

Bagged Lunch Blues

It's that time of year when lunches can get a bit boring, here are some survival tips to liven them up!

Stock up on a variety of different breads and grain products. Rye, whole-wheat, multigrain breads as well as pitas, tortillas, bagels and buns are all good choices. Breads freeze well.

At the beginning of the week, wash and cut raw vegetables (carrots, celery, pepper, and turnip sticks, broccoli, and cauliflower florets, snow peas), keep them in a plastic bag or a sealed container rather than in water, where they would lose part of their nutritional value.

Buy a variety of protein-based canned items like tuna, salmon, baked beans, chickpeas (makes a great humus or adds protein to leftover salad).

Choose different cheeses such as cheddar, mozzarella, cottage, ricotta, brie, Swiss, colby, havarti. Stock up on other calcium-rich products like yogurt or pudding.

Buy fresh fruit regularly, but keep on hand fruit leather*, dried fruits*, canned and frozen fruits and fruit juices. * caution, sticky foods - be sure to brush.

Freeze individual milk, yogurt or juice containers. Place in your lunch bag, and they will thaw in time for lunch, while keeping other foods cool.

Bake muffins, loaves, date squares or oatmeal cookies with your kids. You can keep them for several weeks in your freezer. When needed, put them directly in your lunch bag in the morning.

Cook over the weekend and freeze individual servings of soup, macaroni and cheese or meatloaf.

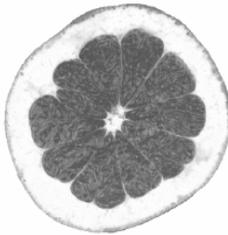
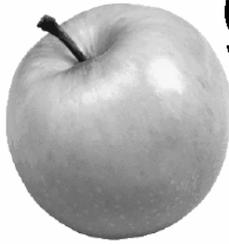
Stuffed Pita Pockets

Open pita bread at the side with your thumbs to make a pocket. Add pizza sauce or salsa, sliced meat, cheese, sprouts, and veggies. Close by folding open flaps of pita bread inwards. Enjoy.

Tuna Wrap

Combine 1 can tuna with 2 tbsp. chopped celery, 2 tbsp. chopped sweet pickle or relish, 2 tbsp. chopped red or green pepper, 2 tbsp. light mayonnaise, 1 tbsp. plain yogurt, 1 tsp. lemon juice 1/4 cup shredded cheese. Wrap into flour tortilla.
Makes 4 wraps.

Good choices, great results



Source: Prince Charles Education Resource Centre "Healthy Food Healthy Kids".

Getting children to eat healthy is common sense and a common challenge – but the results for both home and school are worth it!

Children who eat regular, nutritious meals and snacks show better concentration and behaviour throughout the day.

Great starts. Breakfast is key. Whole grain muffins, toast, fruit shakes, yogurt, cheese and eggs are all "great starts."

Lunch fun. "Package" your child's lunch for mass appeal – think colourful finger foods of chopped veggies with healthy dips, tasty rollups, banana "dogs" or fruit kebobs!

Kidsize it. Cook in large quantities and freeze lunch-size servings for the thermos or school "heat-up".

Go food. Boil eggs, cut up cheese, fruits and veggies and stock muffins as "fast food" for after-school activities.

Fill up. Get 6 to 8 cups of fluids a day – real fruit juice, milk, water, soups, whole fruits and vegetables all add up!

Get real. Choose 100% real fruit juices or milk instead of sugary or caffeinated beverages, punches or soft drinks.

Work it out. Enjoy regular physical activity and healthy, sit down meals as a family.



Check out Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating and other great information at http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html

Check in at your school. Talk to your children's teachers about nutrition programs and resources that may be available.

A message from the  **Manitoba Association of School Superintendents**