

A Few Tips Towards a Healthy Lunchbox

Variety underlies any healthy diet so try to vary the contents of the lunchbox at any chance you get!

- Include a sandwich - but don't forget that instead of sliced bread you could use wraps, ciabatta, rolls, pitta breads etc. Try to use wholegrain bread, which will provide fibre and help your child feel full. If your children aren't used to eating wholegrain bread, use softgrain bread initially, and gradually change over to the wholegrain bread.
- Try to include a piece of fresh fruit, dried fruit, as much as possible to help your child get their "5 a day".
- Vegetables can be sneaked into the lunchbox in many forms - add a bag of carrot sticks or baby tomatoes, grate carrot and use in sandwich fillings or add sweetcorn to tuna.
- Include your children in the grocery shopping and let them choose foods that are part of a healthy diet. If possible, stay out of the way of temptation - skip the aisles that house sweets, biscuits and fizzy drinks.
- At home include the children in their lunch preparation. Take into account their tastes and let them select one new fruit and vegetable to try each week.
- Keep it simple. Avoid messy mushy food which may turn your child off their food.
- Keep it small. Ensure food is manageable for little hands. Cut apples and carrots into slices. Cut sandwiches into four pieces. Small snacks such as raisins or mandarins are easy to manage as they are.
- Children become easily dehydrated so don't forget to include a cup in their lunch box as drinking plenty of water is always encouraged.

Some healthy lunchbox treat suggestions:

- Yogurt, fromage frais or rice pudding - try the reduced fat options
- Individual packets of dried fruit eg raisins or apricots
- Individual portions of cheese
- Plain biscuits, bread sticks or crackers
- Scones
- Popcorn - unsalted and unbuttered
- Fresh fruits (sliced), mini tins of fruit and dried fruits or trail mix
- Raw vegetables such as baby carrots or sliced cucumbers with healthy dip like hummus are easy to pack
- Make homemade lunchables using wholegrain crackers, sliced cheese and lean ham
- Remember it is ok to give your child treats like a chocolate biscuit and crisps now and again - just not too often!