



Easy Lunch and Snack Ideas for Children



LUNCH IDEAS

Build a tasty, healthy lunch from the following:

The base

Choose one of these carbohydrate based foods to fill hungry tummies.

Suggestions are: pasta, rice, potatoes, cous cous, noodles, spaghetti, bread -use a variety of wholemeal, white, rye, pita, Lebanese bread, rolls, bagels, crackers, lavash, foccacia, English muffins, damper.

(Use small serves for small appetites.)



Fillings

Select a high protein filling from one of the following:

lean beef, lamb or pork, ham, corned beef, rissoles, meatloaf, chicken breast, tinned tuna, salmon or sardines, cheese (eg. cheddar, fetta, cream cheese, haloumi or cottage), egg, baked beans, three bean mix.



Cooked vegetables and salad

Add two or more varieties for plenty of vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre.

Suggestions are: lettuce, tomato, cucumber, grated carrot, snow pea sprouts, celery, capsicum, mushrooms, Chinese cabbage, bok choy, zucchini, eggplant, beans, pitted olives, spinach, asparagus, pumpkin, sweet potato, avocado. (Avoid soggy fillings for lunch box sandwiches.)



Flavourings

Add flavour using one or more of the following herbs and spices: parsley, chives, curry powder, mild mustard, salt-reduced tomato sauce or soy sauce, chutneys, relishes, mint sauce, mayonnaise, Vegemite, Marmite or Promite.



Make up your own combinations from the above foods

Some suggestions

- Grated cheese, snow pea sprouts and carrot with a little mayonnaise rolled up in lavash bread.
- Chicken breast, chopped tomato, celery and capsicum in pita or pocket bread.
- Lean roast beef, tomato, grainy mustard and lettuce on rye.
- Banana on raisin bread.
- Baked beans and alfalfa sprouts on a bread roll.
- A salad box with lettuce, potato salad, green beans, pitted olives and a hard boiled egg.
- A cold lean lamb cutlet, cous cous, cherry tomatoes and cucumber.
- Stir fried vegetables and pork with rice or noodles.
- Tuna or salmon rissoles, salad and pasta.
- Ham, chutney, lettuce and grated carrot on foccacia.





Add Fruit

For a delicious and nutritious addition to the meal add one of the following: apple, banana, mandarin, pear, tangelo or tangerine, bunch of seedless grapes, apricots, plums, peach, a small container of fruit salad, nectarine, strawberries, snack pack containers of fruit, cut up pieces of watermelon, rockmelon or honeydew, orange (snake-peeled and then re-wrapped), kiwi fruit.



Drinks



- Active bodies need plenty of fluid to keep them well hydrated.
- Water should be available at all times and encouraged as the best way to quench thirst.
- Cows milk or soy drink with added calcium (containing at least 100mg calcium per 100ml soy drink).
- No more than one cup of diluted 100% fruit juice (at least half water) should be given each day.
- Low or reduced-fat milks are not suitable for young children under 2 years, but reduced-fat varieties are encouraged for older children and adolescents.

FOOD SAFETY and hygiene TIPS FOR PACKED LUNCHES

- Use an insulated lunch box or carry bag.
- Use a frozen ice brick or frozen drink bottle in the lunch box.
- Freeze sandwiches the night before, as both a time saver and to keep foods cool.
- Chill cooked foods (eg. boiled eggs) before packing in the lunch box.
- Store lunch boxes in a cool spot (if possible in the fridge).
- Ensure children wash hands thoroughly before meal times and after going to the toilet or handling pets.



Tooth friendly practices

The following tips will help to minimise tooth decay:

- Discourage continuous picking at food. Keep to meals and snacks.
- Rinse mouth with water after eating (follow the "swish and swallow" routine).
- Encourage dairy foods at snack time as they protect teeth eg. cheese sticks or milk.
- Dilute fruit juice and restrict it to one cup or less per day.
- Brush teeth after meals if possible.



SNACK IDEAS

Small bodies need small, frequent amounts of food to keep them going. Mid-meal snacks are just as important as main meals for children and should be tasty, appealing and nutritious. Many of the foods listed as suitable for lunches are also suitable as snacks. The following list provides some additional quick and easy snack ideas.

Fruit: Try fresh, dried or tinned.

In summer, try frozen orange quarters or frozen bananas (rolled in orange juice and coconut).



Bread or other cereal-based snacks are great fillers. Try:

- Miniwheats breakfast cereal or Weetbix / Vitabrits spread with Marmite or fruit spread.
- Fruit bun, raisin toast/bread, pikelets or scones lightly buttered.
- Crumpets or muffins lightly buttered.
- Quick cooking noodles with grated zucchini and cheese.
- Mini pizzas using English muffins as the base.
- Corn or rice cakes with mashed banana, Vegemite or cheese.
- Plain biscuits eg. arrowroot, milk coffee, shredded wheatmeal, Grissini sticks.



Dairy Foods: Try plain or flavoured yoghurt, frozen yoghurt, icecream, milk.

Vegetable Sticks: Try carrots, celery, cucumber, green or red capsicum (steam to soften for children under three years old).

Meat and Substitutes: Try hard boiled eggs, meatballs, kibbeh, felafel.

Avoiding choking

Choking is a concern for young children, especially if under three years old.

To minimise the risk of choking:

- Children should be sitting down quietly while eating and be supervised at all times.
- Don't give nuts, lollies, popcorn or corn chips.
- Squash whole peas and halve grapes.
- Remove seeds and pips from fruit.
- Grate carrot and apple.
- Remove skin, gristle and bone from meat and chicken.



Foods to limit in your child's meals and snacks

The following foods are high in refined sugar, salt and/or saturated fat and therefore should be limited:

- Sandwich fillings like honey, golden syrup, jam, chocolate spread, and hundreds and thousands.
- Cream-filled and chocolate biscuits, cream cakes and pastries.
- Chocolate bars, lollies, snacks such as potato chips, corn chips and cheezy snacks.
- Soft drinks, cordials, flavoured mineral waters and sweetened condensed milk.
- Drinks and snacks containing caffeine.

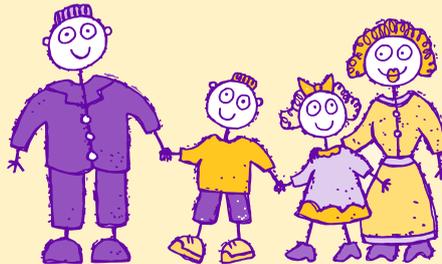


Make other choices from the ideas given in this booklet.

A Useful Resource

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating: Background information for consumers. This guide provides information about the amounts and kinds of food to eat each day to get all the nutrients essential for good health. There are tables with sample serves for children aged 4-7 years, 8-11 years and 12-18 years and also for adult men and women.

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating is available online at www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/food/guide/



Produced by NSW Health

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