

# Healthy lunchbox

Healthy packed lunches are based on the principles of the Eatwell Guide, encouraging a lunchbox to include:

- a portion of starchy food such as potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates
- plenty fruit and vegetables;
- a portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat or other proteins;
- a portion of dairy or calcium fortified dairy alternatives;
- a drink of water

## What should be in a healthy lunchbox?

The British Nutrition Foundation has created a [video](#) to help you understand how to put together a healthy, balanced lunchbox. Eating a healthy, balanced lunch is important to make sure children get the nutrients and energy to see them through the school day. The key to a healthy packed lunch is variety and getting the right balance of foods to provide children with all of the nutrients they need to stay healthy. A packed lunch made at home can be a healthy and delicious choice and gives you control over the foods and drinks included.

A school lunchbox should:

### 1. Be based on starchy foods

- This can include potatoes, bread, pasta, rice, couscous, wraps, pitta and chapatti. Where possible choose wholegrains or other high fibre varieties such as wholemeal bread and potatoes with the skins on.

### 2. Include plenty of fruit and vegetables

- Include at least 1-2 portions and vary these throughout the week.
- You could add sliced vegetables into a pasta dish or sandwich.
- You could also include packs of chopped fresh fruits or individual packs of dried fruits. Dried fruit can stick to teeth, which may lead to tooth decay, so it's best to keep dried fruit to mealtimes and not give them as snacks.

### 3. Include a portion of beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat, a dairy food and/or a non-dairy source of protein

- Use beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other sources of protein as sandwich fillings or in a salad.

- If you're not including a dairy food in the main lunch item (e.g. in a salad or sandwich), add a yogurt or some cheese, such as a Cheddar stick, to the lunchbox.
- If you're including a dairy alternative, e.g. soya yogurt or milk, choose varieties which are unsweetened and fortified with calcium.

#### **4. Include a drink of water**

### **School meals**

It may be worth considering whether your child could have a school meal as meals served in schools in the UK (with the exception of some academies) have to comply with regulatory standards for the foods provided and it is often easier to get the essential nutrients children need into a cooked meal than into a packed lunch.

For more information on healthy lunchboxes go to <https://bit.ly/2gyP4ri>