

NWT HEALTHY COMMUNITIES Toolkit



Children spend a large portion of their day in day care, day camp, or after school care where they may have access to food served through vending machines, snacks and lunch programs.

Children in attendance for more than six hours receive at least half of their daily nutrition! Child care provider have the opportunity to shape children's eating habits to be as healthy as possible. You can do this by role modeling healthy eating habits, having a healthy attitude towards food, and providing healthy meals & snacks.

Healthy Eating Options

FOR DAY CARE, DAY CAMP OR AFTER SCHOOL CARE FOR CHILDREN



The Importance of Healthy Eating for Children

Food is more than just something to eat! Food is important for children because:

- Children grow and develop more rapidly during the first three years than at any other time of life.
- As children learn to feed themselves, they are developing motor skills.
- Eating food provides learning opportunities. Where does food come from? How is it made?
- Variety is the spice of life! Young children are curious and want to try new foods. Studies show that children who have experienced a variety of food tastes, textures and colours when they are young are better eaters and are better nourished.
- Mealtimes provide a good opportunity for children and staff to communicate in a family style setting, and provide pleasure and satisfaction for children in a relaxed atmosphere. Children acquire attitudes towards food from their caregivers.
- Good eating habits learned in the early years can last a lifetime.

Look for these items on the meal plan...

Most daycares post in advance the weekly menus informing parents about the meals and snacks that will be served to the children. A healthy and balanced menu should be based on the Canada Food Guide's daily recommendations. For a sample of a Healthy Eating Day Care / After School Care / Day Camp Menu please visit:

<http://healthycommunities.toolkitnwtac.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/12/daycareafterschooldaycamp-2.pdf>

- Plenty of vegetables and fruit
- Whole grain breads, cereals, pitas, tortillas, roti, crackers and pasta
- Fish, beans, chick peas, soybeans, lentils, eggs and tofu
- Snack foods made with little or no added fat, sugar or salt
- Water, milk, fortified soy beverage, cheese and yogurt



Children Snack Ideas at Day Care / After School Care / Day Camp:

Adapted from the article Plan Well by the Dietitians of Canada
<http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Plan-Shop-Cook/Plan-Well.aspx>

Snacks on Hand

- Crackers
- Dried Fruit/Canned Fruit
- Popcorn (Smartfood)
- Rice Cakes
- Cereal (unsweetened)
- Granola Bars
- Peanut Butter
- Canned Fish
- Dried Meat or Beef Jerky

Snacks in the Fridge

- Bagels/Bread
- Bran Muffins
- Yogurt
- Cottage Cheese
- Fresh Fruit
- Raw Vegetables
- Cheese
- Milk
- Salad Greens

Easy to Go, Picnic Snacks

- Baby Carrots
- Celery Sticks
- Bagel Bites
- Rice Cakes
- Apples
- Crackers
- Pretzels
- Dried Meat or Beef Jerky
- Popcorn (Smartfood)

*** If time is a factor for making a snack, stick to ideas that are quick and easy. These are general guidelines and ideas.**

For assistance or questions, please contact your Regional Health and Social Services Authority or the Department of Health and Social Services Territorial Nutritionist.





Questions for Parents to Ask the Child Care Facility

- Ask to see the weekly menus at the daycare so you know what your child is eating.
- Ask who completed the meal plan and if they are following the Canada's Food Guide Recommendations.
- Ask how food is prepared "how is the pizza made?" Look for words that tell you how food is cooked. (i.e.: roasted, baked, or poached instead of fried.
- Find out how meals and snacks are going. Ask what, and how much your child is eating.

The Eating Environment

Here are some of the tricks they use to encourage children to eat well:

- Have clean tables and set up in a way that encourages talking in small groups.
- Put up attractive posters of healthy foods in full view on the walls.
- Let good smells emanate from the kitchen to tease everyone's senses during playtime.
- Child care providers sit and eat with the children.
- Maintain an approach that's positive, curious and enthusiastic when it's time to try new foods.
- Teach children to recognize when they're full.

