

Top tips for creating a healthy lunch box

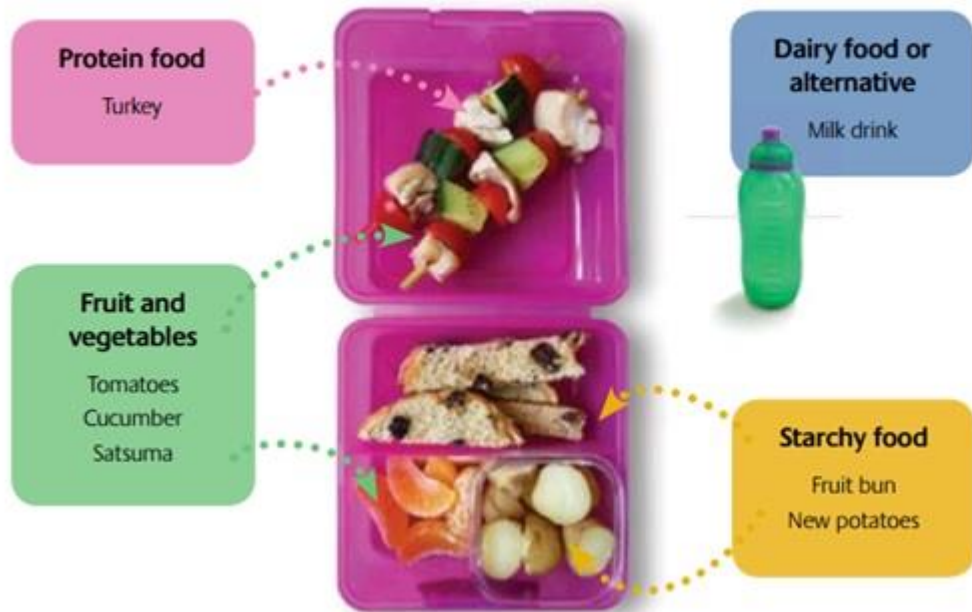
Sending your child to school or nursery with a healthy packed lunch is important. What they eat throughout the day can support growth and development and fuel their ability to learn, concentrate and play. This blog will help you plan healthy nutritious packed lunch. Use the checklist below when preparing your child's packed lunch to make sure it contains all of the food groups they need to grow and develop well.

It's important to vary what you put inside your child's lunchbox. Like us adults, children get bored of eating the same food. Mix things up to keep it interesting and add a touch of creativity where you can.



- Base lunchbox's on starchy foods which provide your child with essential energy and B Vitamins. Foods include bread, pitta, bagels, chapatti, rice, pasta and potato
- Include fruit and vegetables in your child's packed lunch to provide them with important vitamins, minerals and fibre. E.g. a small side salad, chopped peppers and cucumber, a selection of sliced fruit
- Try to include an iron rich food in your child's lunchbox as this will provide them with important iron and protein. Foods include beans, pulses, fish, egg, meat, and other protein like hummous
- It's important to include a calcium rich food in your child's lunchbox as this will help them develop strong bones and teeth. Foods include milk, cheese and yoghurt
- To ensure children are not filling up on energy dense, low nutrient foods, keep them out of their lunchboxes. This includes foods high in fat, salt and sugar such as crisps, chocolate, cereal bars, biscuits, sausage rolls
- It's important to provide your child with a drink as it will help them to stay hydrated and alert throughout the day. Opt for milk or water as these are healthy options and kind to teeth. Avoid sugary or sweetened drinks

Turkey kebabs, new potatoes, fruit bun, satsuma and milk drink



Healthy Lunchbox Examples

Monday

- Pasta with tuna and sweetcorn
- Banana chunks
- Carton of milk

Tuesday

- Mini pita with hummus and salad
- Sliced apple
- Yogurt
- Water

Wednesday

- Homemade mini pizza with sliced chicken, peppers and cheese
- Sliced peached
- Water

Thursday

- Chapatti with lentil and vegetable curry
- Strawberries
- Yogurt
- Water

Friday

- Wholemeal sandwich with egg and cucumber

- Sliced grapes
- Carton of milk

Lunchbox top tips!

- Make sandwiches into exciting shapes. Try using a biscuit cutter to create stars, hearts, animals etc.



- Put wraps or pitta bread and pots of fillings in your child's lunchbox as making them up themselves will be more exciting for them
- Offer sliced up vegetables as they can be a fun dipping food. Try hummus or cream cheese for dipping. The more colourful the better
- Add bite-sized fruit as this will be easier for them to eat. Try sliced grapes, melon, halved strawberries, banana chunks and chopped apple. Add a squeeze of lemon juice to stop sliced fruit going brown!
- If your child likes crisps, swap them for other crunchy textured foods such as plain popcorn, crackers or rice cakes
- Swap biscuits, cereal bars, cakes and chocolate for healthy alternatives such as homemade fruit scones, malt loaf, fruit teacakes or fruit breads
- Get your children involved in choosing and preparing what goes into their lunch box as this can mean they are more likely to eat it
- To keep lunches cool include an icepack or add a frozen drink or yoghurt
- Variety is key! Children will get bored if they are given the same foods in their lunchbox. Try to make the food fun and exciting by including different colours, shapes and textures
- Need more healthy lunch box ideas? Visit the [Change4Life](#) and [First Steps Nutrition](#) for more lunchbox inspiration