





Why is eating a healthier lunch important?

- Lunch is an important meal for everyone, particularly children.
- Eating a healthy and balanced lunch is essential to keep healthy.
- Making a child's lunchbox appetising and healthy, does not mean missing out on the foods they enjoy eating.
- It is simply a matter of getting a balance and eating a wide variety of foods.





Lunchbox checklist

Have you included ...

- a good portion of starchy food, e.g. wholegrain bap, thick sliced wholemeal bread, chapatti, pitta pocket, pasta or rice salad?
- plenty of fruit and vegetables, e.g. an apple, satsuma, handful of cherry tomatoes or carrot sticks, mini-can of fruit chunks in natural juice or small box of raisins?
- a portion of semi skimmed milk or dairy food, e.g. individual cheese portion or pot of yogurt?
- a portion of lean meat, fish or alternative, e.g. ham, chicken, beef, tuna, egg, or hummus?
- a drink, e.g. a fruit juice, semi skimmed milk or water?



Healthier sandwich tips

- Introduce variety using a selection of breads, e.g. sliced, rolls, baguettes, Jamaican hard dough, bagels, tortilla wraps, pitta bread and crispbreads.
- Try making sandwiches with one slice of white and one slice of wholemeal, or use white bread with added fibre.
- Use spread sparingly, e.g. butter, margarine or mayonnaise. If using a sticky filling, you may not need any spread.





Healthier sandwich tips

Pick lower fat fillings such as:

- ham, turkey, chicken,
- fish (e.g. tuna or crabsticks),
- cottage cheese, egg or reduced fat hummous.
- Serve with slices of tomato, cucumber, sweetcorn and /or shredded lettuce.



Healthier drinking tips



- No lunch is complete without a drink.
- Keeping hydrated helps children to be alert and improves concentration
- Try a variety of drinks including:
 - bottled water,
 - flavoured water,
 - milk,
 - unsweetened fruit juice,
 - diluted low sugar squash
 - and yogurt drinks.



Eat more fruit and vegetables at lunchtime

- Use fruit and vegetables from all colours of the rainbow, as they offer a wide variety of vitamins and minerals.
- Peeling and chopping fruit and vegetables into ready-to-eat bite-sized pieces makes them more appealing.
- Seasonal varieties and those which are easy to peel and eat are good choices.

Add fruit to sandwiches (e.g. cheese and pineapple) or use vegetables as a main ingredient in a pasta salad or as a topping on a pizza.





What fruit and vegetables count towards your 5 a day?

- fresh
- frozen
- canned
- dried
- juiced





As a rough guide, a child's portion of fruit and vegetables is the quantity of fruit or vegetable that comfortably fits in their hand.

For example, some favourites include:

- **a satsuma**
- **small banana or an apple**
- **a small box of raisins**
- **a handful of cherry tomatoes**
- **a slice of melon**
- **a mini can of fruit chunks**
- **chunks, slices or sticks of cucumber**
- **sticks of carrot or red and yellow peppers (as these are sweeter than green peppers).**





Tips for bone building lunches

For a good supply of calcium, go for dairy foods such as:

- a pot of low fat yogurt or fromage frais
- individual cheese portions or lower fat cheese spreads
- a carton of semi-skimmed milk (flavoured or unflavoured)
- yogurt smoothies
- drinking yogurt.





Make lunchboxes bright and colourful, and include different tastes and textures

You could include:

- **currant buns**
- **rice cakes**
- **slice of malt loaf**
- **unsalted nuts**
- **plain popcorn**
- **breadsticks**
- **cheese scone**
- **vegetable sticks**

© Crown copyright 2005





Tips to make your lunchbox healthy and safe to eat

- Use an insulated lunchbox or freezer pack.
- Freeze a carton of fruit juice or bottle of still water the night before. Add this to the lunchbox in the morning. This will act as an ice pack and keep the food cold.
- Make the lunchbox the night before and keep it in the fridge overnight.





Tips to make your lunchbox healthy and safe to eat

- Plan ahead if you can to ensure a good variety of foods.
- Involve children in decision making, shopping and preparation of foods where possible.
- Pack foods carefully, avoid using glass bottles or jars, and place soft fruit and crushable items at the top.





For further information and ideas about healthier lunchboxes



Contact:
Real Food Works
0333 444 7325

www.realfoodworks.co.uk