Breakfast, Lunch and Snack Ideas for Elementary Students
Please Note: The following policy does not apply to food and beverages that you send to school for your child’s lunch and recess snacks. However, we encourage you to support your school’s efforts to give children healthy food choices.

All students need healthy food and beverages to grow, learn, play, and develop into healthy adults.

Children learn about healthy eating in the classroom and at home. Having healthy food and beverages available in school helps support healthy eating messages learned in the classroom, at home, and in other settings.

Eating well and making healthy food choices takes more than will power. The Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools makes it easier for students to make wise food and beverage choices while in school.

Principals, teachers, parents, students, government and public health staff, and nutrition professionals created the Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools.

Strive for Five at School! is a resource for schools and parents that supports the food and nutrition policy. It includes tasty and healthy recipes made with local and in-season fruits and vegetables, as well as nutritional tips and fun facts. nshps.ca/downloads/striveforfive
The policy helps ensure that the food and beverages served and sold in school canteens, cafeterias, vending machines, meal programs, and for special functions and fundraising:

• Are healthy, safe, and affordable
• Support student health and learning
• Support the health messages learned in the classroom and at home
• Make healthy food and beverage choices easy

The policy is based on *Eating Well With Canada’s Food Guide* (see pages 11 to 16) and describes the kinds of food and beverages schools can serve and sell during the school day. The foods and beverages served and sold in your child’s school should include a wide selection of vegetables and fruit, whole grains, and lower fat choices.

Schools have gradually changed the kinds of food and beverages served and sold to students since September 2006. Full implementation of this policy is now in effect (as of June 2009). Schools will be provided with ongoing local and provincial support to maintain the policy and parents are encouraged to provide support as well. Many schools have ‘healthy food’ committees that make decisions about the food and beverages served and sold in school. Ask if your child’s school has a ‘healthy food’ committee and think about becoming involved.

To find out more about the *Food and Nutrition Policy for Nova Scotia Public Schools*, ask to see a copy at your child’s school or visit ednet.ns.ca.

## School Policies on Food Allergies

Some children have life-threatening allergies to peanuts or other foods.

Find out if your child’s school has a policy to protect children with allergies. For example, some policies state that children cannot bring certain foods — like peanut butter — to school or carry them on the bus.

If your school has a policy like this, your child can continue to enjoy peanuts, peanut butter and other foods that contain nuts, at home.
Breakfast of Champions

Breakfast is important for everyone but it is critical for growing children. Without a good breakfast, children may be tired, cranky, and have trouble concentrating. This makes it difficult for them to learn.

Children who eat breakfast feel better and do better in school.

*Eating Well With Canada’s Food Guide* has four food groups:
- Vegetables and Fruit
- Grain Products
- Milk and Alternatives
- Meat and Alternatives

You’ll find a copy of the *Eating Well With Canada’s Food Guide* on pages 11 to 16. A healthy breakfast has foods from three of these four food groups. For example, a bagel (Grain Products), an orange (Vegetables and Fruit), and a glass of milk (Milk and Alternatives) make a healthy breakfast and will get kids off to a good start. See *Eating Well With Canada’s Food Guide* for the amount and type of foods and beverages that are recommended for your child.

Foods like cake, donuts, toaster pastries, and sugary fruit beverages don’t give kids the nourishment they need to start their day. These foods and beverages are high in calories, fats, sugar, and/or salt (sodium) and they shouldn’t replace the recommended healthy foods from the four food groups.

Breakfast doesn’t have to be fancy or traditional. Try leftovers, cheese and crackers, or a sandwich. If you’re short of time in the morning, get breakfast ready the night before. You can also pack extra food with their lunch so your children can eat breakfast on the way to school or after they get there.
Breakfast Ideas

★ Yogurt Shake
In a blender mix fruit, yogurt, milk, and all-bran cereal.

★ Cheese Boats
Tuck slices of cheese into celery sticks. Serve with whole grain toast, crackers, or a muffin.

