



**EAT
RIGHT
BE
ACTIVE**

**A Guide for Caregivers of
Children Ages 6 - 8**



NUTRITION RESOURCE CENTRE

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Is my child growing well?.....	3
Eat right, be active quiz	4
Eat right: The basics.....	5
How much should I offer my child?	6-7
Eat right: Making it happen!	8
Label reading made easy	10
I'm thirsty!	11
Picky eaters	12
Breakfast made easy	13
A hand with lunches	14
Easy peanut-free lunches	15
Lunches for a balanced school day	16
Eat well at school	17
Eat well in your community	17
Make mealtimes a family affair	18
Cook together	19
Be active: The basics	20
How much activity is enough	20
Get up, get moving!	21
Be active at home	22
Pump up the fun	22
Be active together all year round	23
Be active at school	24
Support physical activity at school—What you can do	25
Be active in your community—What you can do	25
Need more information?	26-27

Introduction

We all want the best for our children. We want them to grow up healthy and feeling great. This booklet can help. It is full of everyday ideas that you as a busy parent or caregiver can put into action so your 6 - 8 year old can eat well and be active.

You are an important role model for your child. At home, at school and in the community, all the efforts you make will add up to a healthier child.

Note: In this booklet, "child" refers to children 6 - 8 years old. Both "him" and "her" are used throughout to describe your child. "Caregiver" refers to parents, caregivers and anyone else involved in your child's care.

Is my child growing well?

Some children naturally grow faster or slower than others. If your child seems happy, looks healthy, is usually hungry at mealtimes and is active, she is likely doing fine.

What is most important is the overall growth pattern, not the height or weight at any one time. Ask about the growth pattern of your child when you are visiting his health care provider.

Help your child to feel good about their body by praising their strengths, abilities and unique personality, not their appearance. Also try not to criticize your own body or the way others look.

Growth depends on many factors

- Family - parents' size and shape
- Age - children grow fastest as babies and teenagers
- General health - medical conditions, illnesses, medications
- Gender - boys and girls have different growth patterns
- Eating habits - what and how much your child eats
- Activity level - how active your child is, and for how long

Adapted from: *A Health Professional's Guide for using the WHO Growth Charts for Canada*, Dietitians of Canada, 2014

GOOD TO
KNOW!

Eat right, be active quiz

Helping your child to eat well and be active may be easier than you think. Answer with a **Yes** or **No**.

1. Is it important to eat meals together with my child? Yes No

Mealtimes are a chance for your child to learn your good eating and social habits. Eat together as often as possible.

2. Should I be active with my child every day? Yes No

Set a healthy example that your child can follow by being active together every day. Walk to the store, play catch, kick a ball around, or go hiking on the weekend.

3. Is it a good idea to let my child decide how much to eat? Yes No

Trust your child's appetite. When he is growing faster, he will be hungrier; when he is growing more slowly, he will eat less. It is okay if he does not finish every meal. As a parent, your job is to decide what, when and where to offer food, and your child's job is to decide how much and whether they eat the food.

4. Does my child's school have an impact on her eating and physical activity habits? Yes No

Your child spends a lot of time at school. How her school approaches nutrition and physical activity can have a big impact on her health. Healthy celebration options, non-food fundraising, milk programs and physical activity programs are all things you can talk to her school about.

5. If my child eats three healthy meals, does he need snacks too? Yes No

Your child should eat every 2 ½ - 3 hours. One or two healthy snacks plus three meals a day should be enough for healthy growth, and provide the energy to be physically active. Some days your child will eat a lot, sometimes he will eat a little. Your child may decide to say no to a snack or meal, and this is ok. Skipping one meal or snack is no cause for concern.

6. Do even short periods of being active help my child? Yes No

Your child needs at least 60 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily such as walking, biking or playing actively. Three times each week he also needs vigorous activities such as soccer or swimming and activities that strengthen muscle and bone such as gymnastics, tug of war or climbing on playground equipment.

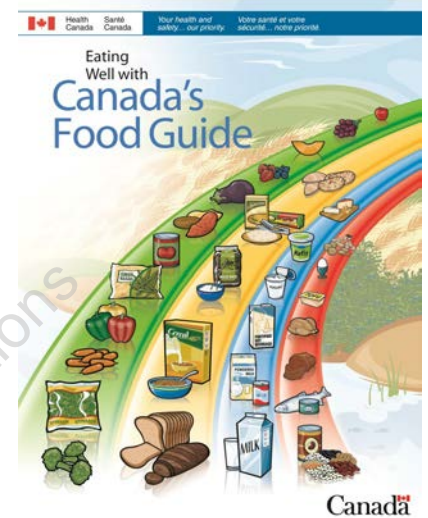
Quiz answers: All Yes

Eat right: The basics

The best way to eat well – for any of us – is to follow *Canada's Food Guide*. Just remember the Food Guide is exactly that - simply a guide, and not what you should expect your child to eat each day. What really counts are his eating habits over time.

