

How do you introduce more fruit & veg into your child's diet?

We know that children like to eat with their hands and are more likely to enjoy foods that are easy to eat. Preparing chopped vegetables or fruit, whole meal crackers or malt loaf in place of fatty, sugary foods allows your child to snack healthily.

It is important that you ensure meals are kept healthy throughout the day; we have provided suggestions on how to include more fruit and vegetables into your child's routine.

Breakfast: cereals can be high in sugar so try porridge or yoghurt with added fruit, or a slice of whole-meal toast.

Break time: it is required that schools provide at least one piece of fruit during break time; however, you can send them with a piece from home too.

Lunch time: include salad in sandwiches and carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes or seedless grapes as part of your child's packed lunch.

Dinner: try giving children two different vegetables with a source of protein – meat, fish or Quorn. Stews or casseroles are ideal for packing in lots of vegetables too.

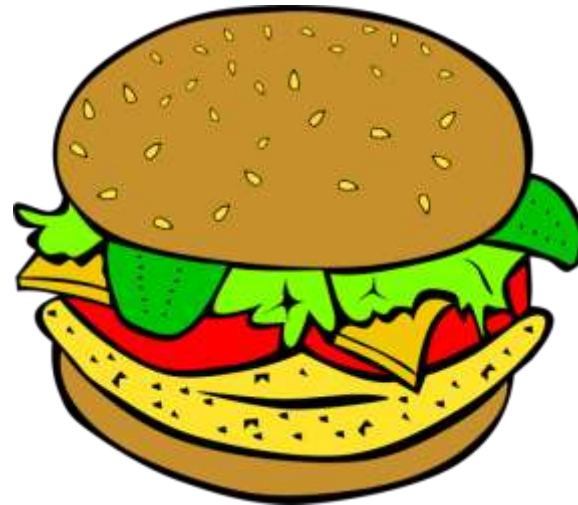


What should you avoid?

If you provide your child with a nutritious lunch, they will be less likely to reach for an unhealthy snack later in the day. Treats such as chocolate, biscuits or cakes should only be allowed in moderation – they are full of sugar!

Dried fruits count towards a child's five-a-day; however, the NHS recommends that they are best given as part of a meal – since they are high in sugar they can damage teeth. (NHS, 2017, para.2)

Always opt for sugar-free or no-added sugar drink options – therefore contributing to your child's healthy lunch.



Remember, treats are part of a balanced diet – providing they are given in moderation!

Healthy Packed Lunches

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS



Why are healthy lunches important?

Obesity is a fast-growing public health issue; over 1 in 5 children in Reception, and over 1 in 3 in Year 6, are overweight. (NHS, 2017, p.2) Providing your children with a balanced packed lunch will contribute to the prevention of obesity as it will limit fat to less than 30 percent, and saturated fat to less than 10 percent, of their weekly calorie intake. (LiveStrong, 2017, para.3)

A healthy lunch provides children with the key nutrients needed for the day – those that eat a healthy lunch will maintain a higher nutrient intake throughout the day compared to those who don't.

When provided with these valuable nutrients, children become more attentive. Children who eat nutritious meals and are active will have a higher performance level in school. Healthy foods boost energy; children will be less tired and able to retain more information.

This is beneficial for both us and our pupils as we want them to gain as much from our lessons as possible.

Schools aim to improve the nutrition of all pupils; adapting pack lunches is a vital step towards this goal!

Top tips for creating a healthy packed lunch:

No single food contains all the essential nutrients that your child needs; therefore, it is important that you provide a varied meal.

The following components help form a healthy and balanced packed lunch:

- Carbohydrates – starchy foods like bread rolls or potatoes will provide your child with energy to keep them alert during lessons.
- Protein – foods such as meat, fish, eggs, nuts or beans are high in protein and will provide your child with iron, magnesium and other essential vitamins.
- Calcium – milk, cheese and yoghurt are all high in calcium, which is a mineral required to help build and maintain strong bones – ideal for growing children!
- Fruit and vegetables – packed with nutrients, vitamins and healthy sugars, fruit and vegetables can replace unhealthy snacks.
- Drinks – fresh water, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, or pure fruit juices are all healthy options. Full of nutrients, calcium and other vitamins; each beneficial to a growing child.

Government guidelines for packed lunches:

- One portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables or salad to be included daily
- Meat, fish or a non-dairy protein source should be included daily
- Oily fish, like salmon, should be included at least once every three weeks
- A starchy food, such as bread or pasta or rice, should be included every day
- Dairy foods such as milk, cheese or yoghurt should be included every day
- Pupils should have access to free, fresh drinking water at all times
- Packed lunches should include water), fruit juice, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, or yoghurt drinks and smoothies
- Snacks such as crisps should not be included.
- Sweet treats such as chocolate bars or chocolate-coated biscuits should not be included. Cakes and biscuits are allowed as part of a balanced meal.