★ Jiffy Pizza
Top half a whole-wheat bun or English muffin with tomato sauce and mozzarella cheese.
Bake.

★ Happy Face Cereal
Top hot, whole grain cereal (e.g. oatmeal) with slices of bananas, apples, or other fruit to make a happy face. Serve with lower fat (e.g. 2%, 1%, or skim) milk or yogurt.

★ Apple Treasures
Core an apple, stuff with peanut or nut butter,* and top with raisins.

★ Nutty Bananas
Dip a banana in lower fat yogurt and roll in wheat germ, crushed nuts,* or dry whole grain cereal. Enjoy with a glass of lower fat milk.

★ Breakfast Trail Mix
Mix together different dry whole grain cereals, (e.g. cheerios, shredies, bite-size shredded wheat) pretzels, and nuts* in a plastic bag. A juice box makes it a complete breakfast to go.

★ Toasted Cheese Treat
A toasted whole grain sandwich with cheddar cheese and tomato can provide a tasty morning alternative.

★ Sandwiches
Try egg salad, cheese, peanut or nut butter*, tuna, or salmon.
Use different kinds of whole grain breads, rolls, or wraps.

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Healthy Lunches

Lunches for school can taste good, be easy to pack and eat, and still be healthy.

For healthy lunches:
• Choose Grain Products lower in fat, sugar, and/or salt (sodium).
• Choose Vegetables and Fruit more often than juices.
• Choose lower fat Milks and Alternatives (i.e. skim, 1%, or 2% milk fat).
• Choose lean Meats and Alternatives with little or no added fat or salt.

Variety and imagination are the keys.
• Enjoy a variety of foods from the four food groups. See Eating Well With Canada’s Food Guide for the recommended amount and type of foods and beverages for your child.
• Make sandwiches with different kinds of grain products, like bagels, pitas, flour tortillas, and rolls. Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.
• Make sandwiches more interesting by adding some vegetables or fruit like grated carrot, red or green pepper, apple slices, lettuce, cucumber, tomato, or onion.

TIP: To get at least one dark green (e.g. broccoli, romaine lettuce) and one orange (e.g. carrot, sweet potato) vegetable each day, pack one in a lunch or add it to a sandwich.

Healthy Lunch Ideas

★ Pizza Lunch
Left-over cheese or vegetable pizza
Pear
Lower fat milk
“Enviro” Cracker Pack Lunch
Skip the pre-packed and make your own:
Variety of whole grain crackers
Hard cheese cubes, slices of lean meats, boiled egg
Sliced cucumber and peppers
Lower fat yogurt and fruit

Munch on the Move
Peanut or other nut butter*
Cheese chunk or lower fat yogurt
Fruit cup
Lower fat milk

Wrap ‘n Roll
Tortilla wrap with slices of lean chicken, beef or ham, cheddar cheese, lettuce, grated apple
Banana
Orange juice

Bagel Sandwich Lunch
Whole grain bagel sandwich with tuna salad
Carrot and celery sticks
Lower fat chocolate milk

Mexican Fiesta
Bean and vegetable burrito
Lower fat milk
Orange

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Snacks That Count

Pack a snack for recess! Active, growing children need small, nutritious snacks to keep them going throughout the day.

See *Eating Well With Canada’s Food Guide* for recommended amounts and types of foods and beverages for your child.

Healthy snacks have foods from at least two of the four food groups and are “tooth-friendly” — that is, they don’t leave sticky sugar on children’s teeth. Sweet, sticky foods increase the risk of cavities and shouldn’t be eaten as snacks at school. Save them for special occasions at home where children can brush their teeth after eating them.

Snacks can be good for the environment as well as good for children. You can pack snacks in reusable plastic containers, wrap them in waxed paper that can go in the compost bin, or send snacks that don’t need to be wrapped at all, like fresh fruit.

