

## Back to School – School Meals

Our children spend about 6 hours a day in the schools they attend, which is around 900 hours per year. During all this time, they need healthy food to:

- Satisfy hunger
- Gain energy to learn and play
- Receive the nutrients they need for growth
- Enjoy food as a source of pleasure

Parents will prepare more than 150 lunch bags during the school year. It is therefore essential to have a variety of choices based on the nutrients a child needs. These meals should be tasty while respecting the principles of the [Canada's food guide](#).



**Food Flair** offers healthy recipes as well as activity ideas to help create environments that promote healthy eating for young children from birth to age 5.

Our booklet [School Lunches Made Easy](#) offers simple and accessible nutrition information and ideas for healthy school lunches. Here's an example of the information you will find.



A school lunch bag contains a morning snack, a lunch meal, and an afternoon snack.

### Snacks

For an energizing and satisfying snack, offer foods from two food groups<sup>6</sup>.



### The Lunch Meal

For a filling and nutritious meal, try offering 2-3 food groups at lunch<sup>7</sup>.



### Some examples

A whole grain sandwich with lettuce and luncheon meat, flat bread and falafel with cucumber, rice with chick-pea and vegetable curry, pasta salad, egg frittata, soup in a thermos, or leftovers.

Your child may also like fruit, a yogurt cup, or a cookie with lunch.

## Snacks to limit Healthier Alternatives

### Sandwich Cookie

Low in fibre  
Higher in sugar  
Higher in saturated fat

### Store Bought Oatmeal Cookie

More fibre  
Less sugar  
Choose a higher fiber brand like Dare "Simple Pleasures" or Peek Freans "LifeStyle" cookies.

### Chocolate Dipped Granola Bar

Higher in sugar  
A candy bar in disguise

### Undipped Granola Bar, (nut free)

Less sugar  
Wholegrain brands have more fibre  
Some lower sugar brands include: MadeGood and Quaker Chewy Chocolate Chip (undipped).

### Cheese Flavoured Crackers

Higher in sodium  
Less fibre

### Whole Grain Crackers

More fibre  
There are many whole grain options. Look for the symbol or words *whole grain*. Look for low-sodium options.

### Pudding Cups

Higher in sugar

### Yogurt Cup

More protein  
Less sugar  
Look for low sugar varieties.

### Mini Bag of Chips

Higher in sodium  
Higher in saturated fat

### Popcorn or Crunchy Chickpeas

More fibre  
Lower in saturated fat

### Fruit Gummies

Higher in sugar  
No fiber or protein  
Candy in disguise

### Fruit, Dried Fruit

Contains fiber  
Contains vitamins and nutrients



Whole Grain Symbol



# Let's make

## Roasted Chickpeas

A healthy lunchbox recipe.

Source : *School Lunches Made Easy*

### Ingredients:

- 2 cans of chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 3 tablespoons (45 ml) canola oil
- 3–4 teaspoons of spices of your choice (cajun, curry, garlic powder, etc.)
- 1–2 teaspoons of salt

### Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F).
2. Pat the drained chickpeas dry with a paper towel or a clean cloth.
3. In a large bowl, mix all ingredients until the chickpeas are well coated. Spread them on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper or lightly greased.
4. Bake for 30 minutes. Stir.
5. Bake for another 20 minutes, stirring every 5 minutes.
6. Let cool completely before storing in an airtight container.



## The Basics of Healthy Meals

- Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits.
- Choose foods made with whole grains.
- Eat a variety of protein foods.
- Adjust the quantity according to the child's age and needs.
- Make water the drink of choice.

The *Canada's food guide* also advises us to avoid highly processed foods that contain large amounts of sodium, sugar, and saturated fats.

Highly processed foods are often presented as convenient snacks for lunch boxes, such as fruit gummies and small bags of chips. These snacks should be considered occasional treats rather than foods to be included in a child's daily lunch.

Some examples of healthy snack choices for school:

- Baby carrots
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Slices of cucumber, celery sticks, sliced bell peppers
- Cheese cubes
- Fruits
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Canned fruits in juice or water
- Whole-grain crackers

**Canada's food guide** **Eat well. Live well.**

Eat a variety of healthy foods each day

Have plenty of vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water your drink of choice

Choose whole grain foods

Discover your food guide at [Canada.ca/FoodGuide](https://Canada.ca/FoodGuide)

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