



Ontario Home Economics Association

COMMUNIQUÉ

For Immediate Release

Ask A Professional Home Economist

Healthy School Lunches Begin @ Home

Tips for Packing Healthy Lunches:

1. Follow Canada's Food Guide - choose foods from all four food groups every day:
 - Whole wheat/grain bread, wraps, bagels, bread sticks, crackers or rolls
 - Meat, fish, poultry, eggs or cheese (leftover meat, sliced cooked chicken, hard-cooked eggs, cubes of cheese, etc.) to satisfy hunger
 - Fresh veggies, (mini carrots, celery, green pepper strips, which could include a low-fat dip), fresh fruits (apples, pears, plums, grapes, oranges, etc.) or low-sugar canned fruit or 100% juice
 - Milk, yogurt, individual unripened cheese or low-fat milk puddings

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2. Tuck in a healthy treat such as a homemade muffin, oatmeal cookie, or a low-fat granola bar. Try baking mini muffins for mini appetites. Many children like/need a snack at recess. When you bake a batch of muffins, wrap some individually and freeze them for quick lunch additions, or buy ready-made low-fat muffins such as bran or oatmeal and raisin.
3. Provide plenty to drink. Students who are dehydrated lose their ability to think and learn and can often be very distracted. Pack two or three drinks, if possible.
4. Add lots of variety, so that lunches do not become predictable and boring.
5. Keep cold foods cold and hot food hot for safety. Use an insulated lunch bag with frozen 100% juice or milk in Tetra Pak® containers to keep it cold. A wide-mouth thermos will hold a hot soup until lunch. Keep an assortment of baggies on hand for ease of wrapping.
6. Watch for school rules regarding the use of peanut butter due to allergies.
7. Avoid too many sweets and high fat foods as they add calories but often little food value. A child can experience fatigue sooner when a diet is too high in sugar.
8. Make your own "trail mix" with dried cranberries, almonds, raisins or other dried fruits, and just a few mini chocolate chips or mini M&M's for a hint of chocolate OR buy an already prepared mix and add some of the above favourites. Use the snack-size zip locks to tuck in this fibre-rich treat.

Healthy Banana Chocolate Chip Muffins

from Home Economist Mairlyn Smith

Makes: 12 large muffins or 18 medium or 36 mini muffins (bite size)

A healthy muffin is a great lunch idea. Make a double batch and freeze them, wrapped individually. Pop them into the lunch bag frozen, they will thaw out by lunch!

Dry Ingredients:

1 3/4 cups whole wheat flour
1 cup wheat bran
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 cup mini chocolate chips

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Wet Ingredients:

- 1 cup mashed banana - about 2 large very ripe ones
- 1 1/2 cups dark brown sugar
- 1 - 250 ml Tetra Pak carton of Pineapple-Orange Juice or Orange Juice
- 1 egg
- 2 Tbsp. canola oil

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Line a muffin tin with paper cup liners.
3. In a large bowl mix together all the dry ingredients.
4. In a medium bowl mix together all the wet ingredients.
5. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and stir until 'just mixed'.
6. Spoon into the muffin cups. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until done. Adjust time for smaller muffins.

Mairlyn Smith is a Toronto-based home economist and member of the Ontario Home Economics Association. Look for Mairlyn's new cookbook, entitled: "The Ultimate Healthy Eating Plan, That Still Leaves Room for Chocolate!", to be released in March 2002.

The Ontario Home Economics Association, a self-regulated body of Professional Home Economists, promotes high professional standards among its members so that they may assist families and individuals to achieve and maintain a desirable quality of life.

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