

Practical Tips for a Healthy Lunch Box

- *Try to vary the contents of the lunch box daily. That way you can ensure your child is getting the variety of nutrients their bodies need to grow.
- *Involve your child in preparing their lunch box. They are more likely to enjoy food they have made themselves.
- *Wash your hands before handling food. Wash fruit and vegetables before use and put food in clean containers.
- *To keep food fresh, make sure it is stored properly: lunches packed the night before need to be stored in the fridge. To keep your child's lunch fresh and cool during the day use a cool bag and put in a reusable ice pack.
- *Keep different breads in the freezer so you can take out and defrost what you need for that day. Using different breads will make the lunch box more interesting and enjoyable.
- *For variety, use pitta strips, crackers, bread sticks, or fruit and vegetable fingers with a dip.
- *Always try to add a little salad to a sandwich
- *Always ensure that items like baby tomatoes, grapes and cherries are cut in half.
- *Please do not give your child peanut butter or nuts in their lunch box.



Plus Three Nursery Healthier Packed Lunches for children What you need to know



Eating well is important. Children need to eat well as it will give them energy and nutrients to grow and develop, be healthy and active.

A healthy, enjoyable lunch gives children the energy they need to learn and play at nursery.



What is a Healthy Packed Lunch?

A healthy packed lunch is a balanced meal providing a variety of nutrients, to be found in the four food groups -



Starchy Foods -

Base each lunch on a starchy food, such as bread, potato, rice, pasta or yam. Starchy foods give energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

*Bread, try different types, such as pitta, wraps, chapattis or bread rolls.

*Other starchy foods such as pasta, couscous or rice.

*Wholegrain varieties are best for fibre, which is vital for a healthy digestive system.



Meat and Alternatives -

Add some protein for example meat, fish, eggs, beans or pulses. Protein foods build muscles and provide minerals.

*Lean meats, such as chicken, turkey or ham.

*Include oily fish, such as pilchards, sardines or mackerel.

*Cheese, such as cottage cheese, edam or soft cheese.

*Egg, such as in sandwiches or in quiche.

*Meat alternatives such as tofu or soya

Drinks -

Drinks, especially water helps children to concentrate and feel well.



Milk and Dairy Foods -

Include a dairy product or dairy alternative such as fromage frais or yogurt. These foods provide calcium necessary for strong bones and teeth, as well as providing protein and vitamins.



Fruit and Vegetables -

Don't forget to include fruit and vegetables. You can use fresh, frozen, tinned or dried. Fruit and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre necessary for the body to function properly and to keep your child strong and healthy.

*Add tomato, lettuce or beetroot to a sandwich

*A vegetable dish such as salad or roast vegetables

*Fresh fruit, such as apples, bananas or pears

*Dried fruit, such as raisins, apricots or figs

*Fruit salad (tinned or fresh) or vegetable salad

*Finger foods, such as cherry tomatoes cut in half, cucumber sticks or celery are good with a dip such as houmous or guacamole.

*Aim to include at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad

Snacks and Confectionary -

Snack food may be included occasionally but aim to make healthy choices

For a Healthy Snack -

*Replace sweets and chocolate with dried fruit, a small bunch of grapes or fruit salad

*Replace cakes and pastries with fruit bread or malt loaf

*Replace salted savoury snacks with rice cakes or bread sticks