

# Healthy Lunch Boxes



Many schools provide a healthy lunch but some parents may wish to provide their own packed lunches

This leaflet contains some useful and practical ideas on how to pack a healthy lunch box

## Good Enough to Eat

As well as being nutritionally balanced, your child's lunch box needs to be interesting and attractive too

Involve your child in deciding some of the contents, e.g. which piece of fruit they would prefer, or whether to have a sandwich or salad. The chances are, if they have helped make the lunch there will be less waste

Avoid foods that smell strongly or are mushy or messy

To add interest cut sandwiches into shapes or use different breads, e.g. bagels, pittas, rolls, or even crackers, rice cakes and oat cakes

If your child won't eat wholemeal bread try softgrain or fibre white

If your child won't eat sandwiches try giving the bread and filling separately. They may eat it that way

Avoid putting too many items in the box

Do not give crisps and biscuits everyday. Children are likely to eat these first and leave the more nutritious option. Try leaving them for Friday as a treat at the end of the week

## Fruit and Vegetables

Think small - Children love snack size foods such as cherry tomatoes or grapes.

Peel, slice or chop bigger fruit and vegetables such as apples, pears, melon, kiwi fruit, carrots, peppers or cucumber.

Buy boxes of raisins or dried fruit or try small cartons of fruit in natural juice.

## Drinks

### WATER IS BEST.

alternatively try milk, pure fruit juice or home-made fruit milk shakes.

Most packaged drinks are high in sugar and expensive to buy.

## Extras

Choose a different 'extra' every day to add variety. These could include yoghurt, currant buns, scones, malt loaf, scotch pancakes, bread sticks, cheese chunks, fig rolls, sugar free jelly, carton of low fat custard or rice pudding.

## Salads

e.g. pasta, rice or cous cous.

## Sandwiches

e.g. tuna, chicken or cheese.

## Alternatives

e.g. cold pizza, hot dog sausages or chicken pieces.



## The Balance of Good Health

A balanced healthy diet includes foods from each of the food groups in the proportions shown here.

Try to provide this balance by choosing foods from each group.



# Food Safety

- ▶ Always wash your hands before preparing or eating food
- ▶ Check **Use By** and **Best Before** dates
- ▶ Always wash salad and fruit
- ▶ Avoid using food containing raw or undercooked eggs
- ▶ Wrap food well
- ▶ Use plastic rather than glass bottles and jars
- ▶ Food should not be out of a fridge for more than four hours without being eaten
- ▶ Ideally lunch boxes should be kept in a fridge. Most schools cannot provide this service therefore it is important to keep your lunch box in a cool place to keep the food as cool as possible
- ▶ Try using an insulated lunch box or small ice pack
- ▶ If you don't have an ice pack, try freezing the sandwich or drink. This will defrost slowly throughout the morning

Leaflet devised by  
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