



BALANCED SCHOOL DAY

The elementary school day is organized as a Balanced School Day. The day begins with an instructional period followed by a 40 minute nutrition/activity break, another instructional period and another 50 minute nutrition/activity break and a final instructional period followed by dismissal for the day.

It has been found where the day is organized this way that this schedule promotes a better learning environment, effectively meets the nutritional needs of students and provides quality time for physical activity and play.

Academic Performance

The Balanced School Day schedule provides longer periods of uninterrupted learning/teaching time. Studies on brain compatibility support a balance of learning, nutrition and physical activity to promote the optimum conditions for effective learning in young people. Students are better able to focus on their school work all day rather than running out of energy towards the end of the day.

Balanced Nutrition

To learn properly, students need to eat and be energized. The Balanced Day schedule ensures that there is an opportunity to eat/snack twice during the day. A student who is nutritionally satisfied and physically healthy has better concentration levels, more focus and more energy.

The Region of Niagara Public Health Department provides the following information to help you plan for the two nutrition breaks:

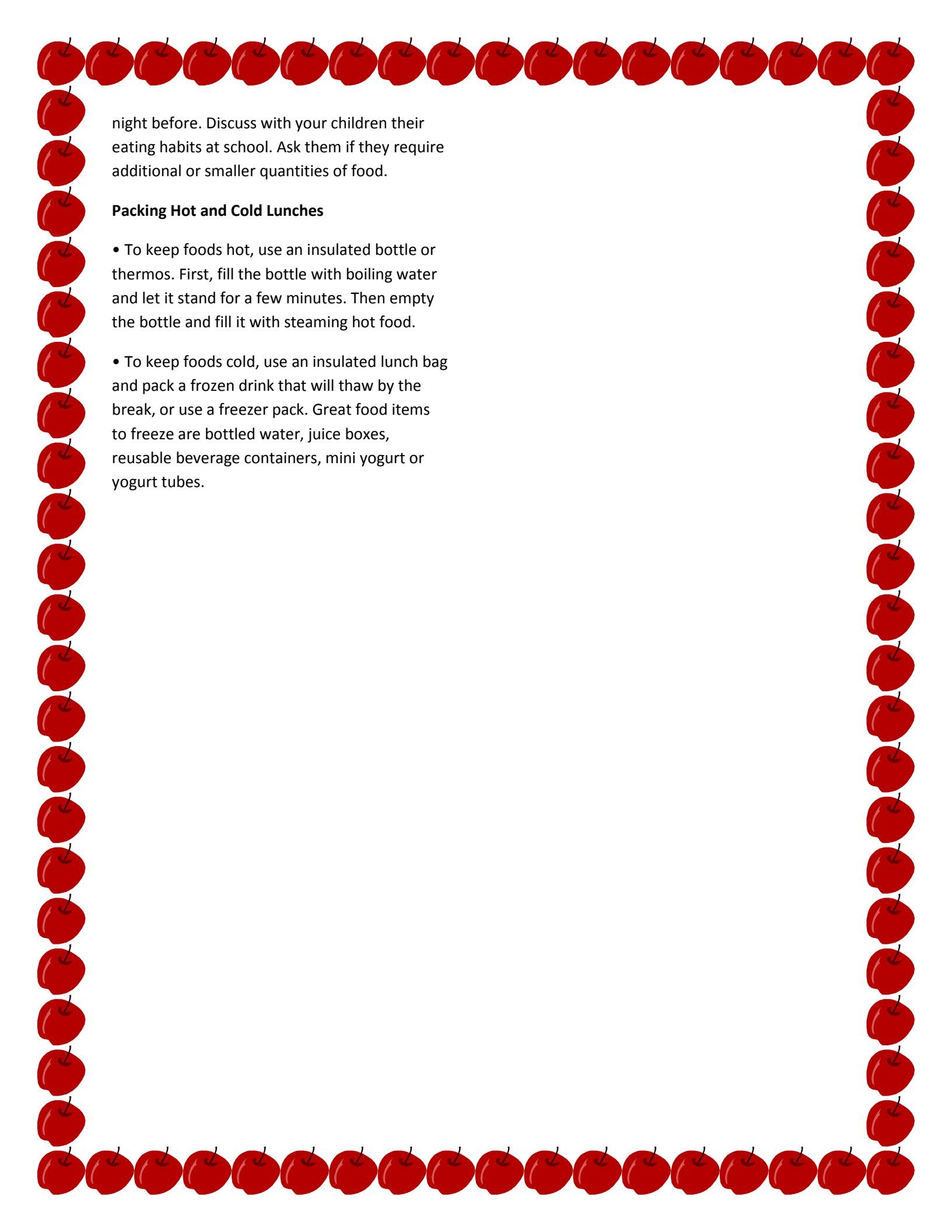
- Talk to your child about how they would like their food organized for their nutrition breaks.
- If your child does not eat breakfast before school, the first break can be at a time to add breakfast into their daily routine.
- Put each meal into separate bags labeled “Break One” and “Break Two”.
- Put dividers in the lunch bag so your child eats everything above the cardboard in the first break and then lifts the card and eats the rest at the second break.

Packing Nutritious Meals

- Try to include foods from at least three of the four food groups from

Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating for each break. The four food groups are Grain Products, Vegetables and Fruit, Milk and Milk Products, Meat and Alternatives.

- Add two beverages. Choose from the following healthy beverages most of the time: milk or chocolate milk, fortified soy beverage, water and 100% unsweetened fruit juice.
- On pizza and sub sandwich days, make sure your children have a healthy beverage to drink. Send healthy snacks for the other break.
- Keep a list on the fridge of favourite meals and let your children “order off the menu”. Review and update the list every few months and add new menu items.
- Involve your children in planning and preparing their breaks. This can be done the



night before. Discuss with your children their eating habits at school. Ask them if they require additional or smaller quantities of food.

Packing Hot and Cold Lunches

- To keep foods hot, use an insulated bottle or thermos. First, fill the bottle with boiling water and let it stand for a few minutes. Then empty the bottle and fill it with steaming hot food.
- To keep foods cold, use an insulated lunch bag and pack a frozen drink that will thaw by the break, or use a freezer pack. Great food items to freeze are bottled water, juice boxes, reusable beverage containers, mini yogurt or yogurt tubes.