

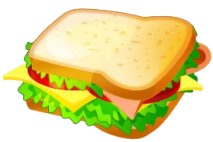


Tips for Healthy School Lunches

Remember that the actual time for eating lunch at most a school is only 15 to 20 minutes and even that is filled with distractions. To help your child eat a healthy and nutritious lunch in a short time, pack foods that are easy to eat, in easily opened packages, and don't require peeling or special tools. Consider packing a variety of smaller portions of 'finger foods' like baby carrots, pre-peeled fruit pieces, mini tortilla wraps, sandwiches cut into bite-sized pieces, or homemade trail mix made with dried fruits, unsalted nuts, pretzels, and baked crackers. Bean dips, fruit dips, and hummus served with veggies, fruit pieces, whole grain crackers or baked chips are a good source of vitamins and fibre. Bite-sized foods make a nice change from sandwiches and are fun to eat!

Some ideas for healthier lunches:

Instead of	Try
Deep fried chips and snack mixes	Baked chips, air-popped popcorn, trail mix, or veggies and dip
Canned fruit in syrup	Fresh BC fruit, or fruit canned in natural juice
Cookies and cupcakes	Homemade lower sugar baked goods like fruit muffins or oatmeal cookies
Fruit drinks and sodas	Water, 100% fruit juice or low fat milk
White bread	Whole grain bread—oat, flax, wheat or multi-grain
Higher fat prepared lunch meats	Lower fat deli meats such as chicken or turkey



Sandwiches are a long-standing staple for packed lunches, but why not try some variations? Think about using different types of bread like whole wheat pita bread bagels or tortillas. Dense breads such as pumpnickel and sprouted grain are great for packed lunches. They are a good source of nutrients and will fill your child up quicker than lighter and less nutritious white bread.

[ActNow BC](#) suggests stuffing sandwiches with a variety of vegetables and fruit like tomatoes, cucumber and leaf lettuce. Strips of roasted or raw bell peppers, shredded cabbage (or the packaged coleslaw in the produce section), shredded carrots or zucchini, thinly sliced onions, radishes, apples, or pears all make good sandwich fillings. To keep bread from getting soggy, pack the veggies separately to be added just before eating.

Fresh fruit and vegetables are great to have on hand for packed lunches and snacks. Check out [what's in season in BC](#) and keep a variety of different colourful and tasty fruits and vegetables at the ready. Fresh fruits and vegetables are packed full of vitamins and nutrients that will keep your child's energy high and immune system pumping.

