

# Eating Between The Lines



## **What Makes a Healthy Meal?**

Today's fast-paced lifestyle may have you wondering how well your family is eating and whether you can help them eat better. Are you and your children eating breakfast before you run off for the day? Does your family pack a healthy lunch and snacks?

How do you know if your family's meals are nutritionally complete with enough vitamins, minerals, protein and fiber? Eating well with Canada's Food Guide is your best bet to build healthy meals for your family.

Eating well with Canada's Food Guide outlines how much you and your child(ren) need from each of the four food groups every day. It features a rainbow to remind us that it takes all four colours to make a rainbow, and all four food groups to make a healthy meal.

For a healthy meal, include at least three of the four food groups. For example; a chicken sandwich on whole wheat bread, carrot sticks, an apple, and a yogurt or glass of milk would have included all four food groups.

Here are some helpful tips to help you pack more nutrition into your family's meals.

## **Have breakfast every day!**

Eating breakfast provides energy to get you going, improves concentration. People who eat breakfast are more likely to have a healthy weight. For a quick breakfast: enjoy a whole grain cereal with milk and a piece of fruit; make a smoothie with yogurt and fresh, frozen or canned fruit and have it with half a whole wheat bagel or small oatmeal or lower fat bran muffin; cook up a poached or scrambled egg in the microwave and have it on a whole wheat english muffin, along with a glass of juice.

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## **Eat a healthy lunch!**

A missed meal can leave you or your child hungry and may cause overeating later in the day. Whether you eat lunch at home, at work or at school, there are many ways to include foods from all food groups.

## **For a balanced lunch:**

have sandwiches made with lean chicken, turkey, ham or beef, or egg, salmon or light tuna; use whole grain bread, buns, bagels, pita bread, or flour tortilla wraps; serve with raw veggie sticks and a glass of milk;  
take a thermos of soup- try broccoli, carrot, tomato, squash or minestrone soup and enjoy with cheese and crackers and some fruit;  
enjoy a Greek salad with a lower fat dressing, whole wheat pita bread triangles and tzatziki (a yummy creamy garlic sauce);  
add skinless cooked chicken to a leafy green salad, bean salad, or mix with leftover rice or noodles and steamed vegetables; enjoy with a glass of milk.

Save time by doing some of the preparation work earlier in the week or the night before, such as prepare vegetables, and thaw frozen meat, fish or chicken in the refrigerator.

## **Here are some fast and easy meals you can try:**

serve cooked deli chicken with bagged salad, baby carrots and whole grain buns;  
cook once and have two meals - make up a batch of soup or stew or two lasagnas instead of one and freeze extras for a meal another day;  
add beans or cooked chicken, beef or fish to salads, or to make enchiladas, sandwiches or wraps;  
use prepared tomato based sauces to make pasta dishes and canned beans for bean burritos or chili;  
start with canned or boxed soup (preferably lower sodium) and add extra veggies, pasta or leftover meat or beans;  
steam frozen vegetables, rice, and poached fish for a meal cooked less than 30 minutes;

Share recipe and meal ideas with family and friends to add to your collection.

For more tips on healthy eating for families go to the:  
Dietitians of Canada, [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca) or  
PEI Healthy Eating Alliance [www.peihealthyeating.ca](http://www.peihealthyeating.ca) website.

Adapted from EatRight Ontario, [www.eatrightontario.ca](http://www.eatrightontario.ca) and  
Dietitians of Canada, [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)