



Healthy Lunchboxes

A healthy lunchbox will give your child the energy that they need to pay attention during the afternoon in school as well as help your child to stay healthy and well. Please see below for some useful information about how to create a healthy lunch box:

What to pack in a healthy packed lunch...



A portion of starchy food

Base the packed lunch on starchy foods such as bread, bagels, pitta, chapattis, crackers, potatoes, pasta, rice, couscous and noodles. Choosing wholegrain varieties (e.g. wholemeal bread) wherever possible will provide more fibre for a healthy digestive system.

At least one portion of fruit and vegetables

Fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruit and vegetables can all count towards your child's 5-A-DAY and provide vitamins and minerals. Try adding salad to sandwiches, making fruit kebabs, chopping up vegetable sticks, adding frozen or canned vegetables to pasta dishes or frozen fruit to yogurt.



A portion of dairy or alternatives

Include foods such as cheese, yogurt or milk in your child's packed lunch for a source of calcium, important for the development and maintenance of strong and healthy bones and teeth. Choose lower fat and lower sugar options, and make sure dairy alternatives such as soya are fortified with calcium.



A portion of beans, pulses, meat, fish, eggs, or other non-dairy sources of protein

Add some foods such as sliced meat (e.g. chicken, ham, turkey, beef), fish (e.g. tuna, mackerel), cooked eggs, meat alternatives (e.g. tofu, Quorn pieces), beans or pulses (e.g. hummus, mixed beans, lentils). These provide protein which is needed for growth and repair.



A drink

Make sure your child has a drink at lunchtime to help keep them hydrated – water and milk are good choices.

Top tips for lunchboxes!

- Use one slice of white bread and one slice of wholemeal bread to make checkerboard sandwiches
- Make colourful fruit kebabs
- Use a sandwich cutter to make fun sandwich shapes
- Vary the types of bread used (e.g. bagels, wraps, pitta)
- DIY lunchboxes – lunch can be more exciting if they can put their own together (e.g. components of wraps)
- Children love dipping – why not try vegetable sticks or pitta bread as dippers and hummus, mackerel pate, tzatziki or baba ganoush as dips
- Use leftovers to save on prep time (e.g. leftover pasta, noodles, cooked meats) – make sure they are cooled and stored properly
- Get children involved in choosing and preparing what goes into their lunchbox to help encourage them to eat it

Keeping lunches safe

- Wash your hands before handling food
- Wash fruit and vegetables before preparing or eating them
- Add an ice pack or a frozen drink/yogurt and use an insulated lunchbox to keep the lunch cool
- Keep chopped fruit and veg or grated cheese fresh in a small box with a lid
- Keep sandwiches moist in sandwich bags or tin foil
- Store the lunch in the fridge until it is time to go to school
- Throw away any perishable items at the end of the day
- Wash and dry reusable water bottles, lids and lunchboxes in warm, soapy water every day

Leaflet developed by Manchester Healthy Schools (www.manchesterhealthyschools.nhs.uk). For further information on packed lunches, please contact your School Nurse.