Central Highlands Rural Health

Healthy Lunchboxes

PARENT/CARER RESOURCE

Information, resources, tips and tricks on how to pack a healthy lunchbox for your child.

CONTENTS

Healthy Lunchboxes……3

Tips for creating a healthy lunchbox ……..4

A healthy lunchbox contains…….5

Plan for a Perfect Lunchbox……6

Five Food Groups ……..7

Get Your Kids Involved……8

Healthy Snacks…….9

Healthy Lunchbox Swaps…….10

Healthy Sweet Potato Cheese Muffins……..12

Choc Balls……13

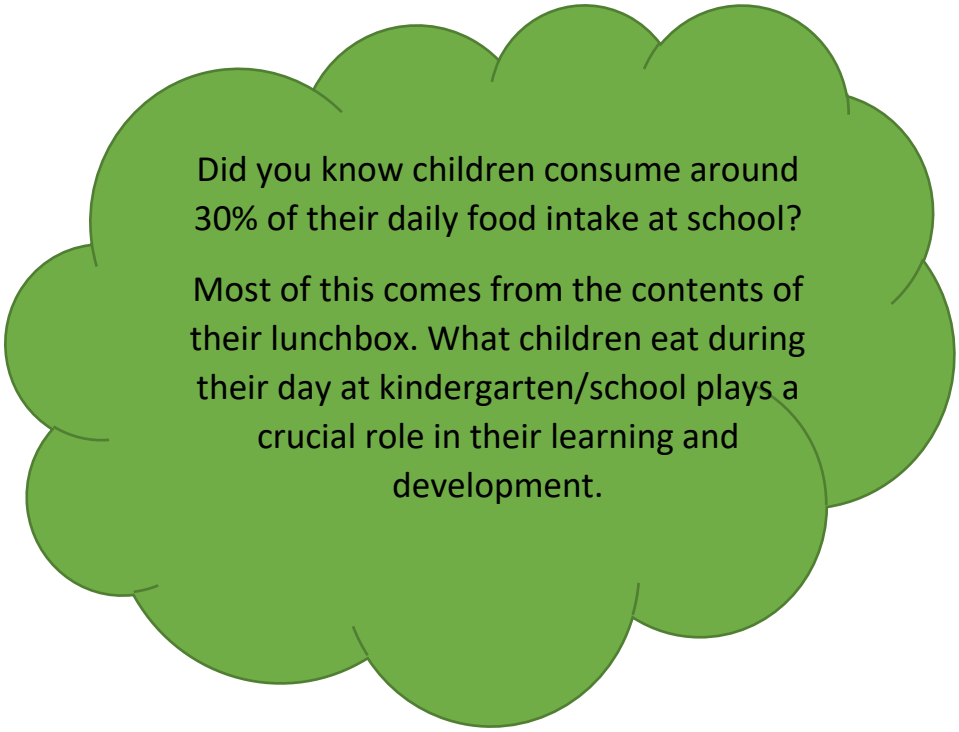
Healthy Lunches…….14

Five Days of Sandwiches……..15

Reading Food Labels……16

Food Relief Guide/Local Initiatives……17

HEALTHY LUNCHBOXES



Sending our children to kindergarten/school with a healthy lunchbox will help them to behave well, learn better and be happy during the day.

What does a healthy lunchbox look like?

A healthy lunchbox should include a variety of foods from the 5 food groups – vegetables, wholegrain carbohydrates, protein, dairy and fruit (see pg.6 for examples).

It's important we don't get caught up in having the fanciest, healthiest lunchbox that is the envy of all the other parents. Instead, focus on including foods that are nourishing, tasty and appropriate for *your* child.

