

Things to Include in a Packed Lunch

Packed lunches do not have to be boring or bland!

With a little thought and imagination, they can be healthy, tasty and fun too!

Try to base the contents around the main food groups detailed in the Eatwell Guide displayed below..



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Make sure your packed lunch contains:

- 1) A portion of bread (or similar), rice, potatoes or pasta
- 2) Plenty of fruit and vegetables
- 3) A portion of dairy or a calcium rich alternative
- 4) Some protein in the form of beans, pulses, fish, egg, meat
- 5) A healthy drink

- 1) **Bread, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta:** These starchy foods are a healthy source of **energy**. Good choices include rolls, bread, wraps, chapatti, pitta bread, pasta or rice salad. **Wholemeal** varieties are good options as they contain more **fibre** than white varieties.
- 2) **Fruit & Vegetables:** Fruit and vegetables provide **vitamins, minerals** and **fibre**. Eating these foods keep children **healthy** and **reduces the risk of disease** in later life. Lunches should include at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetables.
- 3) **Dairy & Alternatives:** These foods provide **calcium** for **healthy bones and teeth**. Include one portion at lunch, for example a drink of semi-skimmed or skimmed milk or unsweetened (fortified) soya milk, an individual cheese portion or pot of plain or low sugar yoghurt, or dairy free alternative.
- 4) **Beans, Pulses, Fish, Eggs, Meat:** These foods provide **protein for growth**. Packed lunches should include one portion of these foods each day. Suggestions include boiled egg, ham, chicken, soya, Quorn, tuna, mackerel, salmon, hummus, chickpeas, lentils or beans.
- 5) **Drinks:** It is important to **stay hydrated**. The best drinks options are always plain water or milk (semi-skimmed, skimmed or unsweetened (fortified) alternative). Try to avoid fruit juices and fizzy drinks – if necessary, switch to no-added sugar cordial instead or add a slice of orange or lime to add flavour to plain water.

What About Treats?

treat
noun

‘an event or item that is out of the ordinary and gives great pleasure’

It is fine to add an extra treat on occasion – maybe once a week. Given too often and it won't be seen as 'special'. And you should still try to make sure it is a healthier choice.

Some good options include:

- ✓ A slice of malt loaf or banana bread, a teacake or low sugar flapjack / cereal bar, rice pudding pot or sugar-free jelly
- ✓ Unsalted pretzels, plain popcorn, seeds, rice or corn cakes with cream cheese, crackers & cheese, vegetable or bread sticks with a dip

And remember, treats don't have to be food – why not add a little note, sticker or joke in the lunchbox to make your little one smile instead?

Things to Avoid in a Packed Lunch

You should try to avoid including foods and drinks that are high in fat, sugar and/or salt as these are bad for our health.

It is advised against including any of these types of items:



Confectionery, such as chocolate bars & sweets

Meat and pastry products, such as sausage rolls or pies



Savoury snacks, such as crisps or processed meat snacks (*e.g. Pepperami*)



Chocolate coated biscuits or wafers



Cakes, bakes, buns or slices

Fizzy drinks or any other sugar sweetened drinks including milkshakes



Nut or nut products are not allowed in schools because of the danger they present to children with allergies.