Find out more:

To get a copy of the Food Guide go to www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide



Children who eat well and keep active

- Do better at school
- Feel good about themselves
- Have the energy to be active
- Build habits for lifelong healthy, active living







GOOD TO KNOW!

Have a nutrition question?

For advice about healthy eating that you can trust, speak to a Registered Dietitian. Call Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.

How much should I offer my child?

Canada's Food Guide gives recommendations on the number of servings for each food group each day. Food Guide servings can be divided into smaller meals and snacks that are offered regularly throughout the day. Offer your child small portions at meals and snacks and let your child decide how much to eat.








Ages 6-8	What is a Food Guide serving?	It looks like...
Vegetables and Fruit		
5 Food Guide servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 piece of fruit • 125 mL (½ cup) fresh, frozen or canned vegetables or tomato sauce, and fruit • 250 mL (1 cup) leafy raw vegetables or salad 	 A tennis ball  A fist
Grain Products		
4 Food Guide servings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice of bread • ½ bagel • ½ pita or ½ large tortilla • 125 mL (½ cup) cooked rice, bulgur, quinoa, pasta or couscous • 175 mL (¾ cup) hot cereal • 30 g cold cereal 	 A hockey puck  A hand  A tennis ball  A cupped hand It varies. Check the label.

Does my child need a vitamin and mineral supplement?

GOOD TO KNOW!

If your child is healthy and his growth is normal, supplements are usually not necessary. Supplements do not provide the benefits of food such as calories, fibre, carbohydrate, fat and protein. If you have concerns, talk to your health care provider about the need for a supplement.

Note: Supplements can be dangerous if too many are taken at once. Keep them locked away, out of a child's reach.

Ages 6-8	What is a Food Guide serving?	It looks like...
Milk and Alternatives		
<p>2 Food Guide servings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 mL (1 cup) milk or fortified soy beverage • 175 g (¾ cup) yogurt • 50 g (1 ½ oz) hard cheese 	 Small measuring cup  Single container  Size of 2 thumbs
Meat and Alternatives		
<p>1 Food Guide serving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 eggs • 30 mL (2 tbsp) peanut butter or other nut butters • 60 mL (4 tbsp) shelled nuts or seeds • 125 mL (½ cup) or 75 g (2 ½ oz) cooked fish*, shellfish, poultry, lean meat or game meat • 175 mL (¾ cup) cooked and canned beans, lentils, chickpeas, edamame (soybeans), hummus or tofu 	 1 golf ball  2 golf balls  A hockey puck  A cupped hand

Adapted from: *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*. Health Canada, 2007

*See page 10 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.



Canada

GOOD TO KNOW!

Split up your servings

One Food Guide serving can be divided into smaller amounts and served throughout the day. For example, a serving of Meat and Alternatives can be split up and served at two different meals - your child could have an egg at lunch and a few forkfuls of chicken at dinner.

Eat right: Making it happen!

Wondering what foods to serve?

The following charts will guide you on what to serve for meals and snacks. Choose whole foods more often than processed foods. When choosing packaged foods, compare food labels and go for foods that are lower in salt (sodium), saturated and trans fats, and sugar and higher in vitamins, minerals and fibre – a good recipe for healthy, active kids.

Try this:

From the charts listed on the next page, check off the foods you serve your child. Now, do you serve them every day, sometimes, or limit them as suggested? What “Healthy foods to serve most often” are you eating everyday?

GOOD TO KNOW!

Cut costs and boost nutrition

The “Healthy foods to serve most often” (next page) give you a lot of nutritional goodness for your money. You can also:

- Buy fresh vegetables and fruit in season, and buy frozen or canned at other times.
- Buy meat on sale and freeze any extra.
- Substitute beans, lentils, canned fish*, tofu or eggs for meat.
- Choose store brands in larger packages and compare to bulk prices.
- Buy less-processed foods. Instead of a small box of flavoured rice, why not choose a large bag of brown rice and flavour it yourself?

GOOD TO KNOW!

Make at least half of your grains 100% whole grain each day

- Eat a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.
- Enjoy whole grain breads, steel cut or large flake oatmeal and whole wheat pasta.



