

Packing a healthy lunch box is a daily challenge for parents. By lunchtime kids are hungry and need a lunch that satisfies their appetite and gives them a healthy and varied diet.

Children who don't have breakfast or are hungry and thirsty at school find it a lot harder to concentrate.

To stay fit and healthy it's important to have a variety of foods to provide all the essential nutrients.

Sandwich Tips

Try not to get into the habit of providing the same filling in a sandwich every day.

When making a sandwich with a moist filling try it without any margarine or butter.

If your child won't eat crusts – cut them off. You're less likely to find a sandwich with just one bite taken out of it this way. You could also try making sandwiches into fun shapes using biscuit cutters.

Try a variety of breads; wholemeal, seeded, pitta, bagels, granary with a variety of fillings such as cheese and apple, egg and salad, tuna and cucumber, ham and hummus, pate and tomato, chicken and grape.

Fruit and Veg

Try and include some of your child's 5 a day in their lunch box every day. Try apples, bananas, kiwi, plums, strawberries, grapes, cherries, tomatoes. Remember to peel oranges and destone cherries etc.



Dried fruit is also a good option as well as raw vegetables such as sticks of carrot, celery, cucumber, pepper and even fresh peas. You could include a small pot of dip with these such as hummus or plain yogurt.

Alternatives

Other options if your child doesn't like sandwiches or you're looking for a little variety could include:

- Pasta salad: cold cooked pasta, tuna, sweetcorn mixed with a little low fat mayonnaise or salad cream
- Noodles: cold cooked noodles mixed with vegetables, cold cooked chicken and soy sauce or sweet chilli sauce.
- Quiche: vegetable, ham etc
- Rice salad: cooked rice, tuna, peas
- Bean, chickpea or couscous salad with bacon bits.

Treats

Try to make sure these are healthier options such as: low fat yogurts, fromage frais, rice pudding, jelly, twiglets, low fat crisps, yogurt coated fruit pieces, oatcakes or savoury biscuits. Check school policy on what is allowed.

Drinks

Drinks should be in a leak proof named bottle. Milk is a good source of calcium, a 250ml bottle of fruit juice counts as one of your child's 5 a day, or water or flavoured water.

Remember to:

Label all packed lunches, on hot days provide an ice pack as they are not put in the fridge, make sure your child can open their own lunch box, packets and put their own straw in carton drinks. The lunch supervisor may have many children to assist and your child may be left waiting, unable to access their food.