



## WHAT'S FOR LUNCH?

Children need to eat a variety of foods everyday to be healthy. Parents can give children a healthy school lunch that tastes great and is good for them too. Many parents say one of the major problems with school lunches is when the children bring them home!

Try to give kids some choice about what they take for lunch, and if possible, get them involved with preparing the 'healthier' foods.

Choosing food for a healthy lunch is easy!

Use Nutrition Australia's Healthy Living Pyramid to help you plan a healthy school lunch.

### What is a healthy school lunch?

- Start by choosing a variety of foods using the Healthy Living Pyramid as a guide. This will ensure that your child is receiving adequate nutrition from various food groups during the day.
- Don't forget to include mainly breads and cereals (bread, rice, pasta etc) and fruit and vegetables, and moderate amounts of dairy and meat or meat alternatives.
- Bread is the most common lunch food for kids. Remember that a range of breads such as sliced bread (white, white high fibre, wholemeal, multigrain, rye), pita bread, kebab bread, bread rolls, and English muffins are available and can be used to vary the lunch you provide.
- Use a variety of fillings to keep children interested.
- Dairy products are particularly important, so be careful that your children are not continually replacing milk with juice. Encourage children to drink water throughout the day.
- Save sweet and fatty treats for special occasions. Most children attend enough birthday parties and holiday celebrations where these foods are readily available.
- Choose healthy snack food options including cheese sticks, canned or fresh fruit, rice cakes, pikelets etc.

- Don't forget that water is the most ideal drink for children.

**Here is an example of a morning tea that you can send to school:**

<b>Food</b>	<b>Food Group</b>
Scone	Bread or cereal
Banana	Fruit
Cheese slice	Dairy

**Try the following example for lunch:**

<b>Food</b>	<b>Food Group</b>
Sandwich bread	Bread or cereal
Salad filling for the sandwich	Vegetable
Tuna or other lean meat	Meat
Apple	Fruit
Milk drink (frozen)	Dairy

**Remember to plan ahead!**

Planning ahead for the busy times helps you get through them a little easier. Think about the lunches you will be preparing for the next week and make sure you buy the necessary ingredients when you do your regular shopping.

## **Packing a Lunch**

When packing a school lunch, it is important to consider how the lunch will be kept cool.

### **Keeping food cool**

If food is not stored properly bacteria in and on top of the food can grow and make you and your children sick; for this reason it is essential to keep school lunches cool. Lunches kept in children's school bags all day, are likely to get warm, though foods such as meat or cheese sandwiches, milk, cheese and yoghurt need to be kept cool.

Why not try the following:

- To keep sandwiches fresh, wrap them in plastic wrap or snaplock plastic bags.
- Find a lunch box that includes a small water bottle. Fill the bottle with water and freeze it, then place it in the lunch box to keep food cold.
- Freeze small packs of milk or juice
- If you prepare lunches the night before they will be eaten, make sure they are stored in the fridge overnight

**Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold!**

## **Lunch Ideas**

Try varying the following lunch samples to keep your kids interested in the food you provide:

### Lunchbox 1

- Fruit in season
- Boiled egg
- Vegetables with yoghurt
- Pita bread, filled with salad vegetables or tabouli and rissoles
- Water

### Lunchbox 2

- Pikelets
- Frozen UHT Milk
- Vegetarian pizza or a sandwich
- Vegetable pack
- Fruit salad
- Yoghurt

### Lunchbox 3

- Fruit in season
- Egg, tomato and cheese sandwich
- Vegetable sticks
- Slice of fruit loaf
- Dried fruit and nuts\*\*
- Frozen UHT Milk drink

### Lunchbox 4

- Fruit in season
- Bread roll filled with vegetables, cheese and a slice of lean roast beef
- Frozen UHT Milk
- Grapes
- Mixed nuts\*\*

\*\* While nuts are a nutritious inclusion to the diet of children, it is recommended that you consult your school regarding anaphylactic or nut allergy policies prior to including nuts or products containing nuts in your child's lunchbox.

**Remember! Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold!**

## **The Tuckshop**

Children can now be well fed with food from the school tuckshop. The Smart Choices Healthy Food and Drink supply strategy is now mandatory in all Queensland Government Schools, and provides guidelines on the provision of healthy foods and drinks to children through the school system.

Moreover, Nutrition Australia Victoria runs a [Canteens Advisory Service](#) to assist tuckshop convenors to develop healthier tuckshop menus.

Nutritious choices from the tuckshop include sandwiches, rolls, wraps, sushi, yoghurt, salads, fruit and milk drinks. Tuckshop convenors can increase choice by stocking healthier alternatives to the traditional not-so-healthy choices, such as low fat pies and low fat sausage rolls. Provide your child with guidance on how best to spend their money when purchasing food from the school tuckshop.