*See page 10 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Healthy foods to serve most often

Vegetables and Fruit	Grain Products	Milk and Alternatives	Meat and Alternatives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh vegetables and fruit • Frozen/low sodium canned vegetables • Frozen/canned fruits in water (not syrup) • Homemade vegetable soups (e.g., tomato, carrot, butternut squash) • Unsweetened fruit sauce or fruit blends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain cereals (6 g of sugar per serving or less) • Whole grain: bread, bagels, English muffins, pitas, buns, crackers, tortillas and muffins • Whole grain noodles, pasta and couscous • Quinoa, couscous, brown rice and bulgur • Whole grain roti, chapatti and naan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk: skim, 1% or 2%, white • Unsweetened fortified soy beverage • Plain yogurt • Smoothies made with milk and/or plain yogurt • Kefir • Hard cheese • Powdered milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tofu • Beans, peas, lentils • Hummus • Nut and/or peanut butter; nuts, seeds (plain, unsalted) • Fish*, seafood, canned fish in water* • Eggs • Chicken, turkey • Lean beef and pork • Game meat

Foods to serve sometimes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vegetables with sauces or breading • 100% fruit juice • Salsa • Canned, low sodium vegetable soups • Dried fruits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Granola bars (6 g of sugar or less) • Popcorn (plain) • Pretzels • Fruit crisps, cobblers • Cookies • Biscuits/scones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chocolate milk • Hot chocolate made with milk • Pudding made with milk • Frozen yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deli meats: roast beef, turkey, ham • Fish sticks, chicken strips, nuggets • Back bacon
---	--	---	---

Foods, beverages and extras to limit

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastries, danishes • Cakes, pies, sticky buns, donuts, tarts • Cereals or granola bars with more than 6 g of sugar per serving • Cookies with icing • Instant noodle soups • Pop and diet pop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit drinks (punch) • Sports drinks • Syrups, jello • Frozen ice treats • Sherbet, ice cream • Marshmallows • Whipped cream, whipped topping • Candy, chocolate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potato chips, nacho chips • Cheezies • French fries • Hot dogs, sausages • Sour cream • Processed-cheese slices • Pepperoni sticks • Strip bacon • Gravy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ketchup, mustard, relish • Butter, hard margarine • Cream cheese • Sweetened fruit juices • Custards • Milkshakes • Cheese spreads • Dried fruit bars • Salad dressing
--	---	--	--

*See page 10 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Adapted from: *Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment*. Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health and *Healthy Eating and Active Living for your 6 to 12 year old*. Alberta Health and Wellness, 2006

Label reading made easy

Eating well is easier if you have healthy choices on hand. When you buy packaged foods, compare the Nutrition Facts on each label.

- Step 1.** Check the serving size on each brand to see if you are comparing similar amounts.
- Step 2.** Look at the % Daily Value (% DV). 5% DV or less is a little. 15% DV or more is a lot. Use the % DV to compare food products to make healthier choices.
- Step 3.** Nutrients you may want **more** of are fibre, calcium and iron.
- Step 4.** Nutrients you may want **less** of are saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 90 g serving (2 slices)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 170	
Fat 2.7 g	4 %
Saturated 0.5 g + Trans 0 g	5 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 200 mg	8 %
Carbohydrate 36 g	13 %
Fibre 6 g	24 %
Sugars 3 g	
Protein 8 g	
Vitamin A 1 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 2 %	Iron 16 %

Find out more:

- To learn more about label reading visit the Healthy Canadians website: www.healthycanadians.gc.ca. Select "Food and nutrition" and then "Food labels". You can also visit Unlock Food: www.unlockfood.ca and search "nutrition label".

Fabulous fish

Many fish and shellfish are healthy and safe for the entire family to eat.

Fish provides protein as well as many nutrients and essential fats. The healthy fats help in the normal development of the brain and eye in young children.

Serve fish or shellfish at least twice a week. Choose fish and shellfish that are low in mercury, such as cod, haddock, rainbow trout, tilapia, sardines, salmon (including canned salmon), canned tuna (choose skipjack, yellowfin or tongol), pollock (Boston bluefish) and shrimp. Mercury is harmful to the developing brain in children of all ages.

Find out more:

- Speak with a Registered Dietitian about choosing fish wisely by calling Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000.
- To learn about fish that are safe to eat in your area, see the Government of Ontario's *Guide to Eating Ontario Fish*, listed on page 27.



GOOD TO KNOW!

I'm thirsty!

Quench your child's thirst with the right drink at the right time. Serve drinks in an open cup.

Serve:

- **Water first for quenching thirst.** Serve water when your child is thirsty between meals and snacks. Water won't spoil your child's appetite between meals. Remember to serve water, especially when children are active, and when the weather is hot.
- **Milk with meals and snacks.** Children need 500 mL (2 cups) of milk (skim, 1% or 2%) per day. If your child cannot drink milk, substitute with unsweetened fortified soy beverage. Limit or avoid sweetened and flavoured milk and soy beverages. Plant-based beverages (e.g., rice, almond, coconut) are not recommended for children as they are significantly lower in protein and overall calories needed for growing children.

Limit:

- **Unsweetened fruit juice.** Limit or avoid juice intake and offer vegetables and fruit more often. Fruit juice is a concentrated source of sugar with no fibre. Juice leaves less room for healthy food choices and can also lead to dental cavities. If juice is served, choose 100% juice and limit to no more than 125 – 175 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) per day for 6 year olds and 250 mL (1 cup) per day for 7 - 8 year olds. Diluting juice does not reduce the risk of tooth decay.

