



## Lunchbox nutrition

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### Getting the facts straight!

- Include a wide variety of foods from all five food groups every day so that you receive lots of different nutrients including carbohydrates, protein, iron, fibre and calcium.

For appropriate serve sizes for kids, try this link

[https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the\\_guidelines/n55f\\_children\\_brochure.pdf](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/the_guidelines/n55f_children_brochure.pdf)

- Focus on “high nutrient/everyday” foods and “low nutrient/sometimes” foods rather than “good” and “bad” foods
  - For grains like breads, cereals, muesli bars etc, Choose higher fibre options - >3 g fibre/serve
  - For low fat dairy options, choose high calcium - aim for 1000mg daily or ~200-300mg per serve
- Aim for 3 food groups at each main meal. Eg: 1-2 slices Toast with avocado and tomato OR 1 slice toast with a glass milk and cut up apple VS 2-3 slices vegemite on toast.
- Kindy aged kids usually only need ½ sandwich at lunch, plus ½ cup veggie sticks (or salad in the sandwich) plus a small amt (20g or 1 tbl) of lean protein eg: shredded chicken, boiled egg, ham etc.. There are some easy lunchbox ideas on the following pages.



## Lunchbox ideas

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To provide everything a child needs for energy and growth, the ideal lunchbox should contain:

- Bread or grains: eg. sandwiches (multigrain, wholemeal, high fibre white, rye, fruit, or pumpkin bread – cut into rectangles, triangles or fingers), or pasta
- Fruit: eg. a ½ cup container of berries and grapes
- Dairy: eg. 1 x cheese triangle or a tetrapak of plain milk
- Drink: a pre-frozen drink bottle (water)
- Snacks: a piece of homemade slice or high-fibre muesli bar; a raw peeled carrot, a container of cherry tomatoes

### Vary the bread

Try doing a different type of bread or baked item each week to add variety:

Week 1: Wraps or pitas      Week 2: Rolls      Week 3: English muffins/scones  
Week 4: Focaccia bread      Week 5: Crackers      Week 6: Regular sandwiches

Try smaller looking serves - two mini rolls look more appealing than one big one. Slice sandwiches in triangles or three fingers.

### Mix up the fruit

- Use fruit in fresh, canned (in natural juices) or dried forms
- If a whole piece of fruit is often returned uneaten bruised or battered, then try popping bite-sized fruit into small containers
- Mix grapes with mandarin segments, or frozen orange quarters
- Transfer canned fruit into a small container with an easy-to-remove lid, or buy the individual fruit tubs
- Use snap-lock plastic bags for a mix of dried fruit
  - Explore the variety of dried fruit available; dried cranberries, dried blueberries and dried papaya are great for extra colour

### Different dairy

- Dairy-based snacks can become warm and inedible in summer months, so try freezing favourite yoghurts or Fruche or add a small carton of frozen milk or calcium-fortified soy milk
- Cheese
  - Cheddar sliced/grated – in sandwiches, or as sticks/cubes added to salad veggies
  - Cottage, Ricotta, light Philadelphia – in sandwiches or use as a dip with veggies
  - Cheese triangle – processed (“plastic”) cheese is still high in calcium and protein and is (usually) accepted by most kids.



### Good take-to-school snacks

- Cold, cooked corn on the cob in small bite-sized chunks
- Mix popcorn with dried fruit for a high-energy snack
- Homemade pikelets or pancakes
- Homemade pizza using English muffins or pita bread – top with tomato paste, capsicum, corn and cheese and place under the grill
- Bite-sized fruit such as mandarin segments and grapes, or frozen blueberries with fresh strawberries
- Apple quarters or halves (squeeze lemon juice on to stop browning)
- Fruit tubs (~120-200g)
- Jaffles (toasted sandwiches made with whole-grain bread or fruit toast) eaten cold –
  - savoury, eg. cheese and tomato
  - sweet, eg. apple and cinnamon
- Cut up vegetables with small pieces of pita bread and hummus/dip
- Celery sticks with smooth peanut butter(after school) or cream cheese
- Rice cakes and crackers
- Chunky cereal like fruity bix or Sultana Buds
- Savoury muffin – made with cheese, capsicum, olives etc
- Small tin of baked beans / tinned spaghetti (reduced salt)
- Thread sandwich fillings onto blunt kebab sticks (or paddle pop sticks) for little fingers - try bread, ham, cheese and raisins
- Yoplait Le Rice
- 25g pkt Chic Nuts
- 30g box Lucky nuts (after school)
- 25g pkt Simply Wize corn crunch
- English muffins with jam/honey/vegemite
- 1 cup Pretzels
- Pita chips – cut pita bread into triangles, sprinkle with grated cheese and bake in moderate oven until crispy (store in airtight container)
- Yoghurt – look for >200-300mg calcium/serve Eg: calcium
- calcium milk cartons

### Lunch options with 3 food groups per meal

- 1 chevup sausage – sliced into 4 meatballs OR 2-3 Mt barker chicken meatballs, ½ cup cooked pasta, ½ cup salad (cherry tomatoes, grated carrot, mushroom, 1-2 olives, baby spinach, sugar snap peas, corn or corn cob)
- ½ avocado and shredded chicken sandwich with ½ cup salad
- leftovers in a thermos: easy food that fits on a spoon – stir-fry with rice, diced beef and veg
- ½ honey soy chicken skewer in a wrap with side salad



### **An example lunchbox**

**Crunch and sip:** small apple or ½ cup grapes

**Recess:** 100g yoghurt (or 30g cheese cut into sticks) plus small banana or ½ cup chopped melon

**Lunch:** ½ large wrap with chicken and butter/avocado/marg and 4 cherry tomatoes and 4 carrot sticks (1/2 carrot)

### **Websites of Interest**

Lunchbox ideas

[www.healthyfoodguide.com.au](http://www.healthyfoodguide.com.au)

– search 'lunchbox' for recipes and other ideas

### **Interactive nutrition websites for kids**

1. This game requires you to catch foods as they fall from a tree. Catch the everyday foods only. If you catch the sometimes foods then the game ends. This is quite a fast game.

[http://www.freshforkids.com.au/games/game\\_fruit/fandvgame.html](http://www.freshforkids.com.au/games/game_fruit/fandvgame.html)

4. Select foods for your lunch box – snacks, main item and a drink. Choose mainly healthy options and you get an A+ score. **This is an excellent one!**

<http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/html/index.html>