

Provincial Menu Planning Guidelines

for Regulated Child Care Services, 2024



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Background

Eating well is an important part of a child's overall health both in the short and long term. Offering children nutritious foods and beverages in the child care setting helps to build a foundation to eat well for life.

The [Child Care Policy and Standards Manual](#), Policy No. ELCD-2017-K11, states "A child care service must meet the nutritional needs of the child by ensuring menus are developed in accordance with Canada's Food Guide and Provincial Menu Planning Guidelines."

Health Canada released an updated version of Canada's Food Guide in 2019. It is mainly an online resource found at food-guide.canada.ca. While it provides guidance for the general population, it does not provide specific menu planning guidance for institutional settings. Therefore, these Provincial Menu Planning Guidelines provide practical information to help in applying Canada's Food Guide recommendations in the child care setting, to help ensure the nutritional needs of children in child care settings are met.

In addition to offering nutritious foods and beverages in the child care setting, support for breastfeeding families is important. Families are encouraged to breastfeed, with the addition of complementary solid foods, up to two years of age and beyond. Families may wish to have time with their child to breastfeed during child care, or to provide breastmilk to staff to give their child. It is important to welcome these families in the child care service at any time and work with them to support their breastfeeding goals. This is outlined in the parental involvement section of the [Child Care Policy and Standards Manual](#) with details on storage and use of breastmilk (ELCD-2017-K10).

Helping Children Eat Well

Offering children nutritious food when they are young helps them to develop a healthy relationship with food for life. Meals and snacks in child care can be provided by the service or by families. Child care providers are encouraged to provide meals and snacks, since child care settings are a great place to expose children to a variety of foods. Children are more likely to try new foods when they are with their peers and benefit when offered the same meals and snacks as their peers, in a positive environment.

Healthy foods and beverages provide children with the energy and nutrients they need to grow, develop, learn and play. For young children, it takes time and experience to learn to enjoy new foods. They may need to be offered a food many times before they decide to try it. It is important to create a relaxed setting at mealtimes (free of toys and other distractions) and allow a child to decide if and when they want to try a new food.

It is the child care provider's job to decide **what** food to offer. It is the child's job to decide **if they will eat** the food offered, and **how much**. A healthy child's appetite is the guide to how much they need to eat, so food providers should respond to the child's cues. A child's appetite can vary from meal to meal and day to day, so it must be the child's choice to finish their food, leave some food on the plate, or ask for more food. This applies to all children.

Canada's Food Guide reminds us that healthy eating is about more than the food we eat. It is also about where, when, why and how we eat. The child care setting lends itself well to supporting children to eat well. Providing sufficient time to eat, as well as the opportunity to eat together as a group and with child care providers, is an important part of helping children eat well for life.

How much food to offer

- Offer a small serving to start; let a child have more food if they want it.
- Do not pressure a child to taste a food. It is their choice what food they put in their mouth.
- Do not pressure a child to eat more than they want (e.g., "clean their plate").

Pressuring a child to eat is trying to make them put food in their mouth that they do not want. Forms of pressure include coaxing, lecturing, bribing/rewarding, playing food games (e.g., saying a spoonful of food coming to the child's mouth is "a train coming into the station") and trying to feed a child after they have stopped feeding themselves.

Sometimes when preparing food for children, vegetables, fruits, beans etc. might be mashed and added to recipes. While this can be a great way to boost the nutritional value of foods like pasta sauce or homemade muffins or pancakes, it should not be used to "hide" these foods. Child care providers are encouraged to use the foods in recipes but also to offer them as individual items on their menus regularly. When children are exposed

to a variety of foods over time, they can learn to recognize and enjoy these foods. Keep in mind, some foods will need to be modified to reduce a child's risk of choking (see [Appendix 1](#)).

As you work to align your menu with Canada's Food Guide, you may add new foods that are not familiar to the children. It may take time for them to accept these new foods. To cut down on food waste, offer small amounts of new foods to the children and encourage them to take up their own snacks and meals from what is offered. If it is not possible or feasible for children to take up their own, they can still indicate what they want and how much. Encourage staff to eat with the children when possible and model the enjoyment of eating a variety of foods, as this will also help children feel comfortable trying the new foods.

When a child doesn't eat a food

The child care provider should not provide an alternate meal (e.g., peanut butter sandwich, cereal with milk) if a child refuses all or some of the foods already prepared by the provider. It is also suggested that families not send in alternate meals. Meals and snacks provided in child care include a variety of foods, so a child will likely find something among those foods that they want to eat (e.g., bread, milk). It is not helpful to a child to prepare something different if they refuse a food (even the main course), because it does not help them learn to try new foods or learn to enjoy what the rest of the group is eating. Even if a child chooses to eat little or nothing at a meal or snack, they will soon have another opportunity to eat at the next scheduled snack or meal.

Menu Planning

As outlined in the [Child Care Policy and Standards Manual](#), foods and beverages offered in child care should align with the recommendations in [Canada's Food Guide](#). The Menu Planning Guidelines will help you to interpret what it means to offer food and beverages according to Canada's Food Guide. The guidelines are focused on:

- increasing the amount of vegetables and fruits offered in child care;
- shifting toward the use of whole grain foods;
- offering nutritious protein foods;
- encouraging the use of healthy fats;
- ensuring children are offered food sources of calcium at every meal and snack; and,
- reducing the availability of highly processed foods.

[Canada's Food Guide](#) recommends eating a variety of foods every day, so when developing a menu for child care it is important to consider variety in the types of meals and snacks offered (e.g., a menu should not be made up of all sandwiches or all casseroles). It is important to offer different types of vegetables and fruits, a variety of whole grain foods and different protein foods throughout the week.

The [Canada's Food Guide snapshot](#) provides a visual reminder of the recommended proportions of food at meals and snacks - half the plate is vegetables and fruits, with whole grain foods and protein foods making up the rest of the plate. Since children have high calcium needs, Health Canada also recommends that a food source of calcium be made available at all meals and snacks.

Access to a variety of food, or availability of certain foods, may vary in your region and this may depend on the time of year. If accessing foods that meet the guidelines is a challenge, child care providers are encouraged to work with the Child Care Services Consultant in their region, who can also reach out to the Regional Nutritionist to discuss these concerns and determine how to provide the most nutritious foods and beverages available to the children.

Integrating foods from different cultures and traditions in menu planning can positively impact children's relationships with food. It also provides children with opportunities to learn about and try new foods. This can help to create a more inclusive, supportive food environment within the child care setting. Incorporating traditionally relevant foods in cultural activities also provides opportunities for sharing and celebrating cultural food practices. When traditional foods are used as part of cultural activities, they do not need to align with the Menu Planning Guidelines.

Child care providers are encouraged to work in collaboration with families, communities, elders or Indigenous leaders to learn how to incorporate traditional foods in the child care setting.

The Menu Planning Guidelines are based on [Canada's Food Guide](#) and are organized into two categories:

Foods to offer – those that are found in Canada's Food Guide including vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods.

Foods not to offer – those that provide little to no nutritional value and/or are high in sodium (salt), sugars and/or saturated fat and are not consistent with Canada's Food Guide. See [Appendix 2](#) for information on reading nutrition labels to help choose foods lower in sodium, sugars and saturated fat.

In each category the lists are as complete as possible. If you have a question about a food or beverage that you do not find in either of the categories, please connect with the Child Care Consultant in your region.

