

EASY WAYS TO GET YOUR CHILD TO EAT LUNCH

Many parents struggle with getting their children to eat lunch. Children don't need a lot of food at one time but do need to eat frequently. Eating lunch will provide them with the fuel they need to pay attention and learn well for the rest of their school day. Lunch should include items from at least 3 of the 4 food groups from *Canada's Food Guide* as often as possible.

1. Include children in the planning. Children are more likely to eat lunch if they have had some say in what their choices are.
 - ◆ Take them grocery shopping, allow them to provide input into what goes in the shopping cart and ultimately what goes into the lunch bag.
 - ◆ Involve them in the preparation as much as possible.
2. Make lunch interesting. If children are intrigued by what is in their lunch bag they are more likely to eat it.
 - ◆ Mix and match colours, flavours and textures and use colourful packaging.
 - ◆ Cut vegetables into fun shapes and serve with a small container of dip.
 - ◆ Cut sandwiches or wraps into small pieces or fun shapes.
 - ◆ Once in a while include a non-food treat such as a note from home, stickers, a funky pencil, etc.
3. If your child has a small appetite, serve small portions. Kids, especially young ones, do not need a lot of food for lunch and may become overwhelmed with lots of food. Small frequent meals and snacks work best. Give small portions in easy-to-open containers that are easy to grab and eat rather than ones that require taking the whole lunch kit in order to eat.
4. Be a positive role model by packing your own lunch. Children who see adults pack a healthy lunch come to see this as a normal thing to do for school and work.

For more information contact:

- ◆ Your local Health Unit
- ◆ Dial-A-Dietitian 1-800-667-3438 OR www.dialadietitian.org