnip or zucchini sticks, beans, squash and corn, peas in a pod or snow pea pods, cherry tomatoes, melon pieces, cherries, berries, kiwi, pears, peaches.

## Dunk a Lunch

Finger food and dunking are always fun! Here are some healthy choices: Bean dip like hummus, yogurt dip or another dip served with veggies and whole wheat pita bread cut into triangles; Fresh cut or canned fruit mixed with plain yogurt; Whole grain bread sticks with fresh tomato salsa and guacamole.

## Last Night's Leftovers make a Tasty Lunch!

**Not all lunches have to be hot – Leftovers can be sent cold, or hot, in a thermos**

Leftover pizza; Chicken drumstick; Stew; Curry; Chili; Casserole; Stir fry; Perogies; Spaghetti and meatballs; Macaroni and cheese; Baked beans; Soup or Stew.

## Little Extras: Non-food treats are special and long lasting...

A special napkin or straw; sticker, picture, a funny joke, poem or other note.



## Pack a Safe Lunch

- Use clean kitchen tools to make lunches.
- Refrigerate lunches that are made ahead of time.
- Use an insulated bag with a freezer pack or chilled thermos to keep food cool. Chill milk or freeze drinking water or juice in plastic containers to keep food cool.
- Use a wide mouth thermos to keep hot food hot. Pre-heat the thermos with hot water before filling.
- Wash all vegetables well, even if the package says “pre-washed”.
- Wash lunch containers every night and clean them with baking soda once a week to get rid of odours.
- Don't reuse plastic bags – they can hold bacteria.