

Eating Clean on the Go

The Essential Hit List: What to Eat, How to Pack and Where to Go in a Pinch

By Alyssa Bauman

Whether it's a day adventure out in your city, a three-day camping road trip or the scheduled Thursday gymnastics class, every parent knows never, ever, let your kid get hungry. Avoid meltdowns, stabilize moods and keep your child primed and ready to handle daily stressors and emotions by always having healthy food on hand. A little preparation the night before is all you need, and it's surprisingly quick when you have the right supplies. Don't overwhelm yourself by thinking in terms of meals. Kids get over half their nutrition from snacks alone. Focus on nutrient-dense whole foods snacks and keep processed foods to a bare minimum. Instead of the apple-flavoured snack bar, choose an apple. Sure the snack food choices are accessible and endless, but try to navigate it by keeping refined and added sugars to an all-time low. Local competitive ice hockey player Stephanie Burlton handcrafts healthy whole food snack bars in an industrial kitchen in Gastown. Brio Bars (www.briobar.com), which come in flavours like Almond Hazelnut Brownie and Pina Colada, contain less than five ingredients, go through little processing and have no refined or added sugars. Burlton, always on the go and in need of instant energy (sound like your kid?), just wasn't satisfied with the packaged bars available and decided that to sustain her energy, she needed to make her own. The result: a yummy, kid-approved bar for those who are NOT sensitive to nuts.

Easy and fast on-the-go snacks

Cooked organic soybeans and peas; veggies like carrot and cucumbers cut into chips; celery and pepper sticks; fruit—dried, cut up and whole; roasted chick peas; kale chips; Brio bars; air-popped popcorn; hummus; nut or seed butter and honey sandwiches; organic meatballs and mini muffins (maybe pulled easily from your freezer?); soups; whole-grain crackers; brown rice cakes and crackers; cubed cheese; corn chips and salsa. For those with nut sensitivities, look at products like Barney Butter and Savi Seeds, available at Whole Foods and Choices, that are completely nut-free.

How to Pack

The right food storage makes packing up food that much easier and portable, not to mention greener. Pretty, bright containers make healthy food fun and alluring for kids. You'll be surprised just how much they eat when it's packaged well. These containers easily double to pack up restaurant leftovers, so an hour later when you hear "Mom, I'm hunnnnnngry," you are armed.

These local companies are making great strides in cleaning up our city and making the Ziploc baggie a thing of the past. Amen.

Onyx Stainless steel bottles and tiered-tiffins keep things warm and compartmentalized—soups, rice and hearty fare; or cool—fruit, salad, cheese, etc. Plus, they could be spill proof if you don't fill food to the top.

www.raspberryskids.com

Wean Green Tempered glass containers come in bright fun colours in all different sizes—square snack cubes, smaller baby food cubes, sandwich cubes and bowls. Specifically designed for little hands to snap open, Lil' Miss Independent can do it herself so you won't have to pull over.

www.raspberryskids.com

Innate Gear makes very cool and functional on-the-go food storage. Stainless steel bottles, thermos and containers with food-grade silicone lids double as bowls to make sharing (what a concept) that much easier, cleaner and convenient.

www.innate-gear.com

So what happens when, well, you just didn't get it together? Luckily, Vancouver is a super health-conscious city. It's easy to still eat well even on the road. Do yourself and your family a favour and skip the nasty fast-food chains serving up three days' worth of saturated fat in their sugar-and-sodium-laden foods. Instead, try these around-the-town healthy go-to spots that are fast, handy and oh-so-healthy.

Healthy Fast Food Spots

Wrap Zone What kid doesn't like a fun snack wrap? Roll up a load of fresh veggies in a whole grain wrap or try one of the healthy kids' choices featuring brown rice, veggies, and even tofu. Skip the juices and empty-calorie colas and opt for water (which you will no doubt have packed in the car, see above) or feel good about splurging on one of the real-fruit smoothies. Locations in B.C. include Vancouver, North Vancouver, South Surrey/White Rock, Kelowna and Vernon. www.wrapzone.com

Whole Foods When road-tripping with more than one adult, keep the kids in the car and run into this grocery store's fabulous prepped food zone. Choose from an array of healthy options like salads, bean salads, grilled chicken kabobs, vegan goods, baked goods and hummus. Try the burrito, sushi, smoothie, salad and sandwich bars. Locations throughout Vancouver and West Vancouver. wholefoodsmarket.com

Rocky Mountain Flatbread Company This super kid-friendly restaurant featuring local produce serves up organic artisan pizzas, salads and pastas, and nitrate-free organic meats. Call ahead for pizza to go. Locations in Vancouver in Kitsilano and on Main Street.

www.rockymountainflatbread.ca

Sejuiced Fresh vegetable and fruit juices, shakes, vegetarian chilis and burgers, savoury soups, quesadillas, vegetable wraps and sandwiches, rice and quinoa bowls, and huge yummy salads are all available for pick up at this counter-service gem. They will even pack in your own containers to avoid a car mess. Call ahead for to-go orders and expedited service to stay. In Kitsilano.

www.sejuicedvancouver.com

Booster Juice This chain juice and smoothie spot stocks healthier food choices like wraps, quesadillas and interesting snacks. Multiple locations in BC.

www.boosterjuice.com



Certified holistic nutritionist and health consultant Alyssa Bauman founded Nourished [A Health Consulting Firm] two years ago when she was constantly being asked for healthy living advice. Eating well fuels your life, your passions and what's important to you. Foods she can't live without: kale, lemon, quinoa, avocado, berries, chick peas. www.nourished.ca