Do not serve:

- **Sweetened and diet drinks.** Pop, diet pop, sports drinks, fruit cocktails, punches, energy drinks, iced tea, and lemonade are not recommended for children. They offer little or no nutrition and take the place of healthier food options. They can also lead to dental caries if consumed often throughout the day. Offer water or milk at meals and snacks.

Try:

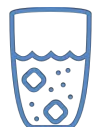
- Water with frozen berries or grapes, served as edible ice cubes, in a fancy cup.
- Fruit smoothies (homemade with frozen fruit and yogurt) in popsicle molds.

GOOD TO KNOW!

Make water fun!

You can add flavour to water by adding fruit or vegetables, such as slices of orange, lemon, berries, and cucumber. Flavouring your water with real fruit adds flavour without the added sugar, a better option for your child. Experiment with different combinations to see what you and your child/children like best! Try these examples:

- Sliced strawberries and lemon wedges
- Watermelon chunks and mint pieces
- Cucumber slices and lime wedges



Picky eaters

It can be frustrating when your child is picky about eating. Try the ideas below to help your child eat well. Discuss any concerns with your health care provider.

- **Help your child come to the table hungry.** Keep her active during the day, serve meals and snacks at least 2 ½ hours apart, and offer only water between meals and snacks.
- **Let your child serve himself.** Trust that he will choose an amount right for him from the healthy choices you offer.
- **Make one family meal.** That will help your child get used to eating the family meal rather than eating a separate meal. Include at least one food you know your child will like at mealtimes.
- **Keep mealtimes positive.** Talk about your child's day, not what and how much he is eating. Children who feel pressured to eat often eat less, especially if you try to bribe or trick them (that includes the one-bite rule).
- **Don't give up.** Your child may need to try a food 10 times or more before he likes it. Keep serving a refused food in different ways, again and again without any pressure to try it.
- **Let her see you eating well.** In time, she will copy your good example.
- **Involve him.** Plan, shop and cook together. Visit a pick-your-own farm. Check out: www.harvestontario.com.

GOOD TO KNOW!

How can I get my child to eat vegetables?

Many children are not big vegetable lovers, but this will change over time. As your child's sense of taste develops, she might decide broccoli tastes pretty good after all. In the meantime, don't pressure her. Try this instead:

- Serve a vegetable with each meal or snack.
- Grow some vegetables.
- Serve colourful veggies with a dip when he is hungry.
- Offer frozen vegetables - yes, still frozen solid!
- Load up pizza, sandwiches, pasta sauces and soups with vegetables. You can even puree the veggies.



Find recipes and more at www.ontario.ca/foodland-ontario and www.unlockfood.ca.

Breakfast made easy

At home or on the go, when your child starts her day with breakfast she is ready to learn, be active and feel great. Here are some easy breakfast ideas with foods from at least 3 food groups – a healthy start to a terrific day!

- **Banana split breakfast.** Slice a banana in a bowl. Add a big spoonful of yogurt in the centre. Top with granola, and any of: frozen berries, kiwi slices or canned apricots.
- **Packing breakfast to go.** Try cut-up fruit, a chunk of cheese and homemade whole grain muffin; a piece of fruit with a hard-boiled egg and a whole grain bagel; or yogurt with berries and homemade trail mix or granola.
- **Remember last night's leftovers.** Have last night's leftovers and enjoy with a glass of milk or fortified soy beverage.
- **Apple pie porridge.** Oatmeal made with quick cooking oats is almost as fast as making instant oatmeal but better. Add boiling water and milk and stir in some cinnamon and diced apples.
- **Homemade egg sandwich.** Beat one egg and 15 mL (1 tbsp) of milk in a microwave-safe mug. Microwave the egg for 30-40 seconds on high and place on a toasted whole wheat English muffin with 2 slices of your favourite hard cheese. Serve with cut-up fruit and milk.
- **Tasty toast.** Thinly spread natural nut butter over whole grain toast topped with sliced pears, strawberries or bananas. Enjoy with a glass of milk.

Snacks to go!

Your child needs 1 - 2 healthy snacks a day to stay energized. Teach her how to make some simple snacks or "mini meals" using small portions from 2 or 3 food groups. Try:

- Fruit smoothie
- Half a sandwich, yogurt, water
- Cut-up veggies, hummus, whole grain pita, water
- Yogurt, tangerine, water
- Homemade oatmeal muffin, cut-up cantaloupe, water

GOOD TO KNOW!

Beat the clock!

- Make lunches and set your table for breakfast the night before.
- Lay clothes out for the next day.
- Get knapsacks all ready to go at the door.

