

Mini-meals

for school nutrition breaks



Huron Perth
**Public
Health**

Children learn and grow to their full potential with a mix of nutritious, satisfying food.

Look inside for mini-meal ideas, recipes and tips for packing food for the school day.



Tips for packing food for the school day

Try to include a mix of foods that help kids feel full longer.

Use yogurt, cheese, eggs, tofu, beans, lentils, chicken or nut-free alternatives.

Fruits and vegetables add colour and crunch.

Try adding at least one each day. Fresh, frozen or canned are all great choices. Wash and prep fresh vegetables and fruit ahead.

Pack foods your child enjoys.

It's okay if they prefer the same things—familiar foods help them stay focused and energized.

Everything packed in the lunch bag is meant to be eaten.

Children may choose to eat foods like cookies or chips first (and that's okay). Eating patterns over time matter more than the order in which foods are eaten.



Send water in a reusable bottle so it can be refilled during the day.



Choose whole grain foods when you can.

Use pantry and freezer shortcuts.

Frozen veggies, canned fruit, canned beans and prewashed greens can save time and help stretch your budget.

Limit prepackaged snacks.

While handy, using fewer of them can help save money and reduce waste.

Keep kids involved.

Even simple tasks like choosing a fruit or filling a water bottle help build confidence and food skills.

Bake once, enjoy twice.

Make a double batch of muffins, loaves, breads or pancakes. Slice and freeze the extras. Add them to the lunch bag frozen—they'll thaw by nutrition break.

Mix and match foods you already have.

Leftover vegetables, fruit or protein from dinner can easily become part of a mini-meal. Think pizza, pasta, chicken, sausage or curry.



**Use containers
your child can
easily open and
close on their own.**

Pack food safely

1

Clean.

Wash hands and clean and sanitize counters, cutting boards and utensils before preparing food.

2

Keep cold foods cold.

Make sandwiches the night before and keep them in the fridge.

Pack items like coleslaw, potato salad and bean salad in a thermos.

Use an insulated lunch bag and add an ice pack.

3

Keep hot foods hot.

Pack hot foods in a thermos in the morning. First fill the thermos with boiling water and let stand for a few minutes. Heat the food that will be packed in the thermos so that it is piping hot. Empty the water and then fill the thermos with the hot food.



About the mini-meals

These are examples of mini-meals and ideas beyond sandwiches. They have the kinds of foods that will keep kids satisfied. Swap the suggested vegetable, fruit, protein and grain product to suit your child's taste.

Some foods show up more than once a week. That's been done purposely. Food can be re-invented to save time and reduce food waste. For example, peppers and cucumbers are veggie sticks one day and then combined with cheese and beans in a salad for later in the week.

Recipes marked with * are found on pages 7 to 14. These recipes have been taste tested with students in elementary school.



Canada's food guide **Eat well plate**

Have plenty
of vegetables
and fruit

Eat protein
foods

Make water
your drink
of choice

Choose
whole grain
foods



Source: [Canada's food guide eat well plate](#)



Mini-meal ideas: Week one

	First break	Second break
Monday	• zucchini loaf* • yogurt • blueberries	• chicken pasta salad • broccoli and dip
Tuesday	• granola bar* • apple slices	• bean wrap* • cucumber and pepper sticks with dilly garlic dip*
Wednesday	• bagel with cheese • cherry tomatoes	• veggie roll ups* • yogurt
Thursday	• banana muffin* • canned peaches	• red, white and green salad* • crackers with hummus
Friday	• raisin bread with cheese • banana	• bean dip* with pita crisps* • grapes



Mini-meal ideas: Week two

	First break	Second break
Monday	• hard-boiled egg • bread with butter or margarine • clementine	• grain salad* • banana muffin*
Tuesday	• naan bread • hummus • grapes	• salmon or tuna sandwich* • snap peas
Wednesday	• zucchini loaf* • yogurt • pineapple chunks	• mini pitas with egg salad • zucchini sticks with dip
Thursday	• apple-cheddar wraps • strawberries	• pita crisps* • salsa mixed with grated cheese • apple slices
Friday	• yogurt parfait*	• couscous with chickpea salad* • granola bar*

Kid-tested and approved recipes

Pita crisps

Ingredients

Whole wheat **pitas**

Vegetable oil

Seasoning (e.g., dill, cumin, chili powder, salt, pepper, rosemary, taco seasoning, etc.)