The [Child Care Policy and Standards Manual](#) outlines that your menu needs to be provided at licensing and renewal. A Menu Review Checklist is included in [Appendix 3](#). This will be used by Child Care Consultants when reviewing menus, and can also be used by child care providers to ensure menus meet the Menu Planning Guidelines. If you have questions about whether your menu aligns with Canada's Food Guide and these Menu Planning Guidelines, you can submit a complete menu to the Child Care Consultant in your region for review. Templates for menu planning and a sample menu are provided in [Appendix 4](#).

When you are submitting a menu for review, please provide the following details as applicable:

- If the menu item is homemade rather than store-bought/packaged;
- If a food is whole grain or whole wheat; and,
- If a food has been modified to reduce choking risk.

Please include any additional details available on a packaged food that you think will help with the menu review (e.g., canned fruit packed in juice). You may also be asked to provide other information (e.g., a recipe, an ingredients list) as required during the menu review process.

Food Waste

Child care providers may have concerns about food waste, especially as they incorporate new foods into their menu. Here are some tips to reduce food waste:

- Offer small amounts of foods to children to start and then offer more if they want it.
- Incorporate leftover ingredients or foods not used up one day into the preparation of meals for another day (e.g., leftover raw vegetables can be used in a soup, pasta sauce or casserole, or leftover roasted chicken can be cut up and frozen to use on pizza another day).
- Only purchase the amount of food you need for the meals and snacks on your menu. Although something may be on sale, if you buy too much it may go to waste, unless you can use it up or freeze it before it spoils.
- Other tips to help you minimize food waste and support a healthier environment are on the Food First NL website, for example:
 - Buy local foods that are in season.
 - Take an inventory of the foods you have on hand to plan your weekly meals and snacks. This will help ensure foods get used while fresh or before their Best Before date, and that frozen foods get used in a timely way.
 - Compost vegetable waste.
 - Plant a garden and get the children involved so they may be more likely to try the foods they have helped to grow.
 - Recycle where possible.

Non-sugar Sweeteners

The [Child Care Policy and Standards Manual](#) indicates that foods and beverages containing non-sugar sweeteners cannot be offered in child care settings. **Although this has not been noted in all the guidelines that follow, this guideline applies to all types of foods and beverages.** Read food labels and ingredients lists to ensure products chosen do not contain non-sugar sweeteners.

Non-sugar sweeteners include artificial sweeteners, sugar alcohols and natural non-sugar sweeteners. Some examples of these sweeteners are aspartame, steviol glycosides (stevia), acesulfame potassium, neotame, advantame, sucralose, saccharin, cyclamate, thaumatin, sugar alcohols (sorbitol, isomalt, lactitol, xylitol, mannitol, maltitol, erythritol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates) and polydextrose. Foods that contain non-sugar sweeteners are often low in nutritional value and may replace healthier foods and beverages. Some foods commonly offered to children may also contain non-sugar sweeteners, for example some types of yogurt and some fruit canned in water. If a food or beverage contains a non-sugar sweetener, it will be listed on the product ingredients list.

Menu Planning Guidelines for Child Care Settings

The following guidelines apply to all meals and snacks in child care settings.

Guideline 1: At a meal, offer vegetables and/or fruits.

- **At lunch and supper, offer at least two different vegetables and/or fruits.**

Examples:

- Spaghetti with a tomato sauce offered with a green salad on the side
- Moose stew with vegetables offered with frozen berries (thawed) on the side
- Pizza topped with vegetables offered with canned fruit on the side

When the main dish is a mixed dish that contains one or more types of vegetables (e.g., shepherd's pie), that mixed dish will count as one of the two choices required. Offer another vegetable or fruit on the side.

Foods that contain very small amounts of vegetables or fruits, such as banana bread, blueberry muffins, or a sandwich with lettuce would not contain enough vegetables or fruits to be considered one of the choices.

- **At breakfast, offer at least one vegetable or fruit.**
- **Offer dark green vegetables (e.g., broccoli, green peas, green pepper strips) at least two times a week and offer orange vegetables (e.g., carrots, sweet potatoes, orange or red pepper strips) at least once a week. These vegetables can be fresh, frozen or canned.**

Health Canada recommends that dark green vegetables are eaten daily and orange vegetables are eaten a few times a week. Although some of these servings can be eaten at home, offering these vegetables in child care is important to help meet the recommendations. They can be offered in a meal or a snack.

Tips for adding vegetables and fruits to your menu:

- Aim to make half of what is offered at each meal vegetables and/or fruits.
- Use fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruits, which are all good options.
- Offer vegetables and fruits in a variety of ways to help children try new foods:
 - Cut up raw vegetables (see [Appendix 1](#), food choking hazards) and offer with hummus or ranch dressing.
 - Top canned fruit with yogurt.
 - Cook vegetables until soft but not mushy (the texture and taste of overcooked vegetables may not be appealing).

Foods to offer	Foods not to offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh vegetables and fruits • Frozen vegetables and fruits (frozen fruit should be thawed before offering) • Canned vegetables (use lower sodium varieties when possible or rinse before using) • Tomato sauce (use lower sodium varieties when possible) • Canned fruits or fruit cups (in juice or light syrup) • Fruit sauces (100% fruit with no added sugar, e.g., unsweetened applesauce) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Battered and/or deep-fried vegetables or fruits • French fries/potato wedges (par-fried) • Fruit drinks, punches or cocktails • 100% fruit juice or bottled smoothies • Dried fruits (100% fruit with no added sugar) • Vegetables in sauces (pre-packaged) • Chips (regular or baked) • Canned/package soup with more than 500 mg of sodium or more than 4 g of saturated fat per serving, as indicated in the Nutrition Facts table on the label • Canned fruits in heavy syrup • Canned fruits in water (with non-sugar sweeteners) • Fruit cups in gelatin/jelly • Sweetened gelatin/jellied desserts • Processed fruit snacks (e.g., fruit leathers, gummies) including those made with 100% fruit juice • Prepared fruit pie filling • Frozen fruit juice bars or fruit juice-based freezies

* Par-fried: Most French fries or potato wedges on the market are par-fried, meaning the potato is cut up and partially deep fried prior to being frozen or packaged. The potatoes are not browned in the process so can be mistaken for not being fried. Review product information to ensure the potato product being used is not par-fried (those that are par-fried will usually have oil in the ingredients list). Potato products that are not par-fried (e.g., pre-cut potatoes, pre-cooked potatoes) can be offered.

**Dried fruits can stick to the teeth and increase the risk of cavities.

Guideline 2: At a meal, offer a whole grain* food.

Tips for adding whole grain foods to your menu:

- Offer a variety of whole grain foods on your menu, such as bread, wraps, crackers, buns, rice, pasta, pizza crust, etc.
- Look for the words “whole grain” in the ingredients list (it should be the first ingredient).
- If a whole grain food is not available, choose a whole wheat food. Both whole grain foods and whole wheat foods contain more fibre than a refined grain food (e.g., white bread, white rice, regular pasta).
- If only a refined version of a particular grain food is available, it can be offered until a whole grain or whole wheat version is available.

*It is recognized that in some communities the availability of whole grain or whole wheat products may be limited. However, as demand for these products increases, availability should improve.