A hand with lunches

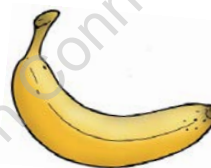
Active, growing kids need a healthy lunch with foods from three or four food groups. Here's how to make packing lunches easier:

- **Enlist a helper.** Brainstorm lunch ideas with him. Go shopping together. Teach him how to make a simple lunch.
- **Leftovers for lunch?** Pack them in a thermos.
- **Trade ideas.** Share easy, kid-friendly lunch ideas with friends and family.
- **Get organized.** Keep all your lunch stuff in one spot: re-useable containers, lunch bags, thermos. Make sure your child can open the containers on her own.

GOOD TO KNOW!

Help! My son wants the same lunch every day

As long as his lunch contains food group foods (for example, an egg-salad sandwich, milk and an apple), always wanting the same thing is okay. Offer a variety of foods at other meals and snack times to make up for nutrients he may be missing at lunch.



GOOD TO KNOW!

Keeping bag lunches safe

Keep hot foods hot. Fill your child's wide-mouthed thermos with boiling water. Let it stand for two minutes. Pour out the water and quickly add the hot food. Keep tightly closed.

Keep cold foods cold. Add a frozen water bottle or an ice pack to an insulated bag.

Find out more:
visit www.befoodsafe.ca.

Easy peanut-free lunches

Play it safe by sending only peanut-free lunches to your child's school.



Leftovers

- Vegetarian chili, small whole wheat roll with slice of hard cheese, fruit cup, water
- Curried beef with vegetables, pita wedges, kiwi, mini banana muffin, water
- Chicken thigh, whole wheat couscous, raw carrots, wedge of cantaloupe, milk

Fun sandwiches and wraps

- Whole wheat bagel with sliced hard cheese and apples, yogurt, graham wafers, water
- Whole wheat hot dog bun, tzatziki as spread, leftover chicken with thinly sliced peppers, an orange, milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverage
- Leftover stir fry wrapped in a whole wheat tortilla, nectarine, milk

Tasty tidbits

- Cheese and fruit kabob, whole wheat pita wedges, salsa and refried beans for dipping, fortified soy beverage
- Pieces of cold cooked meat (chicken or beef), frozen berries mixed into yogurt, bread sticks, water
- Chickpeas, tomato and green pepper salad, yogurt, whole wheat crackers with slice of hard cheese, water

Find out more:

- Visit www.unlockfood.ca.
- Contact your local public health unit or community health centre.
- Learn more about peanut allergies at Allergy/Asthma Information Association: www.aaia.ca.

Food allergies and intolerances

GOOD TO KNOW!

If you think your child has a food allergy or intolerance, talk to his health care provider about allergy tests. If he needs to change his diet, a Registered Dietitian can help.

Find out more at Food Allergy Canada: www.foodallergycanada.ca.

Lunches for a balanced school day

If your child gets two breaks instead of one lunch and two recesses, ask how she wants her lunch packed:

- All in one bag, with the food for each break separated by a piece of cardboard (different coloured containers work too).

Or

- In two labeled bags: "Break 1" and "Break 2".

Three ways to pack a lunch

Break 1	Break 2
Snack and water/ milk.	Lunch and water/ milk.
Lunch and water/ milk.	Snack and water/ milk.
½ lunch plus water/ milk.	½ lunch plus water/ milk.

Here's an example:

Break 1	Break 2
1/2 lunch plus snack and beverage.	1/2 lunch plus snack and beverage.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ sandwich (whole wheat bagel with cooked turkey, slice of Swiss cheese, lettuce and mustard) • ½ small container of baby carrots and green pepper slices • 1 mini homemade carrot bran muffin • Small container strawberry yogurt • 250 mL (1 cup) 1% milk • Water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ sandwich (whole wheat bagel with cooked turkey, slice of Swiss cheese, lettuce and mustard) • ½ small container of baby carrots and green pepper slices • 1 small apple • Small container of grapes • Water

Adapted from: *Cool lunch ideas for the balanced school day*. Public Health Nutritionists/Dietitians in Ontario, 2004

Eat well at school

It's a fact: healthy children learn better.

Healthy eating is easier when your child's school:

- Uses non-food items for student prizes, rewards and fundraisers.
- Offers healthy choices for class parties, in vending machines and on special (pizza, sub) lunch days.
- Serves culturally appropriate, healthy choices in nutrition programs.
- Ensures teachers are trained to teach about healthy eating.
- Provides at least 20 minutes to eat and socialize over lunch.

What you can do:

- Send healthy choices to school for lunches, snacks and parties.
- Promote non-food fundraisers like a dance-a-thon, silent auction, book sale or gift cards.
- Encourage school staff to contact their local health unit for support in becoming a healthy school.
- Support positive changes already underway, such as volunteering for a nutrition program.
- Organize or suggest the school have a milk program at lunch.
- All school boards in Ontario follow the School Food and Beverage policy. To learn more visit <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/policy.html>. Private schools may or may not have a food policy. Call to find out or to get involved.