Directions

Preheat oven to 190 C (375 F).

Split pita bread in half horizontally. Brush rough side with oil. Sprinkle with seasoning and cut the pita halves into triangles. Place on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet.

Bake 10 minutes until golden brown, checking at 5 minutes.

Let cool and store in an air tight container.

Grain salad

Ingredients

250 ml (1 cup) cooked **grain**, cooled (e.g., quinoa, barley, farro, rice, bulgur)

1 red **sweet pepper**

1 pkg **cherry tomatoes**

3-4 **green onions**

22 ml (1 ½ tbsp) **olive oil**

45 ml (3 tbsp) **lemon juice**

1 ml (¼ tsp) **pepper**

Directions

Chop pepper, onions and cherry tomatoes and mix all ingredients together.

Serve chilled.



Bean dip

Ingredients

540 ml (19 oz) can **black beans**, drained and rinsed

15 ml (1 tbsp) reduced sodium **taco seasoning**

5 ml (1 tsp) **cider vinegar** or lemon juice or water

250 ml (1 cup) grated **cheese** (*optional*)



Directions

In a bowl, mash the beans with a fork or potato masher. Sprinkle the cider vinegar over the mashed beans and mix together until blended. You can make a chunky dip or mash it more to make a smoother dip.

Add the taco seasoning and cheese (if using) and mix again. If the dip is too thick, you can mix in more water.

Serve with crackers, pita wedges or crisps or naan. Or, use to make bean wraps.

Bean wraps

Ingredients

8–10 small whole wheat **tortillas**

Bean dip recipe (*page 8*)

125 ml (½ cup) **salsa**

1 clove **garlic**, chopped or
7 ml (½ tbsp) garlic paste or
1 ml (¼ tsp) garlic powder

Toppings (e.g., grated cheese, corn, cooked rice, chopped lettuce or spinach)

Directions

Make the bean base: Add the salsa and garlic to the bean dip and stir together.

To make the wraps: Divide the bean mix evenly among the tortillas.

Add the toppings and fold up the



Salmon or tuna sandwiches

Ingredients

2 cans of **salmon or light tuna**

80 ml (⅓ cup) **mayonnaise**

1 **celery** stalk, finely chopped

5 ml (1 tsp) dried **dill**

5-10 ml (1-2 tsp) **lemon juice**
(optional and add to taste)

Directions

Drain canned salmon or tuna and place into a large bowl.

Mix in mayonnaise, celery, dill and lemon juice if using. Stir until well mixed.

Serve salmon or tuna on a sandwich.

Couscous and chickpea salad

Ingredients

250 ml (1 cup) quick-cooking **couscous**

250 ml (1 cup) **boiling water**

1 small **zucchini**, diced

1 **carrot**, peeled and grated

½ **red pepper**, diced

¼ **red onion**, finely diced

540 ml (19 oz) can **chickpeas**,
rinsed and drained

45 ml (3 tbsp) **oil**

30 ml (2 tbsp) **lemon juice**

1 **garlic** clove, minced

5 ml (1 tsp) ground **cumin**

5 ml (1 tsp) ground **coriander**

2 ml (½ tsp) ground **ginger**

Dash of **salt** and **pepper**

30 ml (2 tbsp) finely chopped fresh **parsley** or 5 ml (1 tsp) dried parsley
(optional)

Directions

Put couscous in bowl, pour boiling water over and combine gently. Cover the bowl to seal in the steam (use a tea towel, plate, tin foil or plastic wrap) for 5 minutes.

