

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 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 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 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.



The healthy lunchbox guide



Ideas for choosing a balanced packed lunch!



Lunch box ideas...

Packed lunch 1

- Tuna, sweetcorn and pepper pasta
- Banana
- Handful of raisins
- Carton of semi-skimmed milk



Packed lunch 2

- Egg, cress and cucumber seeded roll
- Rice pudding
- Satsuma
- Bottle of water



Packed lunch 3

- Mackerel and potato salad (peppered mackerel, new potatoes, watercress, pepper, cucumber, chives, low fat mayonnaise)
- Fromage frais
- Raspberries
- Bottle of water



Packed lunch 4

- Frittata (eggs, cheese, peas, peppers, sweetcorn)
- Slice of crusty brown bread with low fat spread
- Small tub of seeds, sultanas and chopped dried apricots
- Bottle of water



Packed lunch 5

- Pitta bread, falafel, tzatziki (yogurt and cucumber dip), lettuce and tomato
- Small pear
- Handful of plain popcorn
- Bottle of water



Packed lunch 6

- Wholemeal bagel with ham and soft cheese
- Pot of cherry tomatoes
- Frozen cherries mixed with fromage frais
- Bottle of water



All images are suggestions only.

Packed lunch 7

- Hummus
- Carrot and pepper sticks
- Wholemeal pitta bread
- Strawberries
- Yogurt
- Bottle of water



Packed lunch 8

- Chicken, cream cheese and grated carrot wrap
- Fruit kebabs
- Sugar free jelly
- Carton of semi-skimmed milk



Packed lunch 9

- Vegetable and lentil pasta (chopped tomatoes, carrots, celery, onion, red lentils, pasta)
- Small tub of grated cheese
- Canned peaches in natural juice
- Low fat custard
- Bottle of water



Packed lunch 10

- Vegetable cous cous (roasted courgette, peppers, onions, chickpeas, cubed cheese)
- Canned pineapple in juice
- Soya yogurt
- Bottle of water



Preparing a packed lunch can often be time consuming and expensive, so why not try your child on school meals?

- Since September 2014 every infant (aged 5-7) is entitled to a free, healthy and nutritious school lunch, which could save you approximately £400 per year.

- Free school meals are also provided to families who receive qualifying incomes such as income support, universal credit. More information is available from the Manchester City Council website or from your school.
- Schools are required to meet School Food Standards which ensure the school meals provided are healthy, balanced and varied over the week.

FACT Research by the University of Leeds has shown that **only 1.6%** of primary school children's packed lunches met the nutritional standards set for school meals.