Foods to offer	Foods not to offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grain foods like bread, cereal, bagels, soft tortillas, pitas, rolls, bannock, naan, pizza crust, flatbread, etc. • Homemade muffins or loaves made with whole grain or whole wheat flour • Homemade or store-bought pancakes or waffles made with whole grain or whole wheat flour • Whole grain crackers (whole grain flour is the first ingredient) • Whole grains like barley, rye, whole oats or oatmeal (unsweetened), bulgur and quinoa • Whole grain wild rice • Brown rice • Whole grain pasta 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hot or cold cereal that is not whole grain • Granola or granola-type cereal • Puffed-type cereal e.g., puffed wheat • Hot or cold cereal (even if whole grain) with chocolate, candies or marshmallows • Hot or cold cereal with more than 8 g of sugar per 30 g serving, as indicated in the Nutrition Facts table on the label • Baked goods like cookies (e.g., arrowroots, teddy grahams, graham wafers, digestives, etc.), cakes, brownies, squares, sweet buns, croissants, cinnamon buns, pies, donuts, pastries • Crackers that are not whole grain • Rice cakes or rice crackers** • Muffins that are store-bought or made from a mix • Cereal bars and granola bars • Puffed rice cereal bars (e.g., Rice Krispie Squares) • Energy bars and protein bars • Toaster pastries • Pre-seasoned noodles/pasta or rice • Canned rice or pasta • Cheesies, puffs, twists, crisps, straws, pretzels, nacho or tortilla chips

**Although rice cakes or crackers may be whole grain, they have very little nutritional value. Foods offered in the child care setting should be the most nutritious choices available.

Guideline 3: At a meal, offer a protein food.

- **At lunch and supper, offer an iron-rich protein food.**

Young children should be offered a variety of iron-rich foods each day for healthy growth and development. Many protein foods are iron-rich, including meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, legumes, peanut butter and other nut/seed butters. Although milk, yogurt and cheese are protein foods, they are not a good source of iron. As such, they cannot be the only protein food offered at lunch or supper.

Exception: Once a week, if cheese is the protein food in the main dish (e.g., homemade macaroni and cheese or grilled cheese sandwich), you do not need to offer an iron-rich protein food at that meal.

- **At breakfast, offer a protein food.**

The protein food at breakfast does not have to be iron-rich.

Exception:

- If you are providing care to children 12-24 months of age, an iron-rich food must be offered at breakfast. This can be an iron-rich protein food or an iron-fortified infant cereal or iron-fortified ready-to-eat cereal.
- **Offer milk at all meals and at least one snack (see [Guideline 4](#)).**

Fortified soy beverage can be offered instead of milk, only for children two years of age and older. These are protein foods that provide calcium and vitamin D, which are important for a child's bone development.

- **Include a plant-based protein food at least once a week in a meal or snack.**

Plant-based protein foods include baked beans, vegetarian chili, pea soup, lentil and vegetable soup, chickpeas, and hummus. Peanut butter, nuts and seeds are also plant-based protein foods. Most child care settings do not permit peanuts and/or tree nuts due to allergy awareness. If you do allow peanuts and/or tree nuts, they are considered healthy choices. See information on "Food Choking Hazards" in [Appendix 1](#) as nuts, seeds and peanut butter (unless it is spread thinly) can be choking hazards for children under four years of age.

Tips for adding protein foods to your menu:

- Offer a variety of protein foods in meals and snacks, such as beans, lentils, peanut butter, other nut and seed butters, lean meat, wild game, poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, milk, yogurt and cheese.

Foods to offer	Foods not to offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legumes (beans, peas, lentils) – canned, dried or frozen (e.g., baked beans) • Hummus • Tofu • Eggs • Fresh/frozen chicken, turkey • Fresh/frozen beef, pork, wild game* • Extra lean or lean ground meat (or frozen patties – lean when available) • Fresh/frozen fish, seafood • Canned fish • White milk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer lower fat milk (2%, 1%, or 0.5% M.F., or skim**) for children two years of age and older. ○ Offer whole milk (3.25% M.F.) for children under two years of age. • Unsweetened fortified soy beverage*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Offer only for children two years of age and older. <p>Note: Other unsweetened plant-based beverages like rice, oat, almond, cashew and coconut are low in protein and are not a suitable substitute for milk.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese, cottage cheese • Yogurt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercially battered and/or breaded pre-fried meat, chicken, turkey, fish (e.g., chicken nuggets) • Deep-fried meat, chicken, turkey, fish, seafood • Highly processed meats like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Canned meats ○ Bacon, bologna, pepperoni, salami ○ Wiener/hot dog, sausage ○ Deli meats (e.g., ham, turkey, chicken, roast beef) • Plant-based meat substitutes (e.g., veggie burgers) with more than 500 mg of sodium or more than 4 g of saturated fat per serving, as indicated in the Nutrition Facts table on the label • Sweetened milk/milk beverages (e.g., chocolate milk, yogurt drinks) • Sweetened fortified soy beverage • Ice cream, ice milk, frozen yogurt, sherbet, and other ice cream-type frozen desserts • Homemade or pre-packaged milkshakes • Bottled smoothies • Processed cheese – bottled spread, slices or sauce (e.g., Cheez Whiz) • Homemade or store-bought pudding • Yogurt with non-sugar sweeteners • Protein bars

*A child care provider who has a Food Establishment License, can access a Wild Meat Service License by emailing wildlifelicence@gov.nl.ca. Family home child care settings can also offer wild game on their menu. They may have access to wild game from their own harvest or receive the meat as a gift from another hunter and should keep appropriate documentation. Indigenous communities may have other arrangements for access to wild game and the use of these traditional country foods should be encouraged in the child care setting.

**Powdered skim milk, prepared according to package directions, can be offered.

***It is important to shake the container each time before you pour it. Calcium is added to fortify the soy beverage, and it tends to sink to the bottom of the container, so you need to shake the container to mix the calcium back into the liquid.

Guideline 4: Offer a food source of calcium at all meals and snacks.

- **Offer milk at all meals and at least one snack.**

If families are breastfeeding while the child is in your care, or providing breastmilk to give the child, this may be the milk that is provided at meals and snacks.

Fortified soy beverage can be offered instead of milk, only for children two years of age and older. These are protein foods that provide calcium and vitamin D, which are important for a child's bone development.

Note: Children 12-24 months of age should not exceed 750 mL of cow's milk or fortified soy beverage daily. Too much of these can displace other foods that are sources of nutrients not found in milk/soy beverage.

- **Offer milk, yogurt, cheese or another food source of calcium like tofu*, at the other snack.**

In a snack, milk, yogurt or cheese can be the only protein food offered. An iron-rich protein food is not required, the way it is at lunch and supper.

Health Canada recommends that a food source of calcium be made available to children at all meals and snacks, given their higher calcium needs.

*To be a food source of calcium, the tofu should be firm or extra-firm and made with calcium. Check the ingredients list for a type of calcium (e.g., calcium sulphate, calcium carbonate).

Guideline 5: Offer a morning and an afternoon snack.

- **Offer at least one vegetable or fruit at every snack.**
- **Offer at least one protein food or whole grain food, or both, at every snack.**
- **Offer a food source of calcium at all meals and snacks (see [Guideline 4](#)).**

Foods to offer	Foods not to offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● See other guidelines for details on foods and beverages to offer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● See other guidelines for details on foods and beverages not to offer.

Guideline 6: Make water available to children at all times.

- Safe drinking water must be accessible to children in indoor and outdoor areas.
- Offer only plain water. As outlined in the [Child Care Policy and Standards Manual](#), energy beverages, sport beverages, caffeinated beverages, carbonated beverages, vitamin/mineral beverages or beverages with added sugar or artificial sweeteners cannot be offered by the child care service.
- A beverage should be offered to children at least every 3 hours. As outlined in [guideline 4](#), milk should be offered at all meals and at least one snack. If milk is not part of the other snack, water should be offered.

Guideline 7: Use healthy fats as spreads and when cooking and baking.

