



Eat Well, Live Well

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 **Dietitians of Canada**
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Step Right Up to Healthy Eating

Making Great Lunches for my Kids



“Gee mom, that lunch was really great today; thanks.”

Wow, wouldn't that be music to your ears every day, or even once a week! Preparing kids' lunches, whether they eat at home or take a lunch to school, is often a dreaded task.

Common complaints voiced by kids include:

- *“My lunch is boring – I'm tired of the same old thing.”*
- *“I don't have time to eat all that.”*
- *“The food tasted yucky.”*
- *“Why do you give me such weird stuff?”*

Complaints voiced by parents include:

- *“I'm out of ideas of what to make.”*
- *“My child won't try anything new.”*
- *“I'm too busy to make a good lunch.”*
- *“I don't know how to make a healthy lunch.”*

Here are some tips you can use to turn this situation into a 'win-win' scenario:

- 1. Knowledge is power:** Find out how to make a healthy lunch. See the many resources listed below for tips on how to make a healthy lunch. You might also consider forming your own parent group and asking a local dietitian to attend a meeting to give advice on healthy lunches for kids and... for you!
- 2. Be a role model:** It's a well-known fact that children who see parents eat healthy are more likely to eat healthy themselves.
- 3. Value lunches:** We know all too well that a hectic schedule can prevent us from doing some very important and basic daily tasks. However, if you feel that eating a healthy lunch is important, put the time into making it work.



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- 4. Make it a team effort:** When parent and child are 'both' involved in planning and preparing the lunch, the chance of success is much greater. If you need ideas about what to include, your child is the best place to start. If your child is bored with what you give him, then ask him/her for some ideas, or ask your child what he liked best and least in his/her lunch. Exchanging ideas, trying new foods together, experimenting in the kitchen is not only fun, but also will make lunch preparation much easier.
- 5. PLAN, PLAN, PLAN:** We all eat healthier when we plan our meals and snacks in advance. Plan a weekly menu with your child and stick to it as best as you can. Build your shopping list from the menu, to make sure you have all the foods you need for the planned menu.
- 6. Be a nutrition cheerleader:** Be an advocate for a nutritious environment in the school. Work with the principal, teachers and parent council to make sure there is ample time for your child to eat, in a safe, clean and pleasant environment, and that healthy choices are available in vending machines and cafeterias. Take every opportunity to talk with other parents and share ideas and success stories.



Resources for consumers:

- **Eat Well, Play Well**
www.dietitians.ca/child
- **Let's Make a Meal**
www.dietitians.ca/public/content/eat_well_live_well/english/menuplanner/overview.asp
- **Mission Nutrition** – Kellogg Canada Inc.
www.missionnutrition.ca

Resources for health intermediaries:

- **Eating, Physical Activity and Body Weight Trends in Canadian Children and Youth**
2004 Nutrition Month® Backgrounder for Dietitians, Educators, Parents and Community Leaders
www.dietitians.ca/child/pdf/backgrounder.pdf
- **Breakfast for Learning Canadian Living Foundation**
<http://breakfastforlearning.ca/english/index.html>

Dietitians bring you food and nutrition information you can trust. Find a dietitian in your area at www.dietitians.ca/find or call 1-888-901-7776.

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