COOL LUNCH IDEAS FOR THE BALANCED SCHOOL DAY

Packing meals for the balanced school day can be an easy and fun task. Meals can be balanced in a variety of ways. You can organize your child's meals for their school breaks according to any of the 3 examples:

	Example One	Example Two	Example Three
Break One	Snacks	½ of lunch + snack	Breakfast
Break Two	Lunch	½ of lunch + snack	Lunch

Each child has their own unique eating habits, likes, dislikes and appetite. Talk with your child to see what approach they would prefer when planning their meals for school. If your child does not eat breakfast before school, this can be a time to add breakfast into their daily routine.

Try to include **FOODS FROM <u>AT LEAST</u> 3 OF THE 4 FOOD GROUPS** for each break**.** The four food groups are:

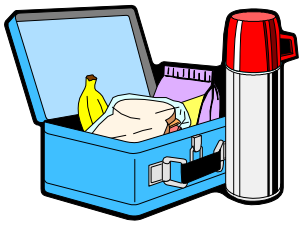
Grain Products
Vegetables and Fruit
Milk and Alternatives
Meat and Alternatives

Easy Tips to Help Pack School Meals Your Child Will Eat:

LABEL AND SEPARATE

- Label each bag: Break One, Break Two[1] OR
- Put dividers in the lunch bag so the child eats everything above the cardboard in the first break and then lifts the card and eats the rest at the second break[1]**.**

PLANNING AND PREPARING LUNCH



- Send leftovers, like cold pizza, stew, macaroni and cheese or soup, for one lunch break in a thermos. Use other break for snacks.
- When making weekend meals, make extra and freeze leftovers in individual portion sizes.
- Bake muffins, banana bread or cookies on the weekend to use during the week.

KEEPING FOODS HOT AND COLD

- To keep foods hot use an insulated bottle or thermos. First, fill the bottle with boiling water and let it stand for a few minutes. Then empty the bottle and fill it with steaming hot food.
- To keep food cold, use an insulated lunch bag and pack a frozen drink that will thaw by lunch, or use a freezer pack.
- Great food items to freeze are bottled water, drink boxes, reusable beverage containers or yogurt.

HEALTHY DRINKS FOR A HEALTHIER LUNCH

- Add 2 beverages. Choose from the following beverages most of the time: 100% unsweetened fruit juices, white or chocolate milk, fortified soy beverage or water.
- On pizza and sub days, make sure your child has either milk or juice to drink along with his/her sub or pizza. Send healthy snacks for the other break.

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[1] Toronto Star, August 30, 2003

Below are cool and nutritious menu ideas for your child's breaks. Mix and match menus or substitute with food items your child prefers. Also you can add more food or reduce portions depending on how much they eat. Use Canada's Food Guide for examples of serving sizes. Enjoy!

Involve your child in planning and preparing his/her lunches. This could be done the night before.

MONDAY			
Break One		**Break Two**	
Oatmeal Raisin Muffin	Grain Products: 1	Sliced turkey on whole wheat bread or bagel	Grain Products: 2 Meat & Alternatives: 1
Banana	Vegetable & Fruit:1	100% fruit juice Baby carrots	Vegetable & Fruit: 2
Milk	Milk & Alternatives: 1	Milk pudding cup	Milk & Alternatives: 1

TUESDAY			
Break One		**Break Two**	
Container with whole grain cereal	Grain Product: 1	One whole wheat tortilla or pita with salsa & cheese Water	Grain Products: 2 Milk & Alternatives: 1
Milk	Milk & Alternatives: 1		
Banana	Vegetable & Fruit: 1	Cucumber slices	Vegetable & Fruit: 1
Handful of nuts/ seeds*	Meat & Alternatives: ½	Chickpeas	Meat & Alternative: ½- 1

WEDNESDAY			
Break One		**Break Two**	
Cheese	Milk & Alternatives: 1	Chicken fingers & plum sauce	Meat & Alternatives: 1
Whole wheat crackers	Grain Products: 1	Breadsticks Low fat fruit cereal bar	Grain Products: 2
Grapes 100% fruit juice	Vegetables & Fruit: 2	Salad with dressing	Vegetables & Fruit: 1
		Fortified soy beverage	Milk & Alternatives: 1

THURSDAY			
Break One		**Break Two**	
1-2 Cold waffles Applesauce	Grain Products: 1-2 Vegetables & Fruit: 1	Homemade soup (with lean meat, vegetables) Applesauce	Meat & Alternatives: 1 Vegetable & Fruit: 2
Vanilla Yogurt	Milk & Alternatives: 1	Whole wheat crackers	Grain Products: 1
Water		Chocolate Milk	Milk & Alternatives: 1

FRIDAY			
Break One		**Break Two**	
One rolled roti or chapatti filled with vegetables and hummus; cut in half	Grain products: 1 Vegetable & Fruit: ½ Meat & Alternatives: ½	Other half of roti or chapatti Fig Bars Strawberries	Grain Products: 2 Meat & Alternatives: ½ Vegetable & Fruit: 1 ½
100% fruit juice	Vegetables & Fruit: 1	Yogurt drink	Milk & Alternatives: 1
Yogurt	Milk & Alternatives: 1		

* Always check with your children's school before sending any nuts or nut products to school. There may be restrictions on their use.

For more nutrition information, please call the Region of Peel - Public Health at 905-799-7700. Caledon residents call free of charge 905-584-2216.

Produced by Peel Public Health Registered Dietitians. Adapted from materials produced by Chatham-Kent Public Health Services and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Health Unit. May be reproduced provided source is acknowledged. Rev. April '07