



Grange Primary Academy

The best in everyone™

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Ideas for a Healthy Lunchbox for Our Children



Enjoy your lunch...

Food should be enjoyable and eating healthily is about getting the right balance of food in your diet. Foods should not be classified as good or bad and any food can be included in a healthy diet, it is the overall balance of nutrients in the diet that is important for health.

Lunch is an important meal for everyone, particularly children. But for many people, getting inspiration for what to include in a child's lunchbox can be a difficult task. This leaflet provides you with some helpful suggestions to make your child's lunchbox appetising and healthy.

Variety is one of the keys to eating healthily so try not to offer the same foods on consecutive days. By including a broad range of foods, a much wider variety of nutrients will be eaten. A healthier lunchbox is about getting a balance and eating a wide variety of foods.

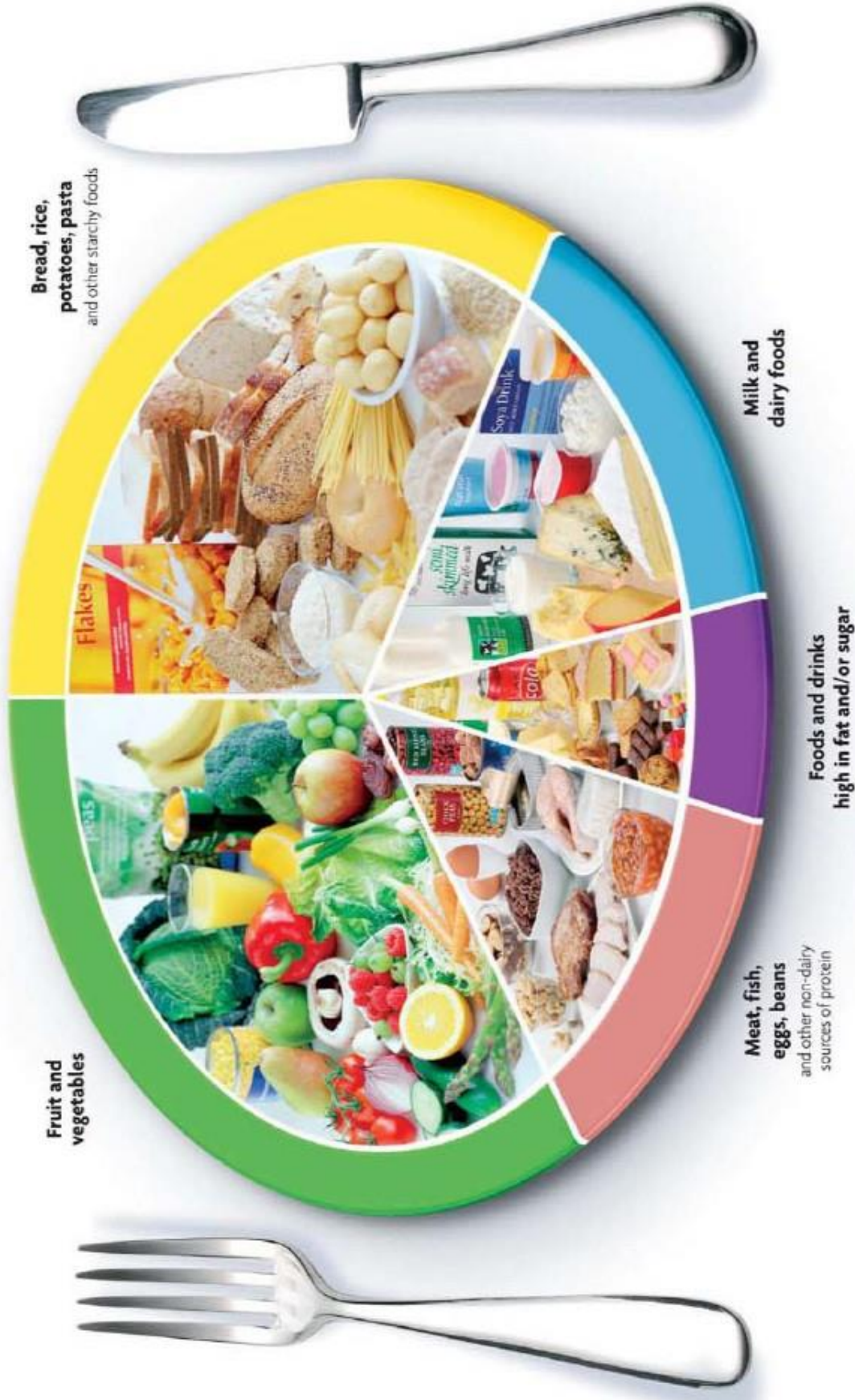
The Eatwell Plate on the next page shows the proportion and types of foods needed to make up a balanced diet. It also shows that healthy eating does not mean your child missing out on the foods that they enjoy.

Please note however, that the Eatwell Plate applies from the age of five years upwards, as below this age, children need a diet slightly higher in healthy fats and milk (together with starchy foods, fruits, vegetables, meat, fish and eggs etc).



The eatwell plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.



Fruit and vegetables

Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods

Milk and dairy foods

Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar

Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein



Mix 'n' match from the following ideas...

Choose a base:- bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods:-



Bread, (wholemeal slices, wholemeal rolls, wholemeal bagel, crispbreads, wholemeal pitta bread, chapattis, wraps), wholemeal pasta, brown rice, potato.

Young children under the age of 5 years cannot cope with a lot of fibre from starchy foods in their diet. Therefore, under this age, white bread, pasta and rice is fine.

