

# Litter-less Lunch and Snack Day

## Package for Educators



March is Nutrition Month! Make Litter-less Lunches and Snacks” your school’s focus this year. Litter-less lunches and snacks provide less waste and packaging. Litter-less lunches and snacks are not only environmentally friendly, but they are often healthier and lower in cost too.

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## Objectives

- To engage children in working towards packing healthy lunches through the promotion of litter-less lunches
- For children and their families to learn and create strategies to pack a variety of healthy lunches

## Educator's Role

- Take a "before" photo of the waste collected by your classroom. This will represent the amount of waste produced on an average day after lunch or snack. We suggest you wait until you are about to take the picture to tell your class as this will ensure the *usual* amount of waste is recorded.
- Choose a time to promote litter-less lunches and snacks to children.
  - Hold a brainstorming session with children on ways to pack lunches while reducing waste and packaging.
  - Record brainstorming ideas.
  - Information and education activities are provided in this package to help with this.
- Designate one day in March for children to bring a litter-less lunch or snack by reducing their waste and packaging. **Fill in your chosen date on the letter provided in the parent package.**
- Send Parent Packages home.
- Take an "after" photo of the waste produced the day of the litter-less lunch or snack.
- Option: Use the 'Classroom Lunch Audit: Tally Sheet' to calculate the differences in the types of waste produced both on the 'before' day and the 'after' day.
- SUBMIT: 1) the *before photos*, 2) *ideas generated from the brainstorming session* and 3) *after photos* to [melanie.warken@fhhr.ca](mailto:melanie.warken@fhhr.ca) if you would like your photos featured on the [South Central Food Security Network \(SCFSN\) Facebook Page](#).

**Note:** If you decide to include any children's faces in the photos, a SCFSN consent form must be signed. This will be provided as requested.

## Example Photos from previous years:



**Before**



**After**



**Before**



**After**

## **Please Note:**

Lunches packed on this or future litter-less lunch and snack days do not have to be entirely waste-free, but trying to provide less packaging than students' usual packed lunches. We do not want to discourage the consumption of healthy foods that may provide some waste (example, milk cartons and fruit peels), and do not want to discourage programs such as those that provide kids with milk in school. We also want to be sure not to be judgemental of anything students may bring in their lunch, it may be all they have.

Feel free to adapt your Litter-less Lunch and Snack Day in order to make it work best for your class, school or program. Perhaps litter-less lunches and snacks can help your school or program move towards implementing a **recycling** or **composting** program. Some schools have a boomerang lunch program by which some or all partially eaten food, recycling, and waste material is returned home and not placed in the school's waste collection. This gives parents a better idea of what their child is eating away from home.

## **Talking Points to Use with Children and Parents:**

Below are suggestions for you. Please feel free to use what you think is appropriate and add your own ideas.

### **What are Litter-less Lunches and Snacks?**

- Lunches and snacks packed so they have less waste and packaging
- Better for the environment
- Often healthier
- Lower cost for your family

### **Tips for Packing Litter-less Lunches and Snacks**

#### **1) *Things that you might need:***

- Reusable, insulated lunch bag
- Reusable containers
  - Various sizes
  - Leak-proof and air-tight
  - Label these items with your name in case they are left at school or program
- Reusable water bottles, cutlery and napkins
- Freezer packs or Thermos™ to keep cold foods cold or hot foods hot
- Avoid paper or plastic bags, plastic wrap and foil, single use containers or juice boxes and overly packaged/processed foods

#### **2) *Buy larger containers of food*** (yogurt, applesauce, pretzels, trail mix) instead of many individually wrapped items.

- Food from larger containers can be portioned into smaller, reusable containers.

### **3) Plan ahead**

- Pack lunch the night before
- Make large batches of healthy recipes (chilli, soup, casseroles, muffins, granola bars) during the week that can be packed for lunch. Recipes will be provided as part of parent package.
- Pre-wash and cut assorted vegetables
- Prepare extra food at dinner time and pack leftovers for lunch

### **4) Keep your lunch safe!**

- Wash your hands before touching your food (preparing and eating).
- Keep your lunchbox, containers, utensils, water bottles and countertops clean.
- Keep cold foods cold with freezer packs and insulated lunch bags.
- Keep hot foods hot using an insulated container like a Thermos™. Try preheating insulated containers by filling them with boiling water for a few of minutes before emptying them and filling them with your hot foods.
- For more information on packing safe lunches visit: [http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/safety-salubrite/school-lunch\\_repas-ecole-eng.php](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/safety-salubrite/school-lunch_repas-ecole-eng.php)

## **Why Should You Pack Litter-less Lunches?**

### **1) Health**

- The healthiest food choices often do not come in packages.
- Packaged foods like chips, crackers, granola bars and cookies are often low in important nutrients for health, growth and development like calcium, vitamin D, iron and protein. See page 8. Nutrients for Health for background information.
- Packing litter-less lunches and snacks encourages everyone to learn new food preparation skills.

