

Healthy Packed Lunches

- School age children must bring a packed lunch for camp, school breaks, and PA days.
- Upper Canada Child Care (UCCC) offers two nutritious snacks per day to all children.

UCCC educators examine all lunches brought from home to ensure they are **nutritionally-balanced** and **do not contain items posing a threat to children with specific allergies (e.g. peanuts/nuts)**. Lunch bags and drinks should be **clearly labelled with the child's name** and **contain an ice pack for cold foods and/or thermos for hot foods to maintain maximal nutritional value and avoid spoilage**. Parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted if their child's lunch is forgotten or is nutritionally inadequate. *Where it is not possible for parent(s)/guardian(s) to rectify the situation in a timely fashion, UCCC will supply/supplement a lunch.

Things to Consider

Think food groups: Aim to **include at least 3 of the 4 food groups** in your child's lunch. As children generally eat three meals a day, lunch should be comprised of approximately 1/3 the daily recommended servings for your child's age group. To review food groups, recommended numbers of servings, and serving sizes for all age groups please refer to *Canada's food guide*:
<https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/>

Change it up! Offer a variety of foods. Simple changes (e.g. type of grain) can make lunch more interesting. Pairing novel choices with old favourites can help "picky eaters" branch out.

Remember: prepackaged foods can contain high amounts of sodium, sugars, and fats.

Suggestions for nutritious lunch options:

- Homemade soup in a thermos with pasta and vegetables, and whole wheat roll
- Quinoa salad with feta, cherry tomatoes, cucumber and balsamic dressing
- Leftover chilli with shredded cheese and nacho chips
- Whole wheat pita with tuna, sliced cucumbers, and cream cheese
- Tofu and vegetable stir-fry
- Lentils, onions, and rice
- Leftover pasta with carrot sticks

To keep packed lunches safe:

- Start with a **clean counter, utensils and hands**.
- **Pack foods in an insulated bag with a small ice pack** and **pack hot lunches in a thermos** to maintain maximal nutritional value and avoid spoilage.
- Use only **fresh foods** or **leftovers that are not more than one day old**.
- All **fruits and vegetables** should be **washed well under cold running tap water**.
- Use **clean, reusable containers**, and **wash thoroughly after each use**.
- Lunch bags and drinks should be **clearly labelled with your child's name**.

To protect the children in our programs with life-threatening allergies:

- **Be aware of ingredients. Avoid foods containing peanuts/nuts/other identified allergens.**
- **Avoid cross-contamination with allergens** (e.g. do not use the same cutting board to prepare toast with peanut butter and then a sandwich without washing in between).