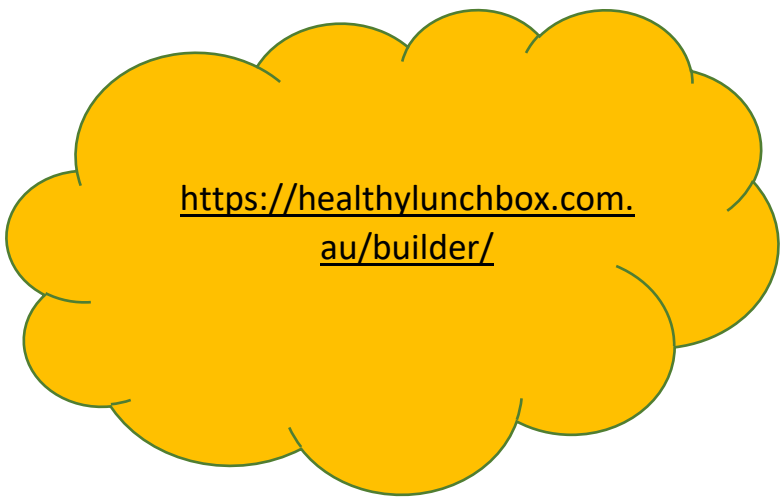
If you're not sure where to start, simply try swapping one of your child's snacks for a healthier alternative.

Nutrition Australia's tips for creating a healthy lunchbox:

- Make time to prepare. Have fresh fruit and vegetables, milk and yogurt, bread and crackers available in your fridge and cupboards at the beginning of the school/kindy week.
- Shop wisely and save money. Buy fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables in season to ensure good quality and value for money.
- Make your own snacks from fresh ingredients which you can buy in bulk e.g carrot sticks and hummus.
- Look after the environment. Put sandwiches and other items in reusable containers. This uses less packaging and creates less rubbish.
- Choose a variety of foods from the 5 food groups (see table below).
- Include a bottle of water. No need for sweetened drinks such as juice, cordial or soft drink as these contain too much sugar which is not good for teeth. Non-water drinkers usually start drinking water with the example of other children. Freeze a small quantity each night and top up with cold water in the morning for a cool summer drink.
- Keep food cool. In warm weather freeze a water bottle or put a small ice pack in the lunchbox.

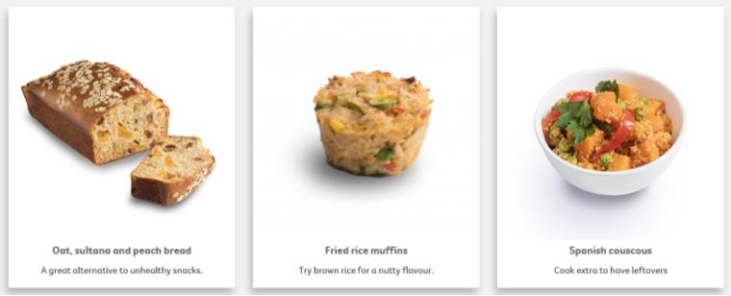
Source: https://www.healthylunchboxweek.org.au/packing-a-healthy-lunchbox

If you are stuck for ideas of healthy foods from each group, to include in your child's lunchbox check out the Cancer Council's Interactive Lunchbox Builder – it's a great place to start!



A healthy lunch box contains...

Breads and Cereals:

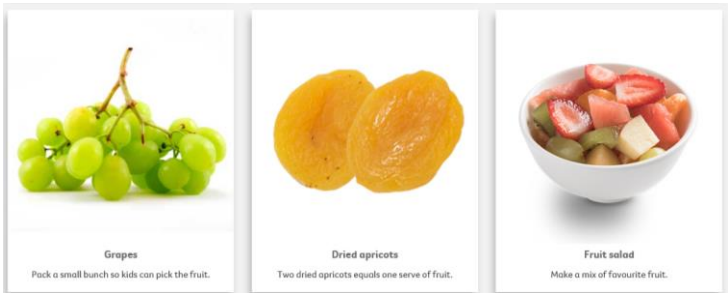


Vegetables:

Meat and Alternatives:

Dairy:

Fruit:



Source: https://healthylunchbox.com.au/builder/

Diabetes SA Support Always

Plan for a perfect Lunch Box

For a fresh and healthy lunch box choose foods from the five food groups to give you all the nutrients you need to stay healthy.

Diabetes SA Support Always

In your lunch box try to have all of the five food groups covered

Vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals, protein, dairy and fruit.
This will leave you feeling full and satisfied, as well as being full of goodness!

Choose plenty of vegetables or salad

Lots of raw, cooked or canned vegetables of different colours and textures. Vegetables contain different vitamins, minerals and wholesome fibre which help fill you up.

