

Fact Sheet

Snack attack and lunchbox ideas



As part of a healthy diet your child should eat 3 main meals and 2-3 snacks a day. Snacks are an important part of daily food intake, especially for children. They need to be nutritious, tasty, quick and easy to prepare. Having small regular meals and snacks by choosing from all food groups (while watching fat intake) is a better approach than skipping meals and "bingeing" when hungry. The following snack ideas are suggestions to pack for school or to prepare at home between main meals. Healthy snacks are suitable for all children (unless advised otherwise by a dietitian).

Lunchbox ideas

School snack ideas:

- Slice of fruit loaf/bun/raisin bread.
- Pancake or pikelet (add mashed bananas to mixture for a change).
- Fruit/date/pumpkin/ or plain scone.
- Small pita bread (spread thinly with cheese spread or peanut butter, grated carrot, sprouts and roll up to serve).
- Small handful of rice crackers or baked wheat pretzels.
- Wholemeal crackers with a slice of low fat cheese.
- Rice cakes with thin scrape reduced-fat cream cheese (eg. Philadelphia Lite®) and Vegemite®.
- 1 cup Mini Wheats® breakfast cereal or 1 packet of Wheat Bites To Go®/Nutrigrain®, Fruity Bix®.
- Cup of popcorn (pop in the microwave). Add a small amount of dried fruit for variety.
- Handful of home made pita chips (cut pita bread into triangles, sprinkle with a little parmesan cheese and bake 180°C 15 - 20 minutes until crisp).
- Small can baked beans, spaghetti or creamed corn.

- Celery sticks with a thin spread of peanut butter topped with sultanas.
- Slice of low fat cheese with a bundle of carrot and celery sticks.
- Tub of low fat fruit yoghurt (freeze the night before in warmer months) or Lite Fromage Frais®.
- Small carton of reduced fat flavoured milk (eg. *Oak Lite*® or *Lite White*®).
- Fresh fruit - available in many varieties all year.
- Piece of fresh fruit or 1 cup of fruit salad in a container or canned fruit snack pack.
- Small handful of dried fruit or nuts (for over 5 year olds only).
- Small container of assorted salads (eg. tabouli, pasta, rice).
- Salad box with a hard-boiled egg, cherry tomatoes and a bread roll.
- Snow peas, feta, pitted olives.
- Can of jelly and fruit.
- Grissini sticks.
- Homemade pizza.
- Vegetarian quiche or frittata.
- Noodles with chicken and snow peas.
- Kibbeh felafel.
- Rissoles, meatballs or kebabs.
- Low fat cheese cubes or sticks.
- Steamed dim sims - still delicious cold.
- Sushi rice roll with avocado, carrot and tuna.
- Chicken drumstick.

Nutrition tip

Children eat different amounts of food according to their growth patterns. For smaller appetites pack smaller serves - cut sandwiches into quarters and chop up fruit so that there is still time to play.

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School lunches

Fill the lunchbox with a variety of healthy foods. Be sure to include plenty of fresh fruit, salad vegetables and bread or low fat cracker biscuits. Put in low fat protein food such as meats, fish, dairy products, baked beans or boiled egg.

Try a variety of breads and rolls such as wholemeal, mixed grain, white hi-fibre, bagels, pocket, lavash, focaccia, turkish and flat breads. Use margarine/butter sparingly. If sandwich filling is moist (ie. avocado, cheese, salad etc) try to leave out margarine/butter. Dairy foods, meat and eggs need to be kept cold. Put a frozen drink bottle in with the lunch box or use a cooler bag. Cut sandwiches into strips or use a shape cutter for a novelty.

Try these sandwich fillings:

- Lean roast beef, lamb or pork with tomato and lettuce.
- Light cream cheese, grated carrot and sultanas.
- Low fat cheese, pineapple and lettuce.
- Ricotta or cottage cheese, tuna and snow pea sprouts.
- Baked beans (drained) and grated low fat cheese.
- Avocado, instead of margarine.
- Avocado, bean sprouts and tomato.
- Lean ham and fruit chutney.
- Roast beef or pastrami with salad
- Chopped egg, cucumber and lettuce.
- Chopped skinless chicken, low fat mayonnaise and lettuce.
- Tabouli salad, lettuce and fetta cheese.
- Peanut butter lightly spread, topped with chopped dried fruit (apricots and sultanas).
- Bananas mashed with ricotta cheese.