Foods to offer	Foods not to offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soft tub margarine• Oil (e.g., canola oil, olive oil*, sunflower oil, soybean oil, vegetable oil, peanut oil, corn oil, safflower oil)• Salad dressing• Mayonnaise or mayonnaise-type dressing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hard block margarine, butter• Shortening, lard• Coconut oil• Cream• Fatback or salt pork fat (e.g., scrunchions)

*Olive oil, a healthy fat, has a low smoking point so it is best used in recipes that do not call for cooking food at high temperatures on the stove top.

Guideline 8: Do not offer highly processed foods and beverages.

Highly processed foods add excess sodium (salt), sugars and/or saturated fat to the diet. These processed and prepared foods and beverages, which are not found in Canada's Food Guide, should not be offered by the child care service.

Foods to offer	Foods not to offer
Homemade meals using foods in the "Foods to offer" categories from guidelines 1-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homemade meals prepared with foods in the "Foods not to offer" categories from guidelines 1-7*• Frozen, canned or packaged mixed dishes (e.g., lasagna, pizza, stew, soup) with more than 500 mg of sodium per serving or more than 4 g of saturated fat per serving, as indicated in the Nutrition Facts table on the label• Cheesies, puffs, twists, crisps, straws, pretzels, nacho or tortilla chips• Chocolate and candies• Ice cream, ice milk, frozen yogurt, sherbet, other ice cream-type frozen desserts or popsicles/freezies• Pudding• Sweetened gelatin/jellied desserts• Sweetened dessert toppings or syrups• Baked goods like sweet buns, cookies (arrowroots, teddy grahams, graham wafers, digestives, etc.), cakes, brownies, squares, croissants, cinnamon rolls, pies, donuts and pastries• Whipped cream or whipped dessert topping• Deep-fried products• Flavoured waters with added sugar or artificial sweeteners• Soft drinks/pop or other carbonated beverages (regular and diet)• Sports drinks, energy drinks or vitamin/mineral waters/beverages

* Some foods in the "Foods not to offer categories can be used as an ingredient in homemade meals (e.g., condensed soup in a casserole) as outlined in the Ingredients Used in Recipes section.

Ingredients Used in Recipes

In addition to the “Foods to Offer” listed in the tables, other ingredients can be used to prepare recipes. Where available, use lower sodium varieties (e.g., soy sauce, tomato sauce, soup). See [Appendix 2](#) for information on nutrition label reading. The following are examples of ingredients that can be used. The items listed under Condiments can also be used as ingredients in recipes.

- Whole grain or whole wheat flour
- Sugar (e.g., for muffins or pancakes), maple syrup, honey*, molasses
- Herbs, spices, salt, flavourings (e.g., vanilla, onion powder, garlic powder, soy sauce, etc.)
- Tomato sauce, tomato paste
- Broth, bouillon
- Canned/condensed soup (can be used as an ingredient e.g., in a homemade casserole. See [Guideline 1](#) or [Guideline 8](#) for criteria for using it as a meal item on its own)
- Dry soup mixes (can be used as an ingredient e.g., in a homemade soup or casserole, but cannot be offered as a meal item on its own)
- Cocoa powder
- Baking powder, baking soda, cream of tartar, cornstarch
- Vinegar
- Breadcrumbs
- Flavoured breadcrumb-style coatings (e.g., coating mix for baked chicken)

Condiments

Condiments are used to enhance the flavour of foods but they can be high in sodium, sugars and/or saturated fat. In child care settings, condiments can be used in **small amounts**. Where available use low sodium varieties (e.g., ketchup).

Examples include:

- Ketchup
- Mustard
- Relish and pickles
- Bottled sauces (e.g., BBQ, honey garlic, sweet and sour, etc.)
- Croutons
- Salsa
- Jam, jelly
- Pancake syrup, honey*, molasses
- Sour cream
- Cream cheese
- Gravy (only when offered as part of a roast meat dinner or sandwich such as with turkey, chicken, beef, pork or wild game OR when part of a homemade stew)

*Honey and foods containing honey cannot be offered to children under one year of age.

Questions

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Child Care Consultant in your region. They will work with Regional Nutritionists, as needed, to support you in menu planning.

For more information on supporting children to eat well, see the list of resources in [Appendix 5](#).

Appendix 1 - Food Choking Hazards

Children younger than four years of age are most at risk of choking on food because they are still learning to chew and swallow effectively. All foods have the potential to cause choking. Certain foods are more of a risk for choking than others. These include:

- hard foods;
- foods that are hard to chew;
- foods that have a shape and size that can block the airway of a young child; and,
- foods that are both smooth and sticky.

There are many ways to reduce a child's risk of choking on food.

Help keep children safe while eating and drinking:

- Always stay with children when they are eating because a child who is choking may not be able to make noise or get your attention. Coughing is a sign that a child is removing the food on their own.
- Make sure children are sitting upright when eating or drinking. Lying down, walking, running, jumping or laughing while eating can increase risk of choking on food.
- Do not allow an older child to feed a younger child.
- Encourage children not to speak with food in their mouth, not to put too much food in their mouth at one time, and to chew food well before swallowing it.
- Always use metal or thick plastic cutlery, and non-breakable plates and cups. Do not use thin plastic cutlery or foam plates and cups, as these break easily and children can choke on the pieces.
- Do not offer food on toothpicks or skewers, or foods that are on wooden or plastic sticks, such as frozen treats.
- Consider learning choking first aid for infants and children.

Do not offer these to children under four years of age:

- popcorn
- hard or gummy candies or fruit chews, marshmallows
- peanuts or other nuts, seeds, crunchy peanut/nut butter
- fish, meat and poultry with bones
- cough drops, gum, chewable vitamins

Some foods need to be modified to reduce choking risk for children under four years of age:

- Foods with a large, round shape (e.g., grapes, grape/cherry tomatoes, whole cooked carrots, etc.)
 - Cut into quarters lengthwise and then cut into smaller pieces as needed.
- Cheese
 - Grate or cut into small thin strips.
- Peanut butter and other nut butters

- Spread smooth peanut butter or nut butter thinly on crackers or toast. Do not offer peanut butter or nut butter spread thickly on something or alone in a lump or on a spoon, as it could get stuck and block a child's airway.
- Fish, meat and poultry
 - Remove all bones before offering.
 - Cut into small pieces or thin strips, including chunks of food in mixed dishes such as soups, stews, salads, casseroles and toppings on pizza.
- Vegetables and Fruits
 - Remove pits and large seeds.
 - Grate or cook hard, raw vegetables or fruits (e.g., carrots, broccoli) until soft but not mushy.
 - Cut into small pieces or thin strips (e.g., melons, peppers), including chunks of food in mixed dishes such as soups, stews, salads, casseroles and toppings on pizza.
 - Finely chop any fibrous or stringy foods (e.g., celery, pineapple)

Note: Vegetable “sticks” (e.g., for dipping) can be made by taking root vegetables like carrot or turnip and cooking until just tender, chilling and cutting into thin sticks.

Appendix 2 - Label Reading

The information found on food and beverage packaging can help you make healthier choices for foods and beverages to offer in child care settings. It is important to understand the food label, which includes a variety of information such as the Nutrition Facts table (NFT) and the ingredients list.

The NFT is based on a specific amount of food: the serving or serving size. The serving size is shown by the word “per” followed by the amount in the serving, for example 125 mL, 1/2 cup, 90 g, 3 crackers or 1 (single) package.

The number after the nutrient is the actual amount of the nutrient in that serving size of the food. Even if the amount of a particular nutrient is zero, it is listed. Use the information on the NFT to determine if a food fits the criteria outlined for sodium, sugars and saturated fat in these guidelines.