### **2) Environment**

- In North America enough garbage is made every day to fill 70,000 garbage trucks. In one year, lined up bumper to bumper, that stretches halfway to the moon!
- One student taking a packed lunch to school creates a total of 30kg (66lb.) of waste every year!
- The packaging food comes in makes up about 30% of garbage that lunches often produce.
- In a lifetime, the average North American will throw away 600 times his or her adult weight in garbage. A 68 kg (150lb) adult will leave a legacy of 40,825 kg (89,815 lb.) of trash. That is heavier than 128 grand pianos!

Reference:

[www.wastefreelunch.com](http://www.wastefreelunch.com)

### 3) Cost

- You can buy a 300g block of cheddar cheese for \$6.49, but a 168g pack of individually wrapped cheese strings costs around \$5.79. Each cheese string (21g) costs around \$0.72 but the same amount of cheese sliced off of a block costs \$0.45. That means cheese strings cost almost twice as much as the same amount of cheese sliced from a block of cheddar cheese.
- A packed lunch containing bottled water, a Lunchables™ kit, canned fruit, and a yogurt cup costs around **\$6.00**.
- A litter-less lunch containing carrots, an apple, yogurt, a chicken sandwich and water from a reusable water bottle costs around **\$2.74**.

# Activities

## KINDERGARTEN – GRADE 3

**Activity:** Litter-less Challenge

**Description:** For the following items, ask the children to think of a litter-less option. Examples of possible answers are provided:

**1) Small yogurt cup**

Answer: Yogurt from a larger container transferred into a reusable container

**2) Bottled water**

Answer: Reusable water bottle filled from the tap

**3) Cheese strings**

Answer: Sliced cheddar cheese from a block

**4) Bringing your lunch in a plastic bag**

Answer: Bring lunch to school in a reusable lunch bag

**5) Pretzels in a plastic bag**

Answer: Pretzels in a reusable container

**6) Lunchables™ kit**

Answer: Home-made sandwich or home-made cheese and crackers

**7) Soup cup from the grocery store**

Answer: Home-made soup in a Thermos™

**8) Granola bar from the grocery store**

Answer: Home-made granola bars packed in reusable containers

**9) Plastic spoon**

Answer: Reusable cutlery

## GRADES 4-6

**Activity:** Litter-less Challenge

**Description:** In groups, come up with the best answers to the following questions:

1. How many delicious snacks can you think of that don't make a lot of garbage?
2. Can you figure out how to make a lunch that includes all your favourite foods and leaves no garbage at the end? (Some items may be ok because they can be recycled or composted.)

## GRADES 7-8

### Activity: The Better Choice

**Description:** Have children individually choose 5 packaged foods that they have packed for lunch. Challenge them to find a better alternative for each. Next, have them compare the price, nutrition and packaging differences. Ask the children to present their findings to the class.

- Nutrition information on un-packaged foods can be found in Health Canada's Nutrient Value of Some Common Foods Booklet: [www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/nutrient\\_value-valeurs\\_nutritives-eng.php](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/fiche-nutri-data/nutrient_value-valeurs_nutritives-eng.php)
- For a better understanding of Nutrition Fact Labels visit: [healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/label-etiquetage/index-eng.php](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/label-etiquetage/index-eng.php)

### Examples:

Compare	Prepared Instant Vanilla Pudding (1/2 cup)	Vanilla Pudding Cup (1/2 cup)
<b>Price</b>	\$0.44	\$0.62
<b>Nutrition</b>	15% Daily Value of calcium	4% Daily Value of calcium
<b>Packaging</b>	1 cardboard box for 4 portions.	Plastic container for every portion.

Compare	Boneless Skinless Chicken Breast (50g)	Deli Chicken Breast slice (50g)
<b>Price</b>	\$0.92	\$1.00
<b>Nutrition</b>	1% Daily Value of sodium	43% Daily Value of sodium
<b>Packaging</b>	Plastic and Styrofoam	Plastic

Compare	Cracker Barrel Cheddar Cheese (30g)	Kraft Singles (31g)
<b>Price</b>	\$0.65	\$0.37
<b>Nutrition</b>	- 9% Daily Value of sodium - 6% Daily value of vitamin A - 20% Daily Value of calcium	- 20% Daily Value of sodium - 4% Daily value of vitamin A - 15% Daily value of calcium
<b>Packaging</b>	One package for entire product	Individually packaged slices

### References:

[www.lunchwithoutwaste.com/LitterlessLunches.aspx](http://www.lunchwithoutwaste.com/LitterlessLunches.aspx)

[www.wastefreelunch.com](http://www.wastefreelunch.com)

[healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/safety-salubrite/school-lunch\\_repas-ecole-eng.php](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/safety-salubrite/school-lunch_repas-ecole-eng.php)

# Litter-less Lunch and Snack Day



Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child's school/program is planning a Litter-less Lunch and Snack Day to celebrate Nutrition Month and healthy eating.