Try some of these ideas

- Add salad vegetables in your sandwich/ roll/wrap.
- Add plenty of vegetables to your cooked meals.
- Pack a salad with lots of leafy greens, tomato, cucumber, legumes, spinach, mushroom (any vegetables you like).
- Pack vegetable sticks like capsicum, carrot, cucumber and beans with some low fat dip.
- Swap margarine or butter for avocado or some tasty hummus.
- Add some extra flavour to your salads with: herbs, vinegars, lemon, tzatziki, avocado, tahini, hummus, mustard, tomato-based pasta sauces or olive oil.

Choose some grains

- Different grain-based foods that are wholegrain, high fibre and low in salt will help fill you up for longer.
- Try including bread slices, a bread roll, wraps, fruit bread, rice paper rolls, rice cakes, crackers, popcorn, pasta, couscous or some quinoa.

Choose some lean protein

- Lean protein options include: chicken, turkey, boiled egg, tinned tuna, sardines or salmon (in spring water or olive oil).
- Meat alternatives like tofu, kidney beans, chickpeas or lentils are high in protein and low in fat, so are a healthy choice.

Dairy

- A small tub of reduced fat yoghurt.
- 2 slices of cheese.
- A small carton of milk.
- Dairy foods help keep you feeling fuller for longer.
- It is also a great source of calcium which helps keep our bones and teeth healthy!

Add in some fruit and seed snacks

- A medium sized piece of fruit or two small fruits like apricots or a small bunch of grapes.
- Dried fruit can also be a great snack, full of vitamins and minerals.
- Try some sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, or sesame seeds. They are a good source of fibre, protein and vitamins.

Don't forget to stay hydrated!

- Tap water is the best choice, fill up a water bottle and bring it with you or freeze it on hot days to keep your lunch and yourself cool.
- Swap drinks with high amounts of sugar such as, fruit juice, cordials, sports drinks and iced teas for a bottle of tap water.
- Try adding fruit or vegetable slices to your water for extra flavour.

Get your kids involved

IN THE KITCHEN

- Select easy lunchbox recipes to cook up on weekends
- Share simple tasks such as cracking eggs, stirring and measuring ingredients
- Help kids build their own lunchbox by keeping a selection of healthy grab and go items
- Encourage kids to fill their drink bottles with water

Set healthy lunchbox rules that include choosing a food from each food group

AT THE SHOPS

- Allow kids to choose their own fruits and vegetables
- Avoid the junk food aisles and set limits on highly processed foods
- Ask kids to help look for products with the most stars

Look for four or more stars on packaged snacks

IN THE GARDEN

- Set up a vegetable patch or pot with some easy to grow vegetables and fruit
- Let children plant and pick their own vegetables, for snacks.
- Set garden tasks such as weeding and watering

Easy grow ideas are cherry tomatoes, snow peas, baby cucumbers, and strawberries

www.healthylunchboxweek.org

HEALTHY SNACKS

Many children often consume between 1-3 snacks while they are at kindergarten/school, however this may be higher or lower depending on the time spent away from home and your child's appetite.

Snacks do not need to be anything fancy, there are plenty of fresh fruits and veggies your children will enjoy. Alternatively making your own snacks is a great way to save money and ensure you aren't purchasing packaged foods that can be full of sugar or salt.

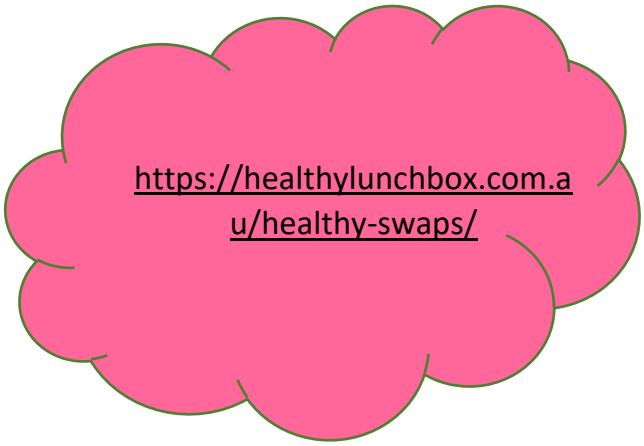
If you're stuck for inspiration, try the following for great snack recipes.