Adapted from: *Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment*, Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health School Nutrition Work Group, 2004

Eat well in your community

Help to make it easier to eat well in the community where your child lives and plays.

What you can do:

- Tell your elected officials you want healthy food and beverage choices in public places such as recreation centres and arenas.
- Pack healthy snacks and drinks for your child.
- Join or start a community garden.
- Find out if there is a "Good Food Box" program in your area. Contact your local public health unit or visit: www.foodshare.net/good-food-box.

Make mealtimes a family affair

Gathering your family around the table for at least one meal a day is a perfect way for your child to learn healthy eating habits, table manners and social skills.

- **Make regular mealtimes the priority.** Show your child that no matter how busy life gets, it is important to sit down and enjoy eating together.
- **Plan ahead.** Save time and money by planning meals one or two days in advance. Choose simple recipes with healthy ingredients.
- **Cook quick meals.** Stock up on time saving foods like eggs, canned beans, hummus, pre-rolled homemade meatballs, plain frozen vegetables and fruit, whole grain pizza crusts, canned fish* in water, and individually frozen plain chicken thighs.
- **Get everyone helping.** Involve the whole gang in shopping, cooking, setting the table and cleaning up.
- **Keep it cheerful.** Over dinner, ask about the best part of your child's day. Plan an active weekend outing. And be firm: no TV, electronic devices or toys at the table.
- **Cook once, eat twice.** Use leftovers as the ingredients for a different dish. Put any extra grilled salmon in quiche, sandwiches or salmon cakes. Cook two batches of a meal and freeze one.

*See page 10 of this booklet for important information about choosing fish wisely.

Get through your busy week easier by menu planning. Here's how:

- Check the fridge, freezer and cupboards. Plan to use those foods first.
- Look over store flyers. List any healthy choices on special and stock up if possible.
- List some healthy family favourite meal ideas. Ask your children for ideas.
- Plan a few lunches and dinners ahead. Keep dinner meals simple and healthy.
- Serve vegetables and/or fruit with every meal and snack, as often as possible.

GOOD TO KNOW!

Cook together

Enjoy good times cooking with your child. Not only will he learn an important life skill, but he may be more willing to try a food he has helped make. At the same time, he will be learning basic math, language and science skills.

Tips for success:

- Cook together when you can take your time. Weekends may be best.
- Keep recipes simple and always supervise him.
- Let him do as much as he can. Most of us learn better by doing than watching.
- Make it fun so he will want to keep on cooking.

Your child can:

- Read and follow recipes with your help.
- Gather, measure, pour and mix ingredients.
- Use a toaster, blender, peeler, grater, can opener, small knife (for easier-to-cut foods like soft fruit) with your help.
- Learn kitchen safety from the tips you share and the example you set.

Six simple ideas to try:

1. **French toast and fruit salad.** Stale bread works best! Try blending a ripe banana into the egg and milk mixture for banana French toast.
2. **Homemade hummus and warmed pita wedges.** For a change, blend mashed sweet potato into the hummus.
3. **Homemade vegetable soup and cheesy garlic toast.** Use leftover, fresh, plain frozen and/or rinsed canned veggies to make the soup.
4. **Cinnamon crisps with fruity salsa.** Cut whole-wheat tortillas into wedges, dust with cinnamon and bake until crispy. Dice a variety of fruit and mix with a little honey to make salsa.
5. **Fresh spring rolls.** Soften rice paper wrappers in warm water, add filling and wrap. Filling ideas: chopped hard-cooked eggs, tofu, or leftover cooked meats, grated carrots, chopped lettuce, tomato or cucumber.
6. **Whole-wheat pita pizzas and smoothie.** Let your child invent a smoothie recipe by blending any type of fruit, yogurt and some ice to make it frosty cold!

Be active: The basics

Children should be physically active every day as part of play, games, sports, transportation, recreation, physical education or planned exercise. Activities can be part of daily routines at home, at school and in the community. Being physically active with family and friends is important for healthy growth and development in children.

How much activity is enough?

For healthy growth and development, the Canadian 24-hour Movement Guidelines* recommend that children and youth **aged 5-17 years accumulate several hours of a variety of structured and unstructured** light physical activities every day.

More daily physical activity provides greater health benefits. Here's how it breaks down:

Vigorous-intensity activities



at least 3 days per week

Activities that strengthen muscle and bone



at least 3 days per week

Being active for at least 60 minutes daily can help children:

- Improve their health and fitness
- Grow stronger
- Perform better in school
- Have fun playing with family and friends
- Feel happier
- Improve their self-confidence
- Learn new skills

GOOD TO KNOW!

Source: *Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth* (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, www.csep.ca/guidelines) and *Aerobic, Muscle- and Bone-Strengthening: What Counts?* (Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, www.cdc.gov)

Get up, get moving!