- Hommos, sliced tomato and sprouts.
- Rissoles, homemade meat pattie and tomato / tomato sauce.
- Tuna or salmon with low fat mayonnaise.

Nutrition tip

Calcium is lacking in many children's diets - provide a calcium rich food like reduced fat milk, cheese or yoghurt every day in their lunch box or first thing on arrival home from school.

Ideas for home

Home snack ideas:

- Rice cakes lightly spread with ricotta or "light" cream cheese and vegemite or fruit spread.
- Toasted muffin with a scrape of honey or fruit spread.
- Slice of toasted wholegrain bread topped with ricotta cheese and fruit spread.
- Microwaved pappadums.
- Crispbreads with a low fat topping or plain biscuits.
- Wholewheat breakfast cereal and reduced fat milk.
- Toasted sandwich – use baked beans with a slice of low fat cheese or lean ham and creamed corn.
- Homemade muffins or buy a low fat muffin mix (check your supermarket).
- Frozen banana (spear peeled banana with icy-pole stick and freeze) or other frozen fruit such as grapes, peeled orange or mandarin segments.
- Scoop low fat ice cream with 1/2 cup canned unsweetened fruit.

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- Banana smoothie (using skim or *Lite White*® milk or low fat soy drink, blend with 1/2 banana).
- Fruit yoghurt smoothie (blend 1/2 cup fruit yoghurt plus 1/2 cup skim milk or low fat milk) plus 1/2 cup canned unsweetened fruit.
- Ice blocks made with equal quantity fruit juice and low fat yoghurt.
- Ice blocks made on diet cordial.
- Fruit kebabs (skewer cubes of fruits on to bamboo skewers).
- 200gm tub of frozen yoghurt or low fat fruit yoghurt.
- Fruit platter with low fat yoghurt to dip into.
- Bowl of pumpkin soup (made with low fat evaporated milk or skim milk instead of cream).
- Vegetable rich soup with spirally pasta.
- Raisin toast.
- 2 minute noodles.
- Cheese scones or muffins (mix grated cheese in or sprinkle on top and grill).
- Crumpets with a scrape of margarine - try topping with tomato and cheese.
- Fresh fruit kebabs.
- Pikelet with jam or honey.
- Low fat cheese, pineapple and lettuce.
- Ricotta or cottage cheese, tuna and snow pea sprouts.
- Baked beans (drained) and grated low fat cheese.
- Avocado, instead of margarine.
- Avocado, bean sprouts and tomato.
- Lean ham and fruit chutney.
- Roast beef or pastramis with salad
- Chopped egg, cucumber and lettuce.
- Chopped skinless chicken, low fat mayonnaise and lettuce.
- Tabouli salad, lettuce and fetta cheese.
- Peanut butter lightly spread, topped with chopped dried fruit (apricots and sultanas).
- Bananas mashed with ricotta cheese.
- Hommos, sliced tomato and sprouts.
- Rissoles, home-made meat pattie and tomato / tomato sauce.
- Tuna or salmon with low fat mayonnaise.

Nutrition tip

Fruit has more fibre and less calories than fruit juice. Make fruit a regular lunch box item.

Home lunches

Try these sandwich fillings:

- Lean roast beef, lamb or pork with tomato and lettuce.
- Light cream cheese, grated carrot and sultanas.

Take-away snacks

- One small Vitari® or frozen yoghurt.
- Low fat ice creams such as Billabong®.
- Plain ice blocks.
- Low fat yoghurt or low fat dairy snack.
- 300ml carton of Oak Lite® or Lite White® flavoured milk.
- Baked wheat pretzels or popcorn.
- Corn on the cob (forget the butter!)

Drinks

Water and milk are the best drinks for children.

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Label reading

Processed snacks can contain a lot of hidden fats. Check the nutrition panel and choose product with <10g fat per 100g/100ml.

Involve your child in choosing their own lunch from a range of healthy options. Children who are involved in their own food choices may be more likely to change to good life-long eating habits.

Remember

- Use only small amounts of oil, margarine and butter.
- Offer water and milk to drink instead of juice.
- Have plenty of fruit and vegetables available.
- Choose snack foods based on breads, fruit, vegetables and dairy foods that are filling and nutritious.

This fact sheet is for education purposes only.
Please consult with your doctor or other health professional
to make sure this information is right for your child.

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