Litter-less lunches and snacks are packed to provide less waste and packaging. These types of lunches and snacks are rising in popularity because they are usually healthier, environmentally friendly and less expensive than pre-packaged lunches and snacks. The goal is to engage children in packing their lunches and to help you and your family learn and create strategies for packing lunches and snacks that produce less waste and are often healthy too.

Your child's teacher has discussed litter-less lunches in the classroom and has planned to have a Litter-Less Lunch or Snack day on \_\_\_\_\_. We ask for your support and involvement in this initiative by helping and/or encouraging your child to pack a litter-less lunch or snack on this day. The accompanying information sheet gives tips for you and your child to pack litter-less lunches and snacks. Feel free to try out your own ideas too!

Classrooms/groups will be submitting before and after photos showing the amount of waste they produce on an average day compared to the Litter-less Lunch and Snack Day along with a list of brainstormed litter-less lunch and snack ideas to the [South Central Food Security Network](https://www.facebook.com/sc.fsn/) to post on their Facebook page to celebrate their success! They can be found here [www.facebook.com/sc.fsn/](https://www.facebook.com/sc.fsn/) sometime after.

Thank you for your support. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact \_\_\_\_\_.

# March is Nutrition Month, but NUTRITION in the classroom doesn't only have to happen in March...



How can you do this year round? What else can you do?

*The following activities tie in well with The Big Crunch! If your class participated in this initiative in October:*

- **Invite a farmer to speak to the class**
- Take the class on a **field trip to visit a farm, community garden or the farmer's market** (Try doing a scavenger hunt while there).
- **Plant vegetables in the classroom** - [www.littlegreenthumbs.org/Apply](http://www.littlegreenthumbs.org/Apply)
- **Plant a school garden** (for resources and tips on how, visit: [www.rghealth.ca/department/health-promotion/nutrition-and-healthy-eating](http://www.rghealth.ca/department/health-promotion/nutrition-and-healthy-eating) )
- **Try New Foods.** Taste-test local foods, seasonal foods, new foods, cultural foods, or new recipes in the class – use attached food experiences form for ideas. Talk about where that food comes from – how it was grown, how far it travelled to get here, how it can be used/cooked at home.
- **Start a school/class compost** – For more information on how to visit: [www.regina.ca/opencms/export/sites/regina.ca/residents/environment/.media/pdf/composting\\_guide.pdf](http://www.regina.ca/opencms/export/sites/regina.ca/residents/environment/.media/pdf/composting_guide.pdf)  
See also Calgary Resource: [www.greencalgary.org/images/uploads/File/SchoolWideCompost\\_GC.pdf](http://www.greencalgary.org/images/uploads/File/SchoolWideCompost_GC.pdf)
- **Start a school/class recycling program**

*Other Ideas:*

- Have a **food/vegetable of the week** – where does it come from, how is it grown/produced, perhaps use it in a snack or just on its own as a taste test using the attached food experiences form.
- **Kids cooking programs**
- **Cultural Food Days – Celebrate foods from different cultures** – taste test, talk about their uses in the countries they are from, different cultural and food practices.
- **Family Food Traditions** – have students draw a picture, write a poem, write a story, or share with the class some of their favourite family food traditions (e.g. eating turkey on Thanksgiving, smoking meat, frying fresh caught fish on the camp fire when camping, having a certain birthday cake every year, etc.)
- **Trip to grocery store** – Save on Foods offers School tours: [www.saveonfoods.com/nutrition-tours/](http://www.saveonfoods.com/nutrition-tours/) or try a virtual tour: [www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/grocery-shopping](http://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/topic/grocery-shopping)
- **Food songs, stories and games**



Linking Nutrition to the Health Curriculum – Resource

- **Teaching Nutrition in Saskatchewan: Concepts and Resources Grades 1-6**  
[www.fhhr.ca/SchoolsAndChildcare.htm](http://www.fhhr.ca/SchoolsAndChildcare.htm) (Developed by the Public Health Nutritionists in Saskatchewan)

Curriculum Support Document with nutrition concepts and resources: The purpose of these documents is to provide teachers with credible Canadian-based nutrition information and resources. The Guide was developed using the Saskatchewan Health Education Curriculum (2010) accessed from [www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca/](http://www.curriculum.gov.sk.ca/)