Foods for Healthy Snacking at School

**Choose Vegetables & Fruit More Often than Juices.**
- Raw fruit (e.g. apples, pears, bananas)
- Canned fruit
- Raw vegetables (e.g. carrot, celery, broccoli, turnip)
- Fruit juice
- Vegetable juice
Choose Whole Grain Products (low in fat, sugar, and salt). Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.

• Whole grain bread or crackers
• Unsweetened, whole grain cereal
• Lower fat whole grain muffin
• Pita bread
• Bagel

Choose Lower Fat Milk and Alternatives.

• Milk, white or flavoured (2% MF or less)
• Fortified soy beverages
• Yogurt or yogurt dip (2% MF or less)
• Hard cheese (less than 20% MF)

Choose Lean Meat & Alternatives (with little or no added fat or salt).

• Lean meat slices
• Dry roasted nuts and seeds (no added salt or oil)*
• Hard-boiled eggs
• Peanut or nut butters*
• Hummus
• Baked beans

Try a Great Snack Combination

• Whole grain crackers and lower fat cheese
• Peanut or nut butter* on a whole grain bagel
• Half of a sandwich
• Lower fat yogurt parfait with lower fat granola
• Fruit and plain, lower fat yogurt
• Whole grain crackers, vegetables, and bean based dip
• Trail mix (mix of whole grain cereals) and lower fat milk

Snacks to Limit

Another important step towards better health and healthy body weight is to limit foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar, and/or salt (sodium) such as: chocolate and candies; cookies and donuts; ice cream and frozen desserts; french fries and potato chips; fruit-flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports energy drinks.

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Keeping Foods Safe at School

To keep lunches and snacks fresh and healthy:
• Store lunches and snacks in the fridge until the kids are ready to leave for the day.
• Pack foods that need to be kept cold in an insulated lunch bag. Include an ice pack or frozen juice box.
• Don’t depend on a thermos to keep hot foods hot. A thermos may not be able to keep the food hot enough to prevent food poisoning. If you send foods like soup, spaghetti, or casserole to school, keep them cold. In some schools children can reheat these kinds of foods.
• Wash lunch bags and boxes, plastic containers, and all utensils every day. Used plastic, waxed paper, or foil wrappings may carry bacteria and shouldn’t be reused.

Beverages

Healthy, active children often get thirsty and need to drink throughout the day.

See Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide (pages 11 to 16) for the recommended amounts and types of beverages for your child.

Water: Remember to encourage children to satisfy their thirst with water between meals! Water is a calorie-free way to quench thirst. It is the least expensive and most convenient drink of all. Children need to drink more water in hot weather or when they are very active. Plain unsweetened, unflavoured water with no additives (for example, caffeine, herbals) and no artificial sweeteners is recommended. Water
can be frozen in a plastic bottle and used to keep lunches cold. Be sure to wash the water bottle every day.

**Milk:** Milk is a very important source of vitamin D and calcium, vitamins and minerals children need to grow strong bones and teeth. Participating in a School Milk Program is a good way to be sure your child gets milk during the school day.

**Unsweetened fruit or vegetable juices:** Check the package label to be sure you are getting 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Even if fruit beverages have added nutrients, they are not as nourishing as 100% fruit juice.

There are many different kinds of 100% juices:
- orange
- apple
- tomato
- pineapple
- vegetable blends
- grapefruit
- cranberry juice
- grape (either white or purple)

Don’t let juice replace other nourishing foods. One serving of juice is small—just 125 mL or 1/2 cup. Many juice packs contain more than 500 mL, which counts as four servings of fruits or vegetables. Think about giving your child smaller, 250 mL juice packs to be sure that juice doesn’t replace other nourishing foods and beverages.

*Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* recommends choosing vegetables and fruits more often than juices.
Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Age in Years</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Teens</th>
<th>Adults</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Females</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>51+</td>
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The chart above shows how many Food Guide Servings you need from each of the four food groups every day.

