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HEALTHY LUNCHBOX IDEAS

The Eatwell Plate



- Fruit and Vegetables - eat lots - at least 5 portions daily.
- Bread, other cereals and potatoes - a good helping, preferably wholegrain or wholemeal varieties, at each meal.
- Meat, fish and alternatives - eat moderate amounts and choose lower fat versions wherever possible (e.g. remove the fat/skin, cook without added fat, avoid meat and fish products containing batter and pastry).
- Milk and dairy foods - Eat or drink moderate amounts and choose lower fat versions whenever possible.
- Foods containing fat, foods containing sugar - Make sure these are the smallest part of your diet.

The Eatwell Plate is a food guide to help you understand and enjoy healthy eating. It shows what our diet should look like at the end of a week rather than what every meal (or even every day) should look like.

It demonstrates that we should all be aiming to eat plenty of fruit and vegetables and foods from the bread, cereals and potatoes group – and that high fat and sugar foods should be the smallest part of a balanced diet.

The Eatwell Plate can apply to your child's lunch box and the following pages show ideas for balanced, healthy and tasty lunches.





A healthy lunchbox should contain starchy, carbohydrate foods to provide children with their main source of energy and fill them up. Why not try, granary/wholemeal bread, hard dough bread, baguettes, bread rolls, chapattis, naan bread, breads, tortilla wraps, pitta, crisp breads/crackers, rice and pasta.

Advise your child to keep their lunchbox in a cool place at school



A healthy lunchbox should usually contain meat, fish or alternatives - these are important sources of protein for growth and repair, and iron for concentration and 'get up and go'. Choose lean meats most of the time (e.g. ham, turkey, chicken), fish, beans, pulses, houmous, peanut butter and eggs.

Advise your child to wash their hands before eating



A healthy lunchbox should always contain fruit and/or vegetables for the vitamins and minerals they contain.

Children and adults should aim for a minimum of 5 portions (i.e. 5 handfuls) of a variety of fruit and vegetables per day.

Wrap all food items well.



A healthy lunchbox should contain a drink to quench your child's thirst. Water is a good choice because it quenches their thirst but doesn't spoil their appetite or harm their teeth.

Remind your child not to let other people eat their food as it could make them ill



Include a frozen ice pack in warm weather or freeze the drink

A healthy lunchbox should regularly contain low fat milk or dairy products to provide calcium for growth, healthy bones and teeth. Most young children (over 2 years old) should be having semi-skimmed milk and over 5's can have fully-skimmed milk.

Healthy Lunchbox Ideas

Healthy eating is all about getting the balance right. There is room for high fat and sugar foods like biscuits, cakes and crisps, in a healthy diet but these should be the smallest part and many schools will have guidelines about what can be included in a packed lunch. Check that your child's packed lunch fits in with this. Try sweet tasting but lower fat alternatives like dried fruit, teacakes, scones and malt loaf.

Try to avoid including jam and chocolate spread sandwiches. For an equally sweet but healthier alternative, try including some chunky bread, a banana and a plastic knife so your child can make up a fresh banana sandwich. Soft cream cheese and grapes also make a surprisingly tasty and satisfying sandwich for children with a sweet tooth.

Try to avoid including deep fried and pastry products such as sausage rolls, samosas and pakoras.

Some more quick and easy lunch box fillers...

Cold pasta salad with a chunky tomato and vegetable home-made or jar sauce

Mixed bean salad (you can make your own or use a canned version)

Pitta bread filled with grated cheese and carrot

Bread roll with houmous and sliced cucumber

Carrot, cucumber, celery and pitta bread sticks with soft cheese

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