While the couscous sits, dice the zucchini, pepper and onion and grate the carrot.

Rinse and drain the chickpeas.

In a small bowl mix together the oil, lemon juice, garlic, cumin, coriander, ginger, salt and pepper.

Fluff the couscous. Add the vegetables and chickpeas.

Pour the dressing on top and gently mix everything together. Sprinkle with parsley if using.



Dilly garlic dip

Ingredients

250 ml (1 cup) **mayonnaise**
250 ml (1 cup) plain, thick **yogurt**
15 ml (1 tbsp) **garlic** paste, or
3 cloves garlic chopped, or
5 ml (1 tsp) garlic powder
15 ml (1 tbsp) dried **dill**
30 ml (2 tbsp) **cider vinegar**

Directions

Mix all the ingredients together until well blended.

Serve with vegetable sticks, crackers or pita wedges or crisps*.



Fruity nut-free granola bars

Ingredients

250 ml (1 cup) rolled **oats**
125 ml (½ cup) toasted **wheat germ**
125 ml (½ cup) **whole wheat flour**
125 ml (½ cup) shelled **pumpkin seeds**
375 ml (1 ½ cups) **dried fruit**,
chopped (e.g., apricots, cranberries)
5 ml (1 tsp) ground **cinnamon**
1 ml (¼ tsp) each ground **nutmeg**
and ground **allspice**
80 ml (⅓ cup) pure **maple syrup**
2 large **eggs**
5 ml (1 tsp) **vanilla**

Directions

Preheat oven to 177 C (350 F).
Grease an 8 x 8 inch baking pan.

In a large bowl, mix oats, wheat germ, flour, pumpkin seeds, dried fruit, and spices. Set aside.

In a small bowl, whisk together the maple syrup, eggs and vanilla. Pour wet mixture over the dry ingredients and mix until well blended.

Press the batter evenly into the bottom of the pan.

Bake until lightly browned, about 20 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool on a wire rack, and then cut into bars.

Store in an airtight container for up to three days or wrap individually and store in freezer.



Butter chicken

Ingredients

1 kg (about 2 lbs) boneless **chicken** thighs or breast

1 **onion**, diced

30 ml (2 tbsp) minced **garlic**

30 ml (2 tbsp) minced fresh **ginger**

15 ml (1 tbsp) **garam masala**

15 ml (1 tbsp) **paprika**

5 ml (1 tsp) **coriander**

5 ml (1 tsp) **cumin**

5 ml (1 tsp) **turmeric**

2 ml (½ tsp) **salt**

30 ml (2 tbsp) **oil**

250 ml (1 cup) **tomato sauce**

250 ml (1 cup) plain **yogurt**

Directions

Heat a large skillet over medium heat.

Add oil and onions, cook until onions are translucent about 4 minutes.

Add garlic and ginger, stir and cook 30 seconds.

Add chicken, tomato sauce, and spices, stir and cook for about 8 minutes, until chicken is cooked through.

Add yogurt and reduce heat, simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Serve with rice and your favourite vegetable.

Pack it in a thermos to keep it warm.



Veggie roll ups

Ingredients

Whole wheat **tortillas**

Hummus

Spinach

Red pepper, sliced thinly

Carrot, grated

Cheese, shredded

Directions

Spread hummus over the whole tortilla, layer with veggies and cheese.

Roll up the tortilla tightly into a log, ensuring the filling is compact. Wrap each log in plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least one hour or overnight, to make slicing easier.

When ready to serve or pack into a lunch, slice into one inch pieces with a sharp knife.

Naan veggie pizza

Ingredients

1 naan

15-30 ml (1-2 tbsp) **tomato sauce**

Chopped **veggies** (e.g., peppers, mushrooms, onion, spinach)

80 ml (⅓ cup) shredded **cheese**



Directions

Preheat oven to 190 C (375 F).