- https://www.healthylunchboxweek.org.au/recipes
- https://livelighter.com.au/recipe

Or keep scrolling for two delicious, inexpensive snack ideas that your children are sure to love!

It can sometimes be tricky to find substitutes for highly processed, packaged foods that your children might enjoy. The following resources have some simple lunchbox swaps. They are great to print out and stick on the fridge for a reminder!

Alternatively, check out this interactive lunchbox swap tool which the Cancer Council has put together to show healthier alternatives.



Central Highlands Rural Health

HEALTHY LUNCHBOX SWAPS

Stick me on the fridge for a reminder!

Get your kids involved in helping to pick foods to create a healthy lunchbox every day.

Be careful of hidden sugars. Aim for 5g or less per 100g serve.

Quick and easy to make at home and store in an air-tight container

Make sure to pack a water bottle too.

Veggie muffins are a great way to sneak in some extra veg!

HEALTHY lunchbox snacks

Swap snacks that are high in fat, sugar, salt and low in fibre for quick and easy healthy snacks!

HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS: ✓

- ✓ Pikelets
- ✓ Fruit bread
- ✓ Plain rice cakes
- ✓ Air-popped popcorn
- ✓ Wholegrain crackers
- ✓ Reduced fat yoghurt
- ✓ Reduced fat cheese
- ✓ Vegetable sticks eg celery, carrot, capsicum
- ✓ Cherry tomatoes
- ✓ Corn cob
- ✓ Cucumber
- ✓ Fruit (whole or sliced) eg grapes, orange segments, kiwi fruit, mango slices, pear, apple, banana

✗ SNACKS BEST LEFT OUT OF THE LUNCHBOX:

- ✗ Muffins and cakes
- ✗ Sweet biscuits
- ✗ Savoury biscuits
- ✗ Muesli bars
- ✗ Sweet rice bars
- ✗ Fruit straps
- ✗ Chocolate
- ✗ Lollies
- ✗ Potato chips
- ✗ Corn chips
- ✗ Processed cheese & biscuits
- ✗ Soft drink
- ✗ Flavoured milk
- ✗ Fruit drinks

munch & move

NSW GOVERNMENT Health

HEALTHY SWEET POTATO CHEESE MUFFINS

Prep: 10 mins
Cook: 25 mins
Serves: 12

Ingredients

Olive or canola oil spray

1 1/2 cups self-raising flour

1/2 cup wholemeal self-raising flour

1/2 cup sweet potato, peeled and grated

2 tbs Parmesan cheese, grated

1/2 red capsicum, finely chopped

3 spring onions (including green tops), ends trimmed, chopped

Pepper, to taste

1 cup reduced-fat milk

2 eggs

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200ºC (180ºC fan forced).
2. Lightly spray muffin tins with oil or line with paper cases.
3. Sift flours into a medium sized bowl, returning husk remaining in the sieve to the bowl.
4. Mix in sweet potato, cheese, capsicum, spring onion and pepper.
5. In a bowl, whisk milk and eggs together.
6. Add to dry ingredients and mix through until just combined.
7. Spoon into prepared muffin pan.
8. Bake for 25 minutes until muffins are firm and a knife inserted into the centre comes out clean.
9. Allow to cool in the tin for a few minutes then turn onto a wire rack.

Hints

- Muffins freeze well in snap-lock bags and can be taken out in the morning

Source: https://livelighter.com.au/Recipe/163/sweet-potato-cheese-muffins

CHOC BALLS

Serves: 24

Ingredients

2 cups pitted dates

2 cups rolled oats

2 cups rice puff cereal

1/3 cup cocoa

¼ cup honey

2 tablespoons monounsaturated margarine

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ cup desiccated coconut - for rolling

Water - as needed

Method

1. Roughly chop dates and add to food processor. Pulse dates until they are finely chopped. Add a sprinkle of warm water to soften dates if needed.
2. Place remaining ingredients into the food processor, blend until well combined.
3. Pour coconut into a shallow bowl. Using clean wet hands roll teaspoons of the mixture into ball shapes.
4. Toss in desiccated coconut and serve in a mini patty case.

Hints

- This is a great recipe to get the kids involved – they can help roll the balls into shapes and toss in coconut!