Nutrition Facts		
Per 1 cup (30 g)		
	Cereal Only	Plus 125 mL 2% p.s. Milk
Calories	110	180
	% Daily Value*	
Fat 1 g [†]	1 %	5 %
Saturated 0.3 g + Trans 0 g	1 %	10 %
Carbohydrate 25 g		
Fibre 2 g	7 %	7 %
Sugars 6 g	6 %	12 %
Protein 2 g		
Cholesterol 0 mg		
Sodium 160 mg	7 %	10 %
Potassium 75 mg	2 %	5 %
Calcium 100 mg	8 %	19 %
Iron 4 mg	22 %	22 %
Vitamin A 10 µg	1 %	11 %
Vitamin D 0 µg	0 %	7 %
Thiamin 0.05 mg	4 %	8 %
Riboflavin 0.02 mg	2 %	19 %
Niacin 1.5 mg	9 %	16 %
Vitamin B ₆ 0.175 mg	10 %	13 %
Folate 30 µg/DFE	7 %	9 %
Vitamin B ₁₂ 0 µg	0 %	27 %
Pantothenate 0.5 mg	10 %	16 %
Phosphorus 100 mg	8 %	16 %
Magnesium 30 mg	7 %	10 %
Zinc 0.5 mg	5 %	9 %
[†] Amount in cereal.		
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot		

The NFT includes information on the % Daily Value (DV) for each nutrient and can tell you at a glance if there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in that serving size of the food.



5% DV or less is “a little”.

15% DV or more is “a lot”.

Depending on the nutrient you are looking at you may want less or more of it for good health. For example, fibre, calcium and iron are all nutrients that are important for children to consume, whereas sodium, sugars and saturated fat are nutrients to limit.

The information in the NFT, including the % DV, is helpful when doing a quick comparison of two products to determine the healthier choice. Keep in mind though, that it does not necessarily tell you whether a food or beverage is nutritious nor whether it can be offered in the child care setting. For example, the % DV can tell you which potato chip has less sodium; however, that doesn't mean chips are a nutritious choice. Use the information (Foods to offer/ Foods not to offer, as well as nutrient criteria provided) in the Menu Planning Guidelines to determine which foods and beverages should be offered in child care settings.

Food packages also display an ingredients list. Use the ingredients list to determine what is in a food and whether it should be offered. The ingredients are listed from the largest to the smallest amount (by weight). This list is very important if you are interested in a specific ingredient (e.g., whole grains [you want more of these], or non-sugar sweeteners [these are not permitted in child care settings]). Below are two examples:

Ingredients: Whole grain whole wheat, wheat bran, sugar/glucose-fructose, salt, malt (corn flour, malted barley), vitamins (thiamine hydrochloride, pyridoxine hydrochloride, folic acid, d-calcium pantothenate), minerals (iron, zinc oxide).

Ingredients: Skim milk fortified with vitamin A palmitate and vitamin D3, water, strawberries, whey protein concentrate, modified corn starch, gelatin, natural and artificial flavour, active bacterial cultures, sucralose (15 mg per 100 g serving), pectin, locust bean gum, calcium lactate, colour, potassium sorbate.

For more information on food labels, visit Health Canada's website [How to use food labels](#).

Appendix 3 – Menu Review Checklist

This checklist can be used when developing menus to align with the guidelines. Child Care Consultants will use this checklist to review and provide feedback on the menu.

Child Care Service: _____

Date: _____

Reviewed by: _____

Meal	Menu Guidelines	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Comments/Suggestions
Morning Snack	Vegetable/Fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Protein Food (should include milk with at least one snack) and/or Whole Grain Food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lunch	Vegetable/Fruit #1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Vegetable/Fruit #2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Whole Grain Food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Protein Food (can't be only cheese more than once a week)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Milk (or alternative in Guideline 4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Afternoon Snack	Vegetable/Fruit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Protein Food (should include milk with at least one snack) and/or whole grain food	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

For the Day	Milk is offered with all meals and at least one snack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	If milk is not offered at the other snack, then it includes yogurt, cheese or other food source of calcium, like tofu	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	No highly processed foods or beverages are offered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For the Week	A dark green vegetable is offered at least two times a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	An orange vegetable is offered at least once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	A plant-based protein food is offered at least once a week	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Note: Water should be available to children at all times.

The menu provides enough variety

- There is variety in the types of meals and snacks offered, e.g., a menu should not be made up of all sandwiches or all casseroles.
- There are different types of vegetables and fruits, a variety of whole grain foods and different protein foods offered throughout the week.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Suggestions for improvement:

Assessment for choking risk

Refer to [Appendix 1](#) on Food Choking Hazards

1. The menu contains foods that should not be served to children under four years of age.

No ☐

Yes ☐

Foods on the menu that need to be changed are:

2. The menu indicates the foods which will be modified to reduce the risk of choking.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Foods on the menu that need to be modified to reduce the risk of choking are:

Other Comments/Suggestions:

Appendix 4 - Menu Planning Templates and Sample menu

Template for Menu Planning in Child Care Settings

Template for Menu Planning in Child Care Settings (Breakfast and Supper)

Sample Menu (using template for menu planning)

Template for Menu Planning in Child Care Settings:

This template supports menu planning and provides space for the breakdown of foods/beverages included to show all food groupings covered.

This breakdown should be included when submitting the menu to the Child Care Consultant for review. Also include detail on the menu items as covered on page 4. Note: if your service provides breakfast or supper, there is a separate template included.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning Snack					
Vegetables and Fruit					
Whole Grain Foods					
Protein Foods					
Lunch Meal					
Vegetables and Fruit					
Vegetables and Fruit					
Whole Grain Foods					
Protein Foods					
Afternoon Snack					
Vegetables and Fruit					
Whole Grain Foods					
Protein Foods					

Notes

Vegetables and fruits: Offer at least two vegetables/fruits at lunch and at least one at all snacks. Offer dark green vegetables at least two times a week in a meal or snack. Offer an orange vegetable at least once a week in a meal or snack.

Whole grain foods: Offer a wholegrain food at lunch and either a whole grain food or a protein food (or both) at all snacks.

Protein foods: Offer a protein food at lunch and either a protein food or whole grain food (or both) at snacks. Offer a plant-based protein food at least once per week at a meal or snack.

Beverage/Food source of calcium: Water should be available to children at all times. Offer milk with all meals and at least one snack. The other snack should include milk, yogurt, cheese or other food source of calcium, like tofu.

Choking risk: See [Appendix 1](#) – Food Choking Hazards for tips on how to modify foods to reduce the risk of choking for children under four years of age. On your menu submission, indicate with an asterisk (*) the foods which will be modified to reduce the risk of choking. Refer to the sample menu for examples.

Template for Menu Planning in Child Care Settings (Breakfast and Supper)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast					
Vegetables and Fruit					
Whole Grain Foods					
Protein Foods					
Supper Meal					
Vegetables and Fruit					
Vegetables and Fruit					
Whole Grain Foods					
Protein Foods					

Notes

Vegetables and fruits: Offer at least one vegetable or fruit at breakfast and at least two vegetables/fruits at supper. Offer dark green vegetables at least two times a week in a meal or snack. Offer an orange vegetable at least once a week in a meal or snack.

Whole grain foods: Offer a wholegrain food at breakfast and at supper.

Protein foods: Offer a protein food at breakfast and at supper. The protein food at breakfast does not have to be iron-rich. Offer a plant-based protein food at least once per week at a meal or snack.

