

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR A HEALTHY LUNCHBOX

- Try to vary the contents of the lunchbox daily. That way you can ensure your child is getting the variety of nutrients their bodies need to function and grow
- Involve your child in preparing their lunchbox. 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 in clear containers
- To keep food fresh, make sure it is stored properly. Lunches packed the night before need to be stored in the fridge. If using rice, make sure it is cooled quickly and stored in the fridge overnight. To keep your lunch fresh during the day, use a cool bag and put in a frozen drink or reusable ice pack
- Keep different breads in the freezer so you can take out and defrost what you need for one day's lunchbox. Using different breads will make the lunchbox more interesting and enjoyable
- If your child refuses to eat brown bread, try a lighter variety or make sandwiches using a slice of white and a slice of wholemeal bread
- For variety, try using pitta strips, crackers, bread sticks, or fruit and vegetable finger foods with a dip
- Always try to add a little salad to a sandwich. To avoid soggy sandwiches, dry the salad before adding it to the sandwich or put it in a separate sandwich bag or tub
- Make a fruit smoothie by blending juice and fruit together, or a yoghurt or milk drink by mixing yoghurt or semi-skimmed milk with pureed fruit
- Make a lower fat salad dressing by mixing it with some low-fat yoghurt or semi-skimmed milk
- You can use leftovers; for example rice and curry, vegetable pizza or pasta and sauce
- Make a salad using rice, potato or pasta from the night before, mixed with vegetables and beans



## HEALTHIER PACKED LUNCHES FOR CHILDREN



**This leaflet provides information on how to pack a healthier lunch following the government's packed lunch guidelines.**

# WHAT IS A HEALTHY PACKED LUNCH?

A healthy packed lunch is a balanced meal providing a variety of nutrients to help your child grow and develop. These can be found in the four main food groups:

## STARCHY FOODS

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

- Try different types of bread such as pitta bread, wraps or bread rolls
- Whole grain 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 builds muscles and provide minerals.

- Lean meats such as chicken, turkey or ham
- Include oily fish such as pilchards, sardines or mackerel at least once every three weeks
- Eggs such as omelette or quiche
- Try meat alternatives such as tofu or tempeh
- Dishes containing pulses, beans or meat, for example dahl, stew or bean salad
- Meat products such as sausage rolls, sausages and chipolatas, pies and pastries should not be included more than once a fortnight
- Use butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad dressing sparingly as these can be high in fat, or try using lower fat alternatives
- The school has a no nuts policy as some children are allergic

## MILK AND DAIRY FOODS

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

- Lower fat varieties are healthier

## 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 you strong and healthy.

- Add tomato, lettuce, or beetroot to a sandwich
- A vegetable dish such as salad or roast vegetables
- Fresh fruit such as an apple, banana or pear
- Dried fruit such as raisins, apricots or figs
- Fruit or vegetable salad, this can be fresh or tinned in juice
- Finger foods such as cherry tomatoes, cucumber sticks or celery. Good with a dip such as houmous or guacamole
- Use fresh fruit and vegetables which are in season to help the environment and enjoy variety
- All packed lunches should contain at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad



### Drinks

Drinks, especially water, help children to concentrate. Water is freely available in school.

- Other healthy drinks such as milk, pure 100% juice, sparkling water, and fruit smoothies can also be included

### Snacks and confectionary

Snack foods may be included occasionally but aim to make healthier choices. Snack foods tend to be high in fat, sugar and salt. Foods high in fat can cause excessive weight and may lead to heart disease. High sugar foods are high in calories and bad for teeth. High salt foods may increase blood pressure.

### For a healthier 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 biscuits
- Packed lunches should not contain chocolate, sweets, or salted snacks