If your child doesn't like wholemeal bread, try giving them 1 slice of white and 1 slice of wholemeal, or choose the 50/50 breads available.

Choose a filling:- from the fruit and vegetables, dairy foods, meat, fish, eggs, beans (and other non-dairy sources of protein) food groups, or maybe a combination from these groups. Try to include something from all these groups within the lunchbox:-



Add chopped peppers, peas, sweetcorn, cherry tomato and spring onion to pasta, rice or potato salad

A banana, or a mixed salad, pineapple or grapes with cheese on sandwiches or crispbreads

Cottage cheese (and pineapple), cheese (and tomato and pickle), cheese spread on sandwiches or crispbreads

After the age of five years old, low fat options in yogurts, hard cheeses and cheese spreads are the healthier option. From two years old, children can drink semi-skimmed milk, providing they are not underweight or in ill health and that



the diet otherwise gives them lots of energy.

Diced cold cooked meat, low salt, egg (and tomato and cress), hummus, chicken (with salad), tuna in spring water (with sweetcorn) with sandwiches or pasta, rice or potato salads



You can give boys up to four portions of oily fish a week, but it's best not to give girls more than two portions per week

Extra fruit and veg:-

For example:- chopped apple, banana, carrot, cucumber or celery sticks, cherry tomatoes, grapes, kiwi slices, pear, small packet of raisins, raspberries, satsumas, strawberries, watermelon slices



Use fruit and vegetables from all colours of the rainbow, as they offer a wide range of vitamins and minerals.

Seasonal varieties and those which are easy to peel and eat are good choices and are cost effective.

Peeling and chopping fruit and vegetables into ready-to-eat bite-sized pieces makes them more appealing

From time to time, a treat:-



For example:- a slice of fruit or carrot cake, oatmeal biscuit, a scone, flapjack, plain unsalted popcorn, malt loaf slice (with a very thin spread of margarine or butter – if any at all), banana bread, scotch pancake, hotcross bun

No lunch is complete without a drink:-



Keeping hydrated helps children to be alert, improves concentration and keeps skin and hair healthy. Try a variety of drinks including; still or sparkling water, semi-skimmed / soya milk, flavoured milk, pure unsweetened fruit juice, pure unsweetened vegetable juice and yogurt drinks which have less than 5% added sugar or honey. Juice and flavoured milk can be used in moderation.



Monday

Monday's lunchbox could be...

- Cheese and tomato, sliced wholegrain bread sandwich (or peanut butter smooth, no nuts)
- Small banana
- Low fat fruit fromage frais
- Carton of pure unsweetened apple juice
- Flapjack

Tuesday

Tuesday's lunchbox could be...

- Canned salmon salad (or tuna salad) bagel*
- Cherry tomatoes
- Individual cheese triangle
- Box of raisins
- Slice of banana cake
- Bottle of water



*healthy hint: some foods are naturally high in salt, e.g. smoked fish, foods canned in brine, cured meats and cheese. However, they all provide other important nutrients. To keep the salt content down, limit the frequency of salted savoury snacks, use tuna canned in water and use sauces and pickles sparingly.



Wednesday

Wednesday's lunchbox could be...

- Egg, lettuce and tomato roll
- Bunch of seedless grapes
- Small pot of fruit chunks, in natural juice*
- Carton of milk or low fat milkshake

*healthy hint: remember, fresh, frozen, canned, dried and juiced fruit and vegetables all count towards your 5 A DAY.



Thursday's lunchbox could be...

- 2 mini pitta pockets with hummus with sliced red and yellow pepper and lettuce
- Fruit scone or slice of malt loaf
- Satsuma or pear
- Carrot sticks and small cream-cheese dip
- Bottle of water

Thursday

Activity tip: being physically active is important for your child's overall health and bone development.



Friday

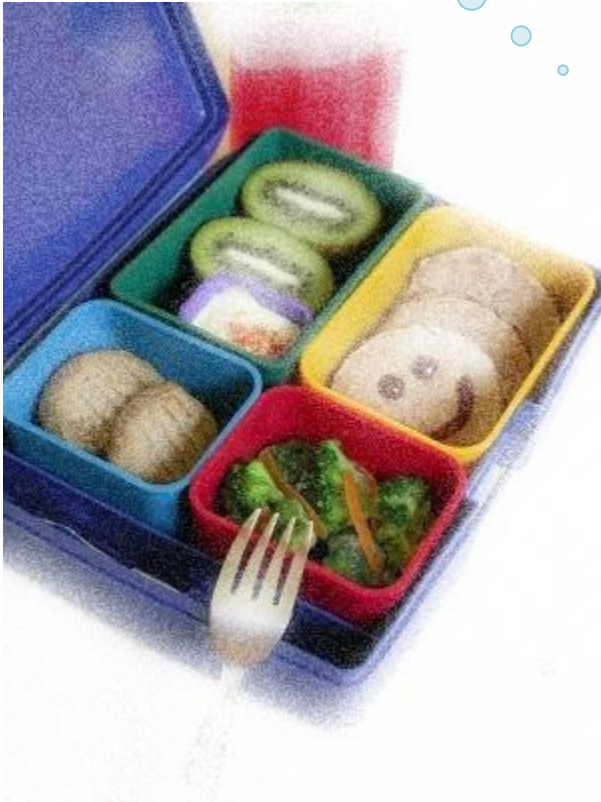
Friday's lunchbox could be...

- Chicken pasta twist salad with a mushroom, sweetcorn and tomato sauce
- Pot of rice pudding