Beverage/Food source of calcium: Water should be available to children at all times. Offer milk with all meals.

Choking risk: See [Appendix 1](#) – Food Choking Hazards for tips on how to modify foods to reduce the risk of choking for children under four years of age. On your menu submission, indicate with an asterisk (*) the foods which will be modified to reduce the risk of choking. Refer to the sample menu for examples.

Sample Menu (using the template for menu planning)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning Snack	Yogurt, fruit and cereal parfait ^{SR}	Homemade pancakes ^{SR} , fruit and milk	Cereal with milk and fruit	Homemade muffin ^{SR} , fruit and milk	Toast, fruit and milk
Vegetables and Fruit	Frozen berries*	Mango pieces*	Blueberries, fresh	Canned pears*	Applesauce
Whole Grain Foods	Whole grain cereal	Whole wheat pancakes	Whole grain cereal	Whole wheat blueberry oatmeal muffin	Whole grain toast with margarine
Protein Foods	Yogurt	Milk	Milk	Milk	Milk
Lunch Meal	Homemade chicken and vegetable pizza, fruit and milk	Homemade macaroni and cheese ^{SR} , salad, fruit and milk	Homemade vegetarian chili ^{SR} , fruit, roll and milk	Egg and veggie cups ^{SR} , toast, fruit, vegetable and milk	Homemade tuna and brown rice casserole ^{SR} , fruit and milk
Vegetables and Fruit	Tomato sauce, onions, mushrooms, green peppers* on the pizza	Tossed salad (lettuce/spinach, tomatoes*, peppers*, cucumbers) with salad dressing	Tomatoes, carrots, onion in chili	Assorted vegetables* in the egg and veggie cups	Frozen green peas in the casserole
Vegetables and Fruit	Kiwi slices*	Apple slices*	Canned mandarin orange sections	Carrot "sticks"* (cooked/chilled) with ranch dressing and banana slices*	Strawberry slices*
Whole Grain Foods	Whole wheat pita	Whole grain macaroni noodles	Whole grain roll	Whole grain toast	Brown rice
Protein Foods	Chicken, cheese and milk	Cheese and milk	Kidney beans and milk	Egg and milk	Canned tuna and milk
Afternoon Snack	Homemade muffin ^{SR} , fruit and milk	Homemade tortilla triangles ^{SR} and veggies with yogurt dip ^{SR}	Fruit smoothie ^{SR}	Fruit, cheese and crackers	Homemade hummus ^{SR} , veggies and milk
Vegetables and Fruit	Canned peaches*	Turnip "sticks"* (cooked/chilled)	Frozen fruit*	Seedless grapes, cut in quarters*	Green and/or red pepper strips*
Whole Grain Foods	Whole grain banana and berry muffin	Whole grain baked tortilla triangles		Whole grain crackers	
Protein Foods	Milk	Yogurt dip	Yogurt and milk	Hard cheese*	Hummus and Milk

Note: Water will be available at all meals and snacks.

^{SR} Sample Recipe provided in [Appendix 6](#)

* Food will be modified to reduce the risk of choking, as per [Appendix 1 – Food Choking Hazards](#).

Appendix 5 - Resources

Child Care Policy and Standards Manual

Relevant Health and Safety Requirements

- 5. Illness, Accidents, Communicable Diseases and Incidents
- 6. Allergies and Other Restrictions
- 10. Food Handling and Preparation
- 11. Nutrition

Canada's Food Guide

[Dial-a-Dietitian](#), call 811 or email through the [811 Health Line website](#) if you have questions about healthy eating. This is a free service available to all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

Affordable Healthy Eating

Vegetables and Fruit

Wasteless Resources, Food First NL

Safe Food Handling for Children Ages 5 and Under

Ellyn Satter Institute

Healthy Eating for Babies Age 6-12 Months

Healthy Eating for Toddlers Age 12-24 Months

Appendix 6 - Sample Recipes

The following are some ideas for recipes that work well in the child care setting. They are family-sized recipes so you can double or triple the recipes according to the number of children in your child care setting. Also, most of the recipes indicate the approximate number of “child-sized” servings that the recipe will make; however, this is just an estimate of recipe yield. This should be used to help you to determine how much you need to make, not to determine how much the children will eat. Offer a small amount at first and the child can eat as little or as much as they want. They can also ask for or serve themselves more if they want it.

Main dishes

Vegetarian chili*

Bean, lentil and brown rice casserole*

Lentil, carrot and ginger soup*

Chicken or tofu*stir fry

Tuna and brown rice casserole

Whole grain macaroni and cheese

Whole grain English muffin pizza

Egg and veggie cups

Other

Blueberry oatmeal muffins

Banana and berry blender muffins

Whole wheat pancakes

Easy hummus*

Baked whole grain tortilla triangles

Dill and onion yogurt dip

Yogurt, fruit and cereal parfait

Fruit smoothie

*indicates that recipe includes a plant-based protein

Vegetarian Chili

Makes about 10-12 servings

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
2	Carrots	2
28 oz can	Kidney beans	30 mL
19 oz can	Black beans	1
2 tbsp	Oil	4
1	Onion, chopped	30 mL
4	Garlic cloves, crushed*	15 mL
2 tbsp	Chili powder	796 mL can
1 tbsp	Ground cumin	540 mL can
19 oz can	Lower sodium diced tomatoes	540 mL can
28 oz can	Lower sodium whole tomatoes	796 mL can

*4 garlic cloves can be substituted with 2 mL (½ tsp) of garlic powder (not garlic salt)

Directions:

1. Peel and chop carrots and set aside.
2. Rinse kidney beans and black beans under cold water, drain and set aside.
3. In a large pot, add oil and fry the chopped onion and crushed garlic over medium heat for 3-4 minutes.
4. Add chili powder, cumin, diced tomatoes, whole tomatoes (break up with a spoon), the chopped carrots and the rinsed beans to the saucepan.
5. Bring chili to a boil, cover pot, reduce heat to a simmer/slight boil and cook for about 1 hour. Stir occasionally.
6. Offer over brown rice or with a whole grain roll.

Recipe from "Affordable Healthy Eating", Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2020

Bean, Lentil and Brown Rice Casserole

Makes about 12 servings

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
1 ½ tbsp	Oil	22 mL
1 cup	Chopped onions	250 mL
3	Garlic cloves, minced*	3
1 tsp	Dried oregano	5 mL
1 tsp	Dried savory	5 mL
½ tsp	Black pepper	2 mL
1 cup	Salsa (mild and lower sodium if available)	250 mL
1 cup	Dry brown rice	250 mL
1 cup	Dry green lentils	250 mL
19 oz can	Kidney beans, drained and rinsed	540 mL
4 ½ cups	Water	1125 mL
1 cup	Grated cheddar cheese	250 mL

*3 garlic cloves can be substituted with 1 mL (¼ tsp) plus 0.5 mL (½ tsp) of garlic powder (not garlic salt)

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Add oil to large pot and heat over medium heat.
3. Add onions and cook for 3-4 minutes.
4. Add garlic, oregano, savory, and black pepper and cook for 1-2 minutes.
5. Stir in salsa.
6. Add brown rice, lentils, kidney beans and water. Bring to a boil.
7. Transfer mixture to lightly greased 3-quart (3.4 L) casserole dish.
8. Cover dish with lid or foil and bake in preheated oven for about 1 ¼-1 ½ hours or until rice and lentils are tender and no water remains. Stir twice during baking, replacing lid or foil before returning to oven.
9. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cheese.
10. Leave lid or foil off the dish and return the dish to the oven for 3-4 minutes to melt the cheese.