Place naan on a baking sheet. Spread tomato sauce over the whole naan bread leaving about 2 cm around the edge. Evenly spread the veggies over the sauce, followed by the cheese.

Bake for about 10 minutes, until the cheese is melted.

Cool for 5 minutes, before slicing. Can be eaten cold.

Red, white and green salad

Ingredients

1 **red pepper**, chopped

1 **green pepper**, chopped

1 small English **cucumber**, chopped

12 **cherry tomatoes**

500 ml (2 cups) cooked **small pasta**

180 ml (¾ cup) crumbled **feta cheese**

Salad dressing: use your favourite store bought or, use the dilly garlic dip (*page 10*).

Directions

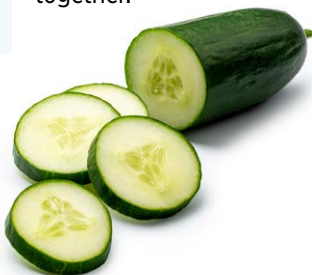
Wash the peppers, remove the seeds and chop into chunks.

Wash the cucumber and chop into chunks.

Wash the tomatoes and cut in halves or quarters.

Combine the pasta, peppers, cucumber, tomatoes and feta cheese in a bowl.

Top with the dressing and gently mix together.



Yogurt parfaits

Ingredients

250 ml (1 cup) **plain yogurt**

250 ml (1 cup) **vanilla yogurt**

500 ml (2 cups) fresh or frozen **fruit**, thawed (e.g., blueberries, strawberries, raspberries or a combination)

125-250 ml (½-1 cup) **granola**,
toasted coconut or dry cereal

Directions

In a medium bowl, blend the plain yogurt and vanilla yogurt.

Put 80 ml (⅓ cup) of the blended yogurt in the bottom of four containers.

Add 125 ml (½ cup) fruit on top of the yogurt and top with 30-59 ml (2-4 tbsp) of granola.



Tip: pack the crunchy topping in a separate container so it won't go soggy. Sprinkle it on top of the parfait before eating.

Banana muffins

Ingredients

3 large overripe **bananas**

125 ml (½ cup) **sugar**

1 **egg**

5 ml (1 tsp) **baking powder**

5 ml (1 tsp) **baking soda**

1 ml (¼ tsp) **salt**

375 ml (1 ½ cup) **whole wheat flour**

80 ml (⅓ cup) **vegetable oil**

Directions

Preheat oven to 190 C (375 F).

Grease muffin tin or use liners.

Mash banana in a large bowl. Add sugar and slightly beaten egg. Stir well. Mix in oil.

In a small bowl stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

Mix into the banana mixture.

Spoon batter into muffin tray, fill ¾ of the way.

Bake for 20 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.





Zucchini loaf

Ingredients

750 ml (3 cups) **whole wheat flour**

5 ml (1 tsp) **baking soda**

5 ml (1 tsp) **baking powder**

2 ml (½ tsp) **salt**

10 ml (2 tsp) **cinnamon**

4 ml (¾ tsp) **nutmeg**

3 eggs

250 ml (1 cup) **sugar**

125 ml (½ cup) **vegetable oil**

125 ml (½ cup) **apple sauce**

10 ml (2 tsp) **vanilla**

750 ml (3 cups) **grated zucchini**

237 ml (8 oz) can **crushed pineapple**, drained

Directions

Place the grated zucchini in a colander over a bowl to drain excess moisture.

Preheat oven to 177 C (350 F) and grease two 5 x 9 inch loaf pans.

In a bowl, mix dry ingredients together: flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg.

In a large bowl, whisk eggs, mix in sugar, add oil, apple sauce and vanilla. Stir in grated zucchini and pineapple. Gently stir in the dry ingredients.

Divide batter evenly into the two pans. Bake for 55 minutes, or until a wooden toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean.





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