

Pack a Healthier Lunch with Less Litter

On average a teen taking a lunch to school will throw away packaging that can create 30 kilograms/67 pounds of litter in a school year. It's clear that lunches with less packaging will help reduce this litter, but they are also a chance to pack healthier foods. Some pre-packaged foods can have more sugar, salt, and fat than foods you choose and package yourself. Also, these ready-to-go options may not have a lot of fibre, vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.

Here are two ideas to reduce litter and pack a healthier lunch.

- Instead of buying a small pre-packaged lunch with meat and cheese, a fruit drink or pop, and a candy bar, try this tip:
 - In reusable containers pack:
 - whole grain crackers, lean meat, and lower milk fat cheese
 - water in a reusable water bottle
 - a piece of fruit or cut vegetables
- Encourage teens to use reusable containers for home-made whole grain sandwiches or wraps, and cut up vegetables and fruit. Buying lunch items from the grocery store, restaurants or convenience stores may have more packaging and there may be fewer options that include whole grains or vegetables and fruit.



These simple changes may provide more fibre from choosing whole grain crackers, bread or wraps and fruit or vegetables. The changes may also help you to use less fat by choosing lean meats, lower milk fat cheese, and less sugar by sending water instead of a sugar sweetened drinks, and it is all done without throw away packaging! For more information on lunch ideas you can pack go to: <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-whats-for-lunch.pdf>

Technology and Physical Activity

There is no doubt that technological advances have changed our society. If we reflect on our own childhood play experiences most of us would likely say that we remember being outside, in an unstructured setting and had the freedom to experiment movement skills. We felt challenged yet successful, building confidence and competence in a variety of skills and movements but most importantly we were having fun! We were definitely heading on the progressing path of enhancing our physical literacy and enjoying every minute of our journey.

Today our children and youth are exposed to technology in various locations (home, school, friends' homes). It has become a daily part of life and this trend is only going to become more and more common. As advances in technology continue, our lives become more and more efficient and effective but have also contributed to more sedentary behaviours. How can we balance the need to embrace the advantages of new technology with the need to stay active and maintain our physical health? This isn't easy in a world that is becoming over populated with screens, but here are some tips on balancing technology and physical activity in our teen's, or even our own lives:

- Set daily limits or guidelines (limit the use of screens to certain times of the day, set times to 'unplug').
- Encourage them to get outdoors. Who needs a screen when you can discover so much more in the great outdoors? Some ideas include: scavenger hunts, snowmen building, or rolling down hills.
- Lead by example. Nothing has a greater impact than a positive role model. How often are you on a screen in front of them? Take note of your behaviours and unplug and get moving with them.
- Create a list of unplugged activities. Keep an activity jar at home, have your child help make the list.

Technology is not going anywhere and we may not have a choice where screens are but we do have a choice in finding balance in our lives and learning how to unplug. Learning these skills and passing them on to our children is only going to help us all lead happy healthy lives!