Having the amount and type of food recommended and following the tips in Canada's Food Guide will help:
- Meet your needs for vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.
- Reduce your risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, certain types of cancer and osteoporosis.
- Contribute to your overall health and vitality.
**What is One Food Guide Serving?**

*Look at the examples below.*

- **Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables**: 125 mL (½ cup)
- **Leafy vegetables**: Cooked: 125 mL (½ cup) Raw: 250 mL (1 cup)
- **Fresh, frozen or canned fruits**: 1 fruit or 125 mL (½ cup)
- **100% Juice**: 125 mL (½ cup)
- **Bread**: 1 slice (35 g)
- **Bagel**: ¼ bagel (45 g)
- **Flat breads**: ¼ pita or ½ tortilla (35 g)
- **Cooked rice, bulgur or quinoa**: 125 mL (½ cup)
- **Cereal**: Cold: 50 g Hot: 175 mL (½ cup)
- **Cooked pasta or couscous**: 125 mL (1 cup)
- **Milk or powdered milk (reconstituted)**: 250 mL (1 cup)
- **Canned milk (evaporated)**: 125 mL (½ cup)
- **Fortified soy beverage**: 250 mL (1 cup)
- **Yogurt**: 175 g (½ cup)
- **Kefir**: 175 g (½ cup)
- **Cheese**: 50 g (1½ oz.)
- **Cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat**: 75 g (2½ oz.) / 125 mL (½ cup)
- **Cooked legumes**: 175 mL (½ cup)
- **Tofu**: 150 g or 175 mL (½ cup)
- **Eggs**: 2 eggs
- **Peanut or nut butters**: 30 mL (2 Tbsp)
- **Shelled nuts and seeds**: 60 mL (½ cup)

**Oils and Fats**

- Include a small amount – 30 to 45 mL (2 to 3 Tbsp) – of unsaturated fat each day. This includes oil used for cooking, salad dressings, margarine and mayonnaise.
- Use vegetable oils such as canola, olive and soybean.
- Choose soft margarines that are low in saturated and trans fats.
- Limit butter, hard margarine, lard and shortening.
Make each Food Guide Serving count... wherever you are - at home, at school, at work or when eating out!

- Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.
  - Go for dark green vegetables such as broccoli, romaine lettuce and spinach.
  - Go for orange vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes and winter squash.
- Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.
  - Enjoy vegetables steamed, baked or stir-fried instead of deep-fried.
- Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

- Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.
  - Eat a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.
  - Enjoy whole grain breads, oatmeal or whole wheat pasta.
- Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.
  - Compare the Nutrition Facts table on labels to make wise choices.
  - Enjoy the true taste of grain products. When adding sauces or spreads, use small amounts.

- Drink skim, 1%, or 2% milk each day.
  - Have 500 ml (2 cups) of milk every day for adequate vitamin D.
  - Drink fortified soy beverages if you do not drink milk.
- Select lower fat milk alternatives.
  - Compare the Nutrition Facts table on yogurts or cheeses to make wise choices.

- Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.
- Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.*
  - Choose fish such as cod, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout.
- Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.
  - Trim the visible fat from meats. Remove the skin on poultry.
  - Use cooking methods such as steaming, baking or poaching that require little or no added fat.
  - If you eat luncheon meats, sausages or prepackaged meats, choose those lower in salt (sodium) and fat.

Enjoy a variety of foods from the four food groups.

Satisfy your thirst with water!

Drink water regularly. It's a calorie-free way to quench your thirst. Drink more water in hot weather or when you are very active.

* Health Canada provides advice for limiting exposure to mercury from certain types of fish. Refer to www.canada.ca for the latest information.
Advice for different ages and stages...

**Children**

Following Canada's Food Guide helps children grow and thrive.
- Young children have small appetites and need calories for growth and development.
- Serve small nutritious meals and snacks each day.
- Do not restrict nutritious foods because of their fat content. Offer a variety of foods from the four food groups.
- Most of all... be a good role model.