Source: https://www.healthylunchboxweek.org.au/chocballs

HEALTHY LUNCHES

A great way to ensure that your child is eating a range of nutritious foods from all the food groups is to send them to kindergarten/school with a healthy sandwich. It ensures they will be feeling full and is simple enough for children to eat. On the page below is some sandwich ideas that you might not have thought of and can be just as simple as the classic vegemite and cheese, but healthier!

If you're feeling more adventurous or your child is wanting something different, check out the link below for even more delicious, healthy sandwich filling ideas.

https://www.crunchandsip.com.au/healthy-lunchboxes/sandwich-fillings

However, like many of you we know that not everyone wants to eat a sandwich for lunch and that's okay!

Instead your child may enjoy:

- Rice paper rolls
- Veggie scrolls
- Salad
- Or leftovers from the night before!

The following links have a great range of sandwich alternatives that you and your child might like to try.

https://www.crunchandsip.com.au/healthy-lunchboxes/sandwich-alternatives

https://www.healthylunchboxweek.org.au/recipes

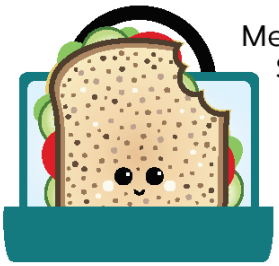
Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council

