



# Packed lunches for ages 2-5

**Many young children have the opportunity to eat a packed lunch at their childcare setting.**

These guidelines will help parents and carers provide a tasty, interesting and healthy lunch box. The information is suitable for children from 2 years upwards.

A healthy lunch box includes food from each of the four main food groups:

- Bread, cereals and potatoes
- Fruit and vegetables
- Meat, fish and alternatives
- Milk and dairy foods



*Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle through Childcare*



## Sandwiches are often the main part of a lunch box

### Bread

Try different varieties of bread e.g. sliced bread, rolls, baps, pittas, baguettes. Choose different types e.g. wholemeal, white or granary.

### Fillings

Try to include some fruit or vegetables in the fillings. You could make up some of your own fillings:

- ✓ ham & tomato
- ✓ tuna & sweetcorn
- ✓ egg & cress
- ✓ corned beef & tomato
- ✓ cream cheese & pineapple
- ✓ chicken & salad
- ✓ sardine & tomato
- ✓ hummus & grated carrot
- ✓ salmon & cucumber
- ✓ grated cheese & cucumber

### Alternatives to sandwiches:

These ideas make a change to sandwiches:

- ✓ potato salad
- ✓ pasta salad
- ✓ couscous & vegetables
- ✓ rice salad
- ✓ pizza slices



### Milk & Dairy Foods

Try to ensure an item from this group is included:

- ✓ fromage frais
- ✓ cheese
- ✓ rice pudding or custard
- ✓ yoghurt
- ✓ milk or flavoured milk

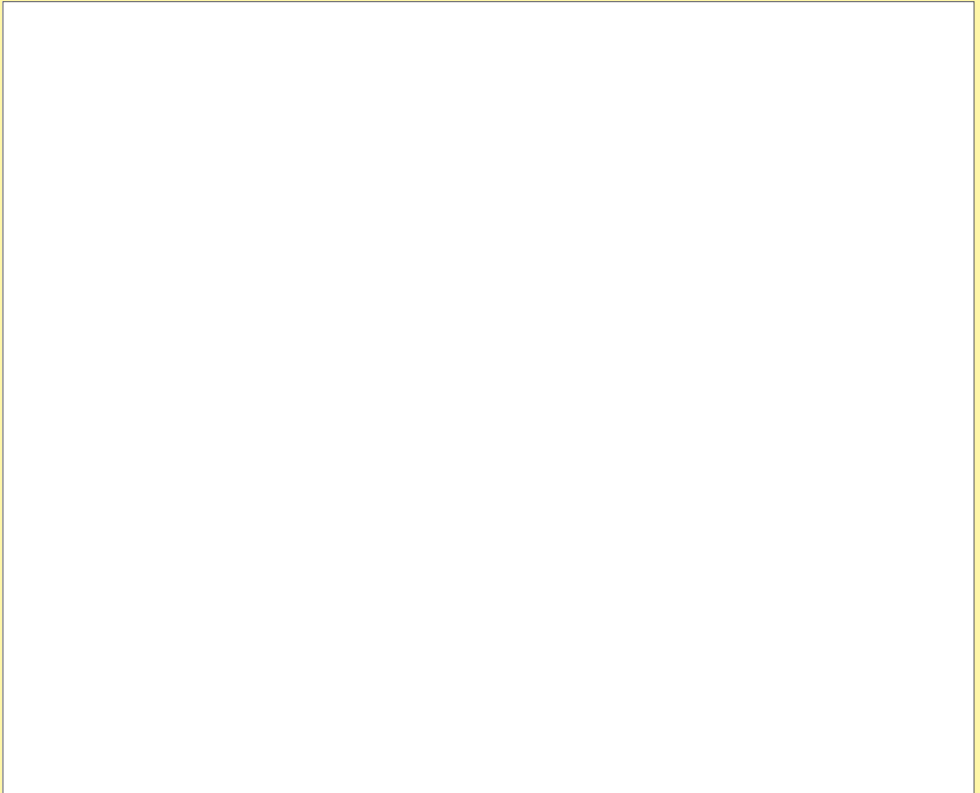
### Drinks

Water and milk are the best drinks for children under 5. Fruit juice can also be included.

**P**arents and carers may like to share these pages with their child. Talking about food and including children in shopping and preparing food is a positive way of helping them to enjoy healthy food choices.

*Which foods do you like to eat?*

*Draw a picture of your favourite food.*



Talking points about food:

- ✓ the taste
- ✓ the touch and feel
- ✓ the colour
- ✓ the appearance inside and outside
- ✓ food that can be eaten raw or needs to be cooked first

## What would you put in your healthy lunchbox?

You could draw pictures of food or cut out pictures from magazines and newspapers.

Talking points:

- ✓ including different types of food (food groups)
- ✓ including a variety of foods in a box (for taste, colour and health)
- ✓ trying different foods (to keep interest and for health)



Can you name these fruit & vegetables?



Talking points:

- ✓ the colour, feel and taste of different fruit and vegetables
- ✓ where fruit and vegetables grow e.g. on a tree, in the ground

## Fruit & Vegetables

Aim to include two items from this group for crunch, colour and health (e.g. add as a sandwich filling and as a separate item):

- ✓ tomato - sliced or chopped
- ✓ carrot - whole, grated or sticks
- ✓ apple - whole or grated with cheese
- ✓ cucumber - sliced or chunks to crunch
- ✓ sweetcorn
- ✓ lettuce - shredded
- ✓ mustard and cress or watercress
- ✓ peppers - rings, slices or chopped
- ✓ coleslaw
- ✓ peaches - whole or mixed in filling
- ✓ pears - ordinary or avocado
- ✓ melon
- ✓ mixed salad - as filling or separate
- ✓ banana - whole or mashed as filling
- ✓ dried fruit - such as sultanas, raisins, apricots
- ✓ kiwi - eat with a spoon like an egg
- ✓ pineapple - rings or added in filling
- ✓ beansprouts
- ✓ tangerines and satsumas or other easy peel citrus
- ✓ grapes - cut lengthways



## Foods high in fat and sugar

If your child eats foods such as crisps, biscuits and cakes at home there is no need to include any in a lunch box. But if you do put anything extra in their box here are some healthier ideas:

- ✓ fruit scone
- ✓ pancakes
- ✓ plain biscuits
- ✓ crackers
- ✓ tea cake or currant bun
- ✓ plain popcorn
- ✓ breadsticks
- ✓ fruit cake

## Allergies and nuts

If there is a family history of allergies e.g. asthma, eczema, hayfever, nut or other food allergy you should not give your child peanuts or foods containing groundnut oil until they are at least 3 years old (Birth to Five 2005).

Do not give any type of whole nuts to children under five in case of choking.

If you have any concerns about allergies or nuts, please inform the person caring for your child.



## Food safety

- Warm conditions can encourage the growth of bacteria so it is important to keep packed lunches cold.
- Pack the food in an insulated cool bag or lunch box along with an ice pack. This should be done all year round but it is especially important during summer months.
- If you make the packed lunch the night before, store it in the fridge. Do not store it in a warm room or by a radiator.
- Remember to wash fruit and salads before eating them.

## Your Health Visitor

If you have any concerns about your child's appetite or diet please contact your health visitor. Their contact number can be found in the front of your Child's Health Record.

This information can be made available in other languages, in large print, Braille or on audio tape. Please phone 01454 868686 if you need any of these or any other help to access Council services.

For further information about packed lunches or food generally please contact the Food Team. 01454 863557