Recipe adapted from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada

Lentil, Carrot and Ginger Soup

Makes about 6 servings

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
2 tsp	Oil	10 mL
1	Onion, chopped	1
2	Cloves garlic, minced*	2
2 tbsp	Finely grated fresh ginger**	30 mL
1 tsp	Ground cumin	5 mL
¼ tsp	Black pepper	1 mL
5	Large carrots, peeled and chopped	5
1 cup	Dry red lentils, rinsed	250 mL
5 cups	Vegetable broth, no added salt	1250 mL

*2 garlic cloves can be substituted with 1 mL (¼ tsp) of garlic powder (not garlic salt)

**30 mL (2 tbsp) of fresh grated ginger can be substituted with 7 mL (1 ½ tsp) of ground ginger

Directions:

1. Heat oil in large pot.
2. Add onion and sauté over medium heat, stirring often, for about 2 minutes.
3. Add garlic, ginger, cumin, black pepper, and carrots and sauté for another 2 minutes, stirring frequently.
4. Add lentils and stir to combine.
5. Add vegetable broth and bring to a boil.
6. Turn down heat and simmer, covered, for about 25 minutes, until lentils are cooked and carrots are soft.
7. Remove from heat.
8. Ladle into blender in batches and puree soup until smooth (or alternatively, use an immersion blender).

Recipe adapted from Health Canada

Chicken or Tofu Stir Fry

Makes about 8-10 servings

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
½ cup	Orange juice	125 mL
1 tsp	Cornstarch	5 mL
2 tbsp	Oil	30 mL
1 lb	Boneless chicken*, cut in thin strips	454 g
1	Medium onion, finely chopped	1
1 cup	Finely chopped carrots	250 mL
1 cup	Finely chopped celery	250 mL
2 cups	Finely chopped broccoli	500 mL
½ tsp	Ground ginger	2 mL
¼ cup	Chicken or vegetable stock	60 mL
1 tbsp	Grated orange rind (optional)	15 mL
¼ tsp	Salt	1 mL
¼ tsp	Pepper	1 mL

Directions:

1. Mix orange juice and cornstarch. Set aside.
2. In a wok or large non-stick skillet, stir-fry chicken in the oil over high heat for about 5 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink. Remove chicken and set aside.
3. Add onion, carrots and celery to wok and stir-fry for 2 minutes.
4. Add broccoli, ground ginger and stock. Cover and cook 3-5 minutes or until vegetables are tender.
5. Return chicken to wok. Add orange juice mixture, grated orange rind, salt and pepper. Cook and stir constantly until sauce is thickened. Offer with rice if desired.
6. *You can make this a plant-based protein food stir fry by using tofu instead of chicken. In step 2, cut firm tofu into thin strips. Brown tofu on both sides, then remove from pan and set aside.

Recipe adapted from Healthy Heart Cooking, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Health, 1996

Tuna and Brown Rice Casserole

Makes about 6 servings

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
4 tbsp	Oil	60 mL
4 tbsp	Flour	60 mL
½ tsp	Salt	2 mL
½ tsp	Paprika	2 mL
2 cups	Milk	500 mL
1 cup	Grated cheddar cheese	250 mL
3 cups	Cooked brown rice (take about 1 cup of uncooked rice and cook according to package directions)	750 mL
2 cans (6 oz each)	Flaked light tuna in water, drained	2 cans (170 g each)
½ cup	Whole grain breadcrumbs (optional)	125 mL

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. In a large saucepan combine the oil, flour, salt and paprika, and stir together until they make a smooth paste.
3. Add the milk and stir to blend with the flour paste, and then place the saucepan on the stove over medium high heat.
4. Cook the milk mixture, stirring constantly, until it thickens. Remove from heat.
5. Add the grated cheese to the sauce and stir until it melts into the sauce.
6. In an ungreased 2-quart (1.8 L) casserole dish layer half of the cooked rice, tuna and cheese sauce, then layer the rest of the cooked rice, tuna and cheese sauce. Top with the breadcrumbs.
7. Bake at 375°F (190°C) for about 20 minutes (until breadcrumbs are golden and food is heated through).

Whole Grain Macaroni and Cheese

Makes about 6 servings

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
2 cups	Dry whole grain macaroni	500 mL
4 tbsp	Oil	60 mL
4 tbsp	Flour	60 mL
½ tsp	Salt	2 mL
¼ tsp (or to taste)	Black pepper	1 mL (or to taste)
2 cups	Milk	500 mL
2 cups	Grated cheddar cheese, divided	500 mL

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Cook the macaroni in a large saucepan, according to package directions (you do not need to add salt to the cooking water), and then drain the water. Set pan aside.
3. In another large saucepan combine the oil, flour, salt and black pepper, and stir together until they make a smooth paste.
4. Add the milk and stir to blend with the flour paste, and then place the saucepan on the stove over medium high heat.
5. Cook the milk mixture, stirring constantly, until it thickens.
6. Add one cup (250 mL) of the grated cheese to the sauce and stir until it melts into the sauce.
7. Put the cooked macaroni in an ungreased 2-quart (1.8 L) casserole dish. Pour the cheese sauce over the macaroni and stir until thoroughly mixed. Top with the remaining one cup (250 mL) of grated cheese.
8. Bake at 350°F (175°C) for ½ hour.

Whole Grain English Muffin Pizza

Makes 8 mini pizzas

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
4	Whole grain English muffins	4
¼ cup	Pasta sauce	60 mL
1 tsp	Italian seasoning	5 mL
2 cups	Chopped vegetables	500 mL
1 cup	Chopped lean roast turkey or skinless baked chicken breast	250 mL
1 cup	Grated cheese	250 mL

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Split English muffins and place on large baking sheet in a single layer; set aside.
3. In a small bowl, stir together pasta sauce and Italian seasoning.
4. Spread sauce mixture evenly on the eight muffin halves.
5. Top each with vegetables and turkey or chicken, and then with cheese.
6. Place baking sheet in preheated oven and bake for about 8 minutes or until cheese is melted.
7. Remove from oven.

This recipe provides an opportunity to get creative and discover new fruits and vegetables. Let children top their pizza with a variety of fruits and vegetables such as pineapple (**finely** chopped), zucchini, etc. before placing in the oven.

Recipe adapted from the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada

Egg and Veggie Cups

Makes 12 egg and veggie cups

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
8	Eggs	8
½ cup	Milk	80 mL
½ tsp	Salt	2 mL
½ tsp	Pepper	2 mL
6 cups	Finely chopped fresh or frozen vegetables	1500 mL
1 tsp	Dried basil	5 mL
¾ cup	Grated cheese	175 mL

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C) and lightly oil or paper line 12 muffin tins.
2. In a large bowl, add the eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Whisk together.
3. Sauté finely chopped vegetables over medium heat.
4. Add the sautéed vegetables and basil to the egg mixture and whisk together.
5. Scoop mixture into muffin tins until divided evenly. Put about 1 tbsp (15 mL) of grated cheese on top of each egg and veggie cup.
6. Place muffin pan in the oven and cook for approximately 15 minutes. Use a digital food thermometer to check the temperature of the eggs.
7. Once the eggs have reached an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F), they can be removed from the oven and cooled for 3-5 minutes before removing them from the muffin tins.
8. Optional: Once baked, you can put the egg and veggie cups into whole grain tortillas to make wraps.