**Women of childbearing age**

All women who could become pregnant and those who are pregnant or breastfeeding need a multivitamin containing *folic acid* every day.
- Pregnant women need to ensure that their multivitamin also contains *iron*.
- A health care professional can help you find the multivitamin that's right for you.

Pregnant and breastfeeding women need more calories. Include an extra 2 to 3 Food Guide Servings each day.

Here are two examples:
- Have fruit and yogurt for a snack, or
- Have an extra slice of toast at breakfast and an extra glass of milk at supper.

**Men and women over 50**

The need for *vitamin D* increases after the age of 50.
- In addition to following Canada's Food Guide, everyone over the age of 50 should take a daily vitamin D supplement of 10 μg (400 IU).

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**How do I count Food Guide Servings in a meal?**

Here is an example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vegetable and beef stir-fry with rice, a glass of milk and an apple for dessert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>250 mL (1 cup) mixed broccoli, carrots and sweet red peppers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 g (2 1/2 oz) lean beef</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 mL (1 cup) brown rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 mL (1 tsp) canola oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>250 mL (1 cup) 1% milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 apple</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Eat well and be active today and every day!

The benefits of eating well and being active include:
- Better overall health.
- Lower risk of disease.
- A healthy body weight.
- Feeling and looking better.
- More energy.
- Stronger muscles and bones.

Be active
To be active every day is a step towards better health and a healthy body weight.

Canada's Physical Activity Guide recommends building 30 to 50 minutes of moderate physical activity into daily life for adults and at least 50 minutes a day for children and youth. You don't have to do it all at once. Add it up in periods of at least 10 minutes at a time for adults and five minutes at a time for children and youth. Start slowly and build up.

Eat well
Another important step towards better health and a healthy body weight is to follow Canada's Food Guide by:
- Eating the recommended amount and type of food each day.
- Limiting foods and beverages high in calories, fat, sugar, or salt (sodium) such as cakes and pastries, chocolate and candies, cookies and granola bars, deep-fried foods, ice cream, and baked goods, including fried foods, French fries, potato chips, and other salty snacks, alcohol, fruit-flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports and energy drinks, and sweetened hot or cold drinks.

Read the label
- Compare the Nutrition Facts table on food labels to choose products that contain less fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, and sodium.
- Keep in mind that the calories and nutrients listed are for the amount of food found at the top of the Nutrition Facts table.

Limit trans fat
When a Nutrition Facts table is not available, look for nutrition information on websites or in nutrition books.

For more information, interactive tools, or additional copies visit Canada's Food Guide on-line at: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide

or contact:
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Également disponible en français sous le titre: Bien manger avec le Guide alimentaire canadien

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902-532-0490

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902-867-4500 ext. 4800

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14 Bay Street
902-226-2944

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902-295-2178

Barrington Passage
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902-538-3700

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902-275-3581

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St. Mary’s Hospital
91 Hospital Road
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7907 Highway 7
902-889-2143

Sydney
235 Townsend Street
2nd Floor
902-563-2400

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Buchanan Memorial Community Health Centre
902-336-2295

Sydney Mines
7 Fraser Avenue
902-736-6245

New Germany
New Germany and Area Medical Centre
100 Varner Road
902-644-2710

Truro
Colchester East Hants Health Centre
600 Abenaki Road
Level 1/Wing B
902-893-5820

Inverness
Inverness Consolidated Memorial Hospital
902-258-1920

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Hants Community Hospital
89 Payzant Drive
902-798-2264

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39 James Street
902-354-5737

Wolfville
Eastern Kings Memorial Community Health Centre
23 Earnscliffe Avenue
902-542-6310

Liverpool
Queen’s General Hospital
175 School Street
902-354-5737

Port Hawkesbury
708 Reeves Street, Unit 3
902-625-1693

Lunenburg
250 Green Street
902-634-4014

New Waterford
New Waterford Consolidated Hospital
716 King Street
902-862-2204

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Yarmouth Regional Hospital
60 Vancouver Street
4th Floor, Building B
902-742-7141