Moderate-vigorous intensity activities: cause children to sweat a little and breathe harder	Vigorous-intensity activities: cause children to sweat and be out of breath	Strengthening activities: build up children's muscle and bones
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • walking quickly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • skating • skateboarding • bike riding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • running • basketball • soccer • cross-country skiing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • climbing • using playground equipment • jumping rope

Enjoy being active together and encourage her efforts to try new physical activities as a family such as sledding, tag, hiking, baseball, hockey, dancing, cross-country skiing, tennis and biking. Your child will develop skills and confidence to continue to do these activities with friends as she gets older.

GOOD TO KNOW!

Limit sedentary and screen time

For health benefits, children aged 5-11 years should minimize the amount of time they are sedentary each day. Limit screen time to no more than 2 hours per day and reduce time spent riding in motorized vehicles, sitting for long periods and time spent indoors.

For more information visit: Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth: www.csep.ca/guidelines.

Be active at home

Active parents have active kids. Make time to be active with your child. Here's how:

- Work activity into your daily routine. Walk instead of driving, or park the car a few blocks from your child's school and walk from there. After dinner, plan 20 minutes or more of outdoor play time.
- Replace screen time with active time. Allow at most two hours a day for TV, computers and video games. Less is even better.
- Make fast healthy dinners. That will leave more time to be active together. Giving everyone a cleanup task can help too.
- Plan to be active on weekends and during vacations. Visit the zoo or explore a beach. You could also try camping.

Pump up the fun

The more your child enjoys being active, the more she will want to keep at it.

- Let her pick the activities she wants to do.
- Focus on the social and fun aspects of sports, and less on winning.
- Invite friends, neighbours and family to join in. Meet at a park or pool.
- Fill a jar with ideas for being active. Each weekend, pull out a new activity to try.
- Teach her a new skill, activity or sport: skating, swimming, catching a ball, skipping or riding a bike. Consider some non-traditional activities such as snowshoeing, yoga or paddle boarding.
- Get in the game. Watching your child play is nice but playing with her is way more fun.
- Have fun and play safely. For safety tips visit www.parachutecanada.org or contact your local public health unit. Find your local public health unit by going to www.health.gov.on.ca (Select "Health Services in Your Community", "Public Health Units" and then "Public Health Unit Locations").

Be active together all year round

As a family, brainstorm activities you would all like to try. Then write them into your calendar. That way you'll be more likely to stick to it.

Spring	Summer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play catch or soccer after school, then walk home• Plant a garden at home or in a community garden• Try in-line skating or riding a scooter• Play hopscotch• Fly a kite• Go to the park• Jump in puddles on a rainy day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Try badminton, baseball, basketball and beach volleyball• Visit a splash pad or local pool• Dribble a soccer ball around an obstacle course• Visit a pick-your-own farm• Try a camping, canoeing or biking vacation
Fall	Winter
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rake the leaves• Go bowling• Go apple or pumpkin picking• Explore a local pond or creek• Take a short jog or walk after supper• Walk to school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Shovel snow or build a snowman• Play indoor basketball and beach ball volleyball• Go skating, skiing or snowshoeing• Go for a winter hike• Play "snow pitch" baseball using a brightly coloured ball• Go tobogganing or sledding

Affordable sports equipment

- Go to garage sales and second-hand stores that sell gently used equipment such as bikes, ice skates, baseball gloves and bats, soccer balls, footballs and basketballs.
- Buy equipment or clothing that is a previous year's model.
- Organize a sports swap at your school or start a donation box for used equipment.
- Avoid buying equipment for your child to "grow into." Proper fit is important.
- Improvise. Use clothing as pylons/ground markers, bed sheets as parachutes, and empty two-litre beverage containers as bowling pins.
- **Always buy new helmets.** You cannot tell if a used one is damaged.

GOOD TO KNOW!

Be active at school

Physical Education

Health and physical education classes are part of the curriculum. Every child should receive physical education from a qualified teacher. This gives your child a chance to learn, practice and develop movement skills now so she can enjoy lifelong physical activity.

Good questions to ask your school:

- How often does he receive physical education?
- Who is teaching physical education? Is the teacher qualified? Enthusiastic?
- Is the school providing the mandated 20 minutes of sustained moderate to vigorous physical activity each school day?*
- Does the school have the resources to provide a strong program - equipment, facilities, teaching support?

If the answer to any of those questions is "No":

- Talk to your principal, school board or school trustee about making quality physical education part of your child's school experience.
- Ask that quality physical education be added to the parent council agenda in order to make other parents aware of its importance.
- Ask that physical education be taught by a qualified teacher. This may be done by looking for teachers with a physical education degree when hiring new teachers.

Physical Activity

As well as physical education classes, children also need the chance to be physically active before and after school, and at recess and lunch.

