

Tips for Lunch Boxes

Each day try to pack the following:

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Main | Sandwich, cheese & crackers, salad, dip with crudité |
| Fruit | A couple of pieces of their favourite fruit |
| Snack or Treat | Real fruit breakfast bar, popcorn, pretzels, fromage frais |
| Drinks | Avoid boxes of juice that say "juice drink" as this means that sugar is added. Stick with water or pure juice |

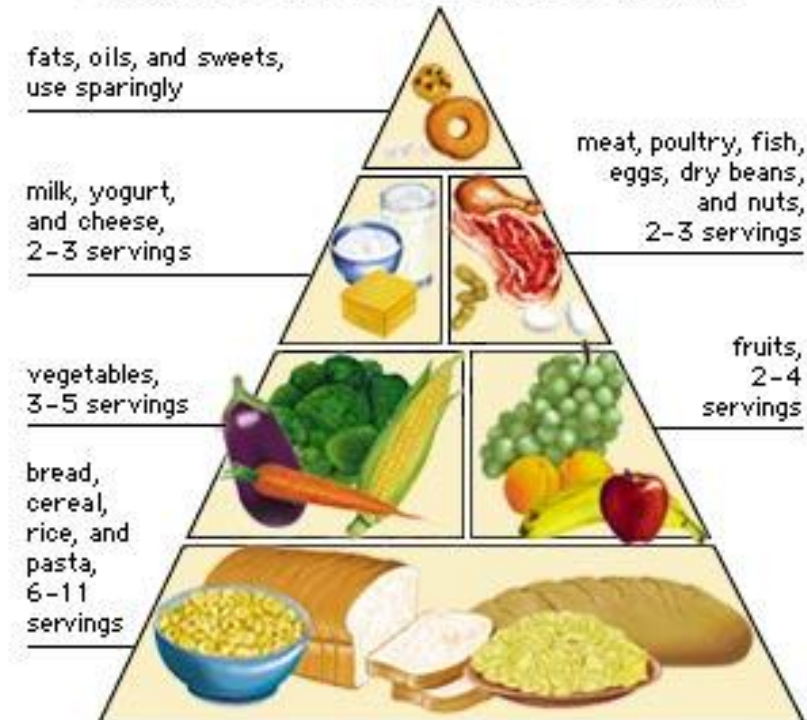
| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Size | Don't put too much food in the box or it will go to waste. Most children eat in short shifts and have very little time to eat their lunch. Peel and cut up fruit where necessary |
| Containers | Use disposable bags for sandwiches and fruit, and plastic sealable containers for salads |
| Lunch Boxes | Soft, padded, insulated lunch boxes are recommended for keeping food fresh |
| Bread | Vary the bread as much as you can. Try to buy grainy or wholemeal (vs. white bread) for sandwiches |

Little Land Nursery

Tips and Ideas For Healthy Lunch Boxes

1. Try to ensure that your child eats a wide variety of foods to ensure that their bodies receive the necessary balance of nutrients
2. Resist highly-processed food (e.g. crisps, soft drinks) - fresh food is best!
3. Select foods from all of the food groups on the pyramid each day if possible
4. No nuts or chocolate in lunch boxes please.

Original USDA Food Guide Pyramid



Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture

© 2005 Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc.

Tips for Healthy Eating

Fruit

Use with fruit salads, muffins and snacks, or with cottage or ricotta cheese

Try to leave the skin on fruit wherever possible to ensure your child eats more fibre

Here is a list of some of the fruits that go well in lunch boxes in sandwiches, salads, dips or snacks and their benefits:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Blackberries | Excellent source of Vitamin C Good for immunity and healthy skin |
| Blueberries | Very high in antioxidants Excellent for skin, digestion, kidneys, bones, amongst others! |
| Raspberries | Very rich in calcium |
| Strawberries | Contain Vitamin K, which allows calcium to be absorbed and benefits immune system |
| Bananas | Good slow-release energy food |
| Mangos | Great source of beta carotene for eyes |
| Pineapple | Rich in enzymes for reducing inflammation |
| Cherries | High in antioxidants |
| Kiwi | Huge amount of Vitamin C |
| Oranges | High in Vitamin C |
| Pears | Especially good for the digestive system after a period of illness |
| Watermelon and Peaches | Good source of Vitamin C |
| Apples | Best known for detoxifying capabilities and aiding digestion |
| Grapes | High in antioxidants, especially red grapes |
| Apricots | Very rich in iron |
| Plums | Best known for their fibre; they aid digestion |
| Avocados | Very high in Vitamin E |

Fats

Children **NEED** fat for development of hormones, the brain and nervous system. There are two types of fat - essential fatty acids and saturated fats. Children need both types. The former are also known as Omega-3 and Omega-6 oils, which are found in fish, oily seeds and whole grains. The latter are derived from red meat, poultry and dairy products. Children need less of this type of fat. Beware of hydrogenated fat, which is used in a lot of processed foods like crisps. Too much of this fat can block absorption of the "good" fat.

Vegetables

Vegetables can be added to sandwiches, salads or dips, or used alone as a snack.

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Carrots | One carrot supplies an entire day's beta carotene needs, which strengthens eyes |
| Spinach | Best known for iron and calcium to strengthen bones and teeth |
| Sweet peppers | Good source of beta carotene |
| Broccoli | Strong in antioxidants |
| Peas | Very likeable children's vegetable Improve heart and eyesight |
| Sweetcorn | Good for energy and fibre |
| Asparagus | Good detoxifier and high in antioxidants |
| Green beans | Very rich in fibre |
| Beetroot | Rich in iron |
| Cabbage | Good for bones, blood and circulation |
| Celery | Reputed to be good for sore throats because of antiseptic properties |
| Tomatoes | Very high in Vitamin C |
| Courgettes | Good for immunity, nervous and digestive systems |
| Rocket | High levels of Vitamin C |
| Cucumber | Good for digestion and bones Leave the skin on |

Salt

Should you use salt in children's food? The British Food Standards Agency recommends:

- **Children under five** No added salt
- **Ages six - seven** Up to three grams per day
- **Ages seven - ten** Up to five grams per day
- **Ages eleven and up** Up to six grams per day

N.B. Six grams is about one teaspoon

Processed food is notorious for containing a lot of sodium (salt) so the less your child eats the better. If you make the food yourself you can control the quantities. Too much salt in a child's diet can cause heart and blood pressure problems in later life. A little salt is needed in a balanced diet - you can't cut it out altogether - but you get most of what you need without adding too much more.

Sugar

It's fine for children to have some sugar, but **in moderation!** Too much has the potential to cause adult diabetes and obesity. The most immediate effect can be hyperactivity. Processed snacks and drinks are the worst offenders for providing excess sugar. If you see sugar listed as one of the first three ingredients then you know it's bad!

