

Kids' recipe contest: Get kids in the kitchen to eat right

When seven out of 10 children do not meet the minimum recommendation of five servings of vegetables and fruit each day, it's time to get kids in the kitchen. According to Statistics Canada, not only are most children not eating enough vegetables and fruit, but more than a third also do not meet the recommended daily servings of milk and milk alternatives. This means many children may be missing key nutrients to help them grow well and do their best in school.

That's why EatRight Ontario and Dietitians of Canada are launching the first annual EatRight Ontario Kids Recipe Challenge. The contest is open to Ontario students in grades 1 to 3 and grades 4 to 6. There are two recipe categories, school day lunches and after school snacks.

Young chefs, with their parents help, can submit their favourite recipes online or by mail until January 6, 2010. "We know that Ontario families have lots of great ideas for healthy and nutritious meals. This contest is their opportunity to share that creativity and get their kids excited about healthy eating and being in the kitchen", says Margaret Best, Minister of Health Promotion.

"Making a point to involve children in healthy food preparation can lead to life-long healthy eating habits."

A team of Registered Dietitians will judge recipes on nutrition, taste, originality, ease of preparation and the response to the question, "Why would kids like this recipe." Winners will have their recipes posted on the EatRight Ontario website at www.ontario.ca/eatright and can win gift certificates, clothing, cookbooks and cooking equipment.

Entry forms and the Official Contest Rules are available at ww.ontario.ca/eatright or by calling 1-877-510-510-2. Choosing meals that include a food item from each of the four food groups, or a snack with at least two food groups from Canada's Food Guide will help you meet your daily nutrient requirements. Find creative lunch and snack ideas at EatRight Ontario's Packing Healthy School Lunches and Snacks FAQ (<http://www.eatrightontario.ca/en/ViewDocument.aspx?id=41>). For answers to your questions on feeding kids nutritious and delicious meals or other healthy eating tips, speak to a Registered Dietitian at EatRight Ontario. Call toll-free 1-877-510-510-2 or email your question at www.ontario.ca/eatright.

This article originally appeared in the December 2009 issue of Capital Parent Newspaper