Five Days of Sandwiches

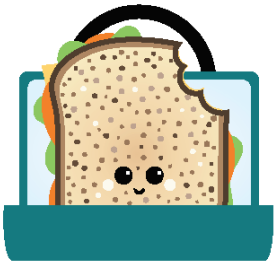
Graphics by @fineprintfood

Step 1: Choose Whole Grain Bread

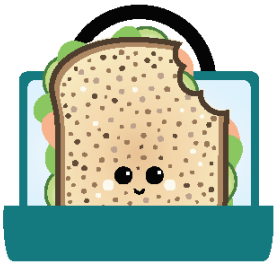
Step 2: Choose Your Favourite Fillings



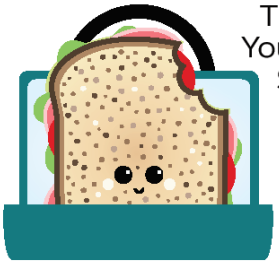
Mediterranean Sandwich



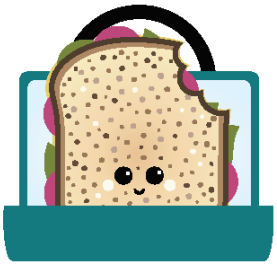
Roasted Vegetable Sandwich



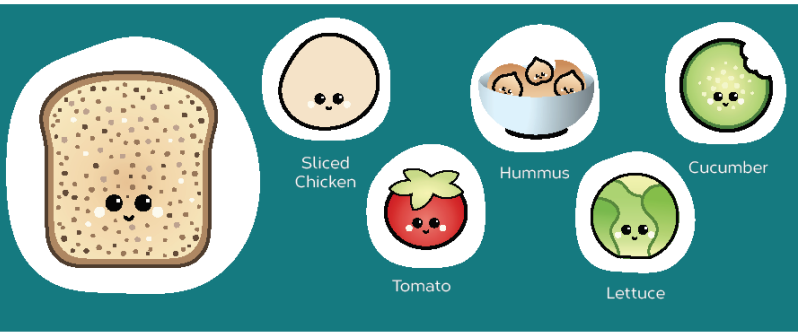
Tuna Mayo Sandwich

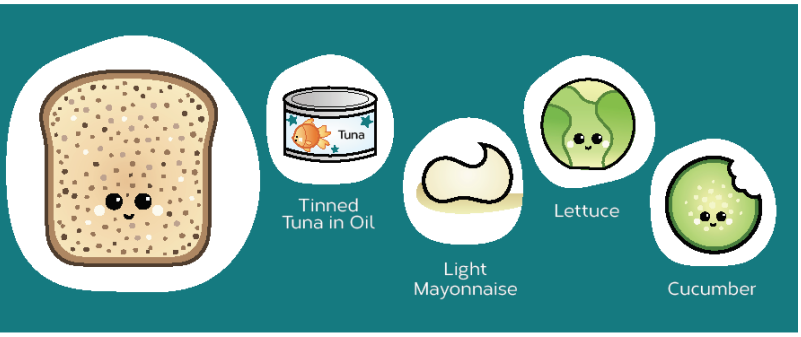


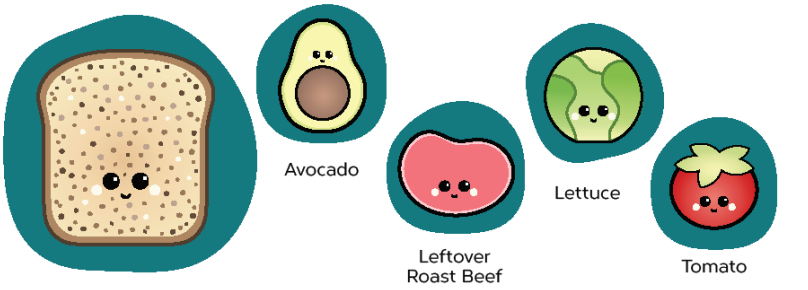
The 'Use Up Your Leftovers' Sandwich

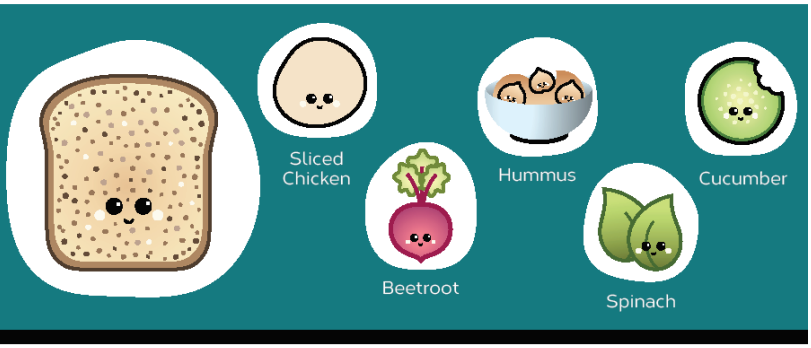


Bright Beetroot Sandwich









Reading food labels

Most packaged foods have an ingredient list and Nutrition Information Panel (NIP). Know what to look for to choose the healthier product.

INGREDIENT LIST

Ingredients are listed in order of most weight to least. If a source of sugar, salt or saturated fat is listed in the first three ingredients, it may not be the healthiest choice.

HOT TIPS

- Sugar may be listed as syrups, sucrose, maltose, glucose, fructose, honey.
- Salt may be listed as sodium, sea salt, sodium bicarbonate, rock salt.
- Saturated fat may be listed as palm oil, coconut oil, tallow, butter, cream, copha, lard.

NUTRITION INFORMATION PANEL (NIP)

When reading the NIP always compare similar products, for example compare one brand of yogurt with another brand of yogurt.

Energy:
For packaged snacks look for less than 600kJ per serve

Nutrition Information		
Servings per package: 1		
Serving size: 30g		
	Per Serve	Per 100g
Energy	432kJ	1441kJ
Protein	2.8g	9.3g
Fat	0.4g	1.2g
saturated	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrate	18.9g	62.9g
-sugars	3.5g	11.8g
Fibre	6.4g	21.2g
Sodium	65mg	215mg

Saturated Fat:
Aim for the lowest per 100g, less than 3g is best

Sugar:
Aim for less than 15g per 100g

Fibre:
Not all labels include fibre. For breads, cereals & crackers look for more than 5g more per 100g

Sodium:
Foods with less than 400mg per 100g are good, but less than 120mg are best

©Copyright The Australian Nutrition Foundation Inc. 2021
www.healthylunchboxweek.org.au

FOOD RELIEF GUIDE/LOCAL INITIATIVES

COVID-19 and many other reasons may have left you at times without the ability to provide sufficient and nutritious food for your family.

Food insecurity is an issue that can affect people at all different ages and stages of their life. It's not something to be embarrassed or ashamed about!

The Population Health team at Central Highlands Rural Health (CHRH) have put together a list of organisations offering food relief and food services across the Hepburn Shire and Macedon Ranges.

You can view the most up to date version of this resource at the link below.

If you would like further information about these resources or to discuss with our team please get in contact via email at pophealth@chrh.org.au.

Central Highlands Rural Health