

NUTRITION BITS AND BITES

Packing a Balanced School Lunch



The Untouched Lunch....

Are you frustrated when your child's lunch comes home mostly untouched? There could be a variety of reasons why they didn't eat; however it's important to remember- it's the child's job to decide how much and whether to eat, not yours. It can be useful, however, to get feedback from the child and discuss if there is anything you can do to help them eat more at lunch. Perhaps pre-opening packages or sending less food if their appetite is typically low at noon.

It's also helpful to get kids involved in packing their own lunches early on. They may be more inclined to eat a lunch they had a hand in preparing themselves.

Packing an A+ lunch

Packing an A+ lunch everyday can be easy when you follow these 5 steps!

1. Keep it simple and ensure the meal incorporates fruits and vegetables, whole grain products and protein. Water to drink is always a great choice too!
2. Plan and prep beforehand. It can be helpful to have a rough schedule of what you plan to pack for the week. This can make grocery shopping, food prep, and packing so much easier.
3. Pack the night before. Trying to pack lunches during the chaos of mornings can lead to unbalanced meals. Skip the stress and do most of the work when you have time in the evening.
4. Get the kids involved. Although it's the caregiver's job to provide the food, kids can help by washing fruits and veggies, getting out supplies or filling water bottles.
5. Make it safe! Remember to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Use a good quality thermos or ice packs to ensure food stays fresh and free of bacteria. Don't forget to regularly clean lunch kits and wash water bottles too!

Nut-Free Granola Bars

Ingredients:

- 1 cup packed medjool dates, pitted
- ¼ cup of honey
- 1 ¼ cups of rolled oats
- ½ cup of dried cranberries
- ½ cup of pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup of unsweetened shredded coconut

Instructions:

1. Line an 8x8-inch baking pan with parchment paper, leaving some overhang on the sides for easy removal
2. Process dates and honey in a food processor until they form a paste
3. Combine the oats, cranberries, pumpkin seeds and coconut
4. Add the date mixture to the oat mixture and mix using your hands until both mixtures are well combined, transfer the combined mixture to the prepared pan and firmly press into an even layer
5. Put the pan into the freezer for about 20 minutes until it is firm, remove the pan from the freezer and lift the granola mixture out of the pan using the overhang on the sides and cut the mixture into bars

Store in the fridge



Recipe source: everydayeasyeats.com

Kids can help by:

- Measuring out ingredients
- Pressing buttons on food processor
- Mixing oat/date mixture together
- Pressing mixture firmly into pan

Want more tips for packing school lunches?



Check out www.unlockfood.ca and search “school lunches”

**** Refer to the Allergy Newsletter (September issue) for substitution ideas.**

For more information on nutrition and healthy eating, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/finding-care/health-info-for-you/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/>

To access previous school nutrition newsletters, visit:

<https://www.southernhealth.ca/whats-happening/nutritional-newsletters/>

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