Great ideas for schools:

- Paint hopscotch and four-square game lines on the paved play surface around the school.
- Train older students to organize and lead games at recess and lunch.
- Provide each class with a recess/lunch bin full of equipment such as skipping ropes, balls, lightweight Frisbees and sidewalk chalk.
- Participate in a "Walking Wednesday" program. Find out about the Active and Safe Routes to School program at www.saferoutestoschool.ca.
- Provide a safe place to lock up bikes, preferably close to the front of the school.
- Offer both competitive and non-competitive sport and physical activity opportunities before, during and after school.

* Source: Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education, *Healthy Schools, Daily Physical Activity*.
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/dpa.html

Support physical activity at school—

What you can do:

- Help organize or lead lunch and after-school physical activities.
- Volunteer to coach an intramural sports team.
- Encourage your child to join in school sports and other physical activities.
- Walk or bike to school with your child.
- After school, join in a game of soccer.
- Suggest a policy that does not take away recess or physical education as a way to discipline students.
- Help to brainstorm ideas for active fundraisers, such as a dance-a-thon.

Be active in your community—

What you can do:

- Let your elected officials know what your community needs to make being active easier.
- Consider community programs such as Girl Guides (www.guidesontario.org) or Cubs (www.scouts.ca).
- Check out the *Ontario - Yours to Discover* travel website at: www.ontariotravel.net for local sightseeing, museums, festivals and events.
- To find out more about active transportation, check out your local public health unit website. Find your local public health unit by going to www.health.gov.on.ca (Select “Health Services in Your Community”, “Public Health Units” and then “Public Health Unit Locations”).
- Map out the best locations in your community for activity: pools, parks, arenas, sports fields, outdoor skating rinks, sports clubs, toboggan hills, community gardens, and walking, biking and hiking paths.
- Participate in local active fundraising events such as the Terry Fox Run, Run for the Cure, Super Cities Walk for MS and many more.

Need more information?

Unlock Food & Telehealth Ontario

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit Unlock Food at: www.unlockfood.ca. You can also speak to a Registered Dietitian directly by calling Telehealth Ontario's toll-free telephone information service at 1-866-797-0000.

Websites

- Allergy/Asthma Information Association: www.aaia.ca
- Anaphylaxis Canada: www.anaphylaxis.ca
- Best Start Resource Centre: www.beststart.org
- Canada's Food Guide: www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide
- Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines: www.csep.ca/guidelines
- Canadian Safe Schools Network: www.canadiansafeschools.com
- Cyberbullying.ca: www.cyberbullying.ca
- Dietitians of Canada: www.dietitians.ca
- Ellyn Satter: www.ellynsatterinstitute.org
- Family Food Patch Youtube video series:
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCB1cquEpGBcspH-K1H6hpNQ>
- Food Allergy Canada: www.foodallergy.ca
- Foodland Ontario – Local Food Recipes: www.ontario.ca/foodland-ontario
- Government of Ontario – Guide to Eating Ontario Fish (2017-18):
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/eating-ontario-fish-2017-18>
- Have a Ball Together!: <http://haveaballtogether.ca/>
- Understanding nutrition labels: <http://www.unlockfood.ca/en/Videos/Nutrition-Labeling.aspx>
- ParticipACTION: www.participaction.com
- Parachute Canada: <http://www.parachutecanada.org/>
- Raising our Healthy Kids: <http://www.raisingourhealthykids.com/>
- Safe Kids Canada: www.parachutecanada.org

Need more information? Continued

Consult your public health unit, community health centre or family health team for information, referrals, handouts and more about healthy eating, physical activity and safety.

- To find out where your local public health unit is, visit www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx.
- To find out where your local community health centre is, visit www.aohc.org and click on “Find a centre”.
- To find out where your local family health team is, visit http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/fht/fht_progress.aspx.

Copyright © 2017 Nutrition Connections

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all the contributors who have assisted in developing the original booklet and the several revisions over the years. Specifically, we would like to acknowledge the following contributors to this 2017 revised booklet:

Laura Atkinson BSc, RD – York Region Public Health

Ginette Blake, RD – Middlesex-London Health Unit

Melissa Cardinal, RD – Eastern Ontario Health Unit

Katie Neil, RD, MAN, MPH (c) – Oxford County Public Health

Lindsay Siple, MHS (c) – Physical Activity Resource Centre (PARC)

Candace AQUI, RD – Nutrition Resource Centre

Erin Colburn, MHSc., RD – Nutrition Resource Centre

Donna Smith, MPH, RD – Nutrition Resource

Mary Wales, MSc – Nutrition Resource Centre

This resource was funded by the Government of Ontario as part of Ontario's Action Plan for Healthy Eating and Active Living. March 2009 (updated February 2015 & December 2017).

Distributed by the Nutrition Resource Centre: Ontario Public Health Association



NUTRITION
RESOURCE
CENTRE
CENTRE DE
RESSOURCES
EN NUTRITION



The voice of public health in Ontario since 1949.



www.nutritionrc.ca, info@opha.on.ca