Recipe adapted from Health Canada

Blueberry Oatmeal Muffins

Makes 12 standard size muffins or 24 mini-muffins

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
1 cup	Rolled oats	250 mL
1 cup	Buttermilk or *sour milk	250 mL
1 tsp	Vanilla	5 mL
1 cup + 2 tbsp	Whole wheat flour	250 mL + 30 mL
1 tbsp	Baking powder	15 mL
½ tsp	Salt	2 mL
1 tsp	Cinnamon	5 mL
½ tsp	Baking soda	2 mL
¼ tsp	Nutmeg	1 mL
1	Large egg	1
¼ cup	Brown sugar	60 mL
¼ cup	Oil	60 mL
1 ½ cups	Blueberries or partridgeberries, fresh or frozen	375 mL

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Lightly oil or paper line 12 muffin tins or 24 mini muffin tins.
3. In a medium mixing bowl, combine rolled oats, buttermilk or sour milk, and vanilla, and let stand.
4. In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking powder, salt, cinnamon, baking soda, and nutmeg.
5. Add egg, brown sugar and oil to the rolled oats mixture.
6. Add wet mixture to dry ingredients. Stir just until moistened.
7. Fold in berries.
8. Pour batter into prepared muffin pan, filling each cup ¾ full.
9. Place pan in preheated oven and bake for about 15-20 minutes (standard size muffins) or 10-12 minutes (mini-muffins) or until the tops of the muffins are set. Toothpick test** can also be used.
10. Cool in pan for about 10-15 minutes before removing from pan and offering to the children.

*To sour milk, add 1 tbsp (15 mL) vinegar or lemon juice to each 1 cup of milk.

**Toothpick test – to check if the muffins are baked, insert a toothpick into a muffin; if the toothpick comes out clean, with no batter attached, the muffins are baked and ready to be removed from the oven.

Recipe adapted from Healthy Heart Cooking, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Dept. of Health, 1996

Banana and Berry Blender Muffins

Makes 12 standard size muffins or 24 mini-muffins

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
1 cup	Plain Greek yogurt	250 mL
2	Ripe bananas	2
2	Eggs	2
2 tbsp	Oil	30 mL
2 cups	Rolled oats	500 mL
1/3 cup	Maple syrup	80 mL
½ tbsp	Baking powder	7 mL
½ tsp	Baking soda	2 mL
1 tsp	Vanilla	5 mL
1 cup	Fresh or frozen mixed berries	250 mL

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Lightly oil or paper line 12 muffin tins or 24 mini muffin tins.
3. Place all ingredients, except mixed berries, in a blender or food processor. Blend until smooth.
4. Add mixed berries to the batter in the blender. Using a wooden spoon, gently fold them into the batter.
5. Pour batter into prepared muffin pan, filling each cup ¾ full.
6. Place pan in preheated oven and bake for about 17 minutes (standard size muffins) or 10-12 minutes (mini-muffins) or until the tops of the muffins are set. Toothpick test* can also be used.
7. Cool in pan for about 10-15 minutes before removing from pan and offering to the children.
8. *Toothpick test – to check if the muffins are baked, insert a toothpick into a muffin; if the toothpick comes out clean, with no batter attached, the muffins are baked and ready to be removed from the oven.

Tips:

- If using frozen berries, give them a light coating of flour before stirring into the batter, for even distribution.
- Freeze overripe bananas if they won't be eaten right away and use them (thawed) in this recipe.

Recipe adapted from Health Canada

Whole Wheat Pancakes

Makes 14 pancakes

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
1 cup	Whole wheat flour	250 mL
½ cup	All-purpose flour	125 mL
2 tbsp	Granulated sugar	30 mL
2 tsp	Baking powder	10 mL
Pinch	Ground cinnamon	Pinch
1 1/2 cups	Skim milk	375 mL
1	Egg	1
2 tbsp	Oil	30 mL
2 tsp	Vanilla	10 mL
1 cup	Fresh or frozen mixed berries (optional)	250 mL

Directions:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together whole wheat and all-purpose flours, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon.
2. In another bowl, whisk together milk with egg, oil and vanilla. Pour over flour mixture and stir to combine. Stir in berries.
3. Lightly oil a non-stick frying pan. Heat over medium heat. Using 60 mL (1/4 cup) measuring cup, pour batter into hot pan. Cook for about 2 minutes or until bubbles start to appear on top. Flip over and cook for another minute or until light golden brown. Repeat with remaining batter.

Recipe adapted from Health Canada

Easy Hummus

Makes about 1 ½ cups (375 mL)

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
19 oz can	Chickpeas	540 mL can
3 tbsp	Lemon juice (juice of one lemon)	45 mL
2 tbsp	Canola or olive oil	30 mL
1 tsp	Ground cumin	5 mL
2	Garlic cloves, minced or crushed*	2
3 tbsp	Water	45 mL
	A pinch of pepper (optional)	

*2 garlic cloves can be substituted with 1 mL (¼ tsp) of garlic powder (not garlic salt)

Directions:

1. Drain and rinse chickpeas. Place in blender or food processor.
2. Add lemon juice, oil, ground cumin, garlic and water.
3. Blend or process until smooth. Add a small bit more water, if needed.
4. Add pepper to taste (optional).

Keep refrigerated.

Baked Whole Grain Tortilla Triangles

Ingredients - whole grain soft tortillas

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Cut the whole grain tortillas into narrow pie wedges (triangles) and place them on an ungreased baking sheet.
3. Bake them for about 5-7 minutes, or until lightly browned and crisp. Check them after 5 minutes, and keep an eye on them, as they brown very quickly near the end of the time.

Offer with [dill and onion yogurt dip](#) (see recipe below) or other dips such as [hummus](#), salsa, guacamole or fruit yogurt. To avoid double dipping in a common bowl, give each child their own little portion of dip in a small glass or bowl, or a disposable paper container like a muffin cup liner.

Dill and Onion Yogurt Dip

Makes $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (175 mL)

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	Plain yogurt	175 mL
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	Dried dill weed	2 mL
$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp	Onion powder (not onion salt)	2 mL

Directions:

1. Mix all ingredients together in a bowl.
2. Cover and refrigerate until needed.
3. Offer as a dip with baked whole grain tortilla triangles (see recipe above) or vegetable sticks. If using hard vegetables like carrot or turnip, cook them until just tender, chill, and then cut into thin sticks.

Yogurt, Fruit and Cereal Parfait

Ingredients

Plain or fruit yogurt

Chopped fruit (fresh, frozen or canned)*

Whole grain cereal (e.g., bran buds, oat o's)

Directions:

1. Layer or combine the ingredients in small cups or bowls.
2. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Note: If you make the parfaits ahead of time, the cereal will absorb moisture from the yogurt and fruit and become soft. If you want the cereal to stay crunchy, add it right before offering.

You might want to let the children prepare their own parfaits** and eat them right away. You could give them the choice of a couple of flavours of yogurt (or a plain and a fruit one), two or more kinds of chopped fruit, and two or more kinds of cereal. Then they can each create their own unique parfait.

*If using frozen fruit, thaw first; if using canned fruit, drain it before adding.

**Another option is to let the children choose their ingredients while an adult makes the parfaits.

Fruit Smoothie

Makes 4 smoothies

Amount (imperial)	Ingredients	Amount (metric)
1/2 cup	Plain or fruit yogurt	125 mL
2 cups	Chopped fruit (fresh or frozen)	500 mL
1 cup	Milk	250 mL

Directions:

1. Place the ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend on high until smooth (add more milk, if needed, to achieve desired consistency).
3. Pour into individual glasses.
4. Offer immediately or cover and refrigerate until ready to offer to the children.



July 3, 2024