

Supporting Eating Well at School: Information for Parents and Caregivers



This resource provides parents and caregivers with information on the [Provincial School Food Guidelines](#), as well as ideas to support eating well at home and at school.

Since children and youth spend a large part of their day at school, it is important for them to have opportunities to choose healthy foods and drinks while they are there. This can help them build a foundation to eat well for life.

School food guidelines are a tool for schools and school food providers to support increased access to nutritious foods and drinks at school, and to reduce the amount of [highly processed foods](#).

The School Food Guidelines, based on [Canada's Food Guide](#), provide information on the foods and drinks that can or cannot be sold or served at school and school-sponsored events. This includes in:

- cafeterias and canteens;
- vending machines;
- breakfast and lunch programs;
- school fundraising; and at,
- school sport tournaments.

For more information on using the guidelines at school-sponsored events, see the resource for [volunteers](#).

What Parents and Caregivers Can Do to Help Children and Youth Eat Well

Healthy foods and drinks provide essential nutrients children and youth need to grow and develop. Eating well also supports learning and academic performance.

Parents and caregivers play an important role in supporting children and youth to eat well. They can:

- Be role models by eating well and being active;
- Eat together as a family as often as possible;
- Offer a variety of foods and drinks at home and in packed lunches for school;
- Involve children and youth in planning lunches and snacks;
- Involve children and youth in food shopping, cooking and preparation;
- Support the food provider if buying lunch at school, as these organizations are working hard to offer students healthy options. For older students, encourage them to use the food services at school, if available, rather than leaving school grounds;

- Keep snacks, like vegetables and fruits, on hand for grab and go. Fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruit are all great options. For more information on eating more vegetables and fruits, check out the [website](#).
- Offer foods or drinks that fit with the School Food Guidelines when volunteering for school events (e.g., sport tournaments) or helping with fundraising activities; and,
- Use the School Food Guidelines if sending snacks to school for sharing, like at a birthday celebration or other special occasion.

Use Canada's Food Guide to Build School Lunches and Snacks

When planning school lunches and snacks, try to include a variety of foods, including [vegetables and fruit](#), [whole grains](#) and [protein foods](#). Culture is an important part of eating well. Incorporate your family's food traditions in lunches and snacks for school.

Schools are “allergy-aware” and students and staff are asked not to bring specific food items into the building to minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens of concern for students or staff in the school. Your school will let you know if there are items that cannot be sent to school due to allergies.

Keep food safety in mind as well. Use a thermos to help keep hot foods hot. Warm the thermos with boiling water before filling it with hot food. Use an insulated lunch bag and a freezer pack to keep cold foods cold.

For lunch and snack ideas visit the [website](#).

Water is Important for Health

Having [water](#) is a good way to quench thirst and stay hydrated. Include a reusable bottle filled with water every day for school. Other options include milk or unsweetened fortified plant-based drinks such as soy beverage.

Check out the Provincial School Food Guidelines at www.gov.nl.ca/healthyeating/school.

For more information on packing healthy lunches and snacks for school, visit:

[Healthy Lunch and Snack Ideas](#)

[Affordable Healthy Eating](#)

[Vegetables and Fruits](#)

[Canada's Food Guide Recipes](#)

If you have specific questions about food and nutrition, you can speak with a Dietitian free on the Healthline - call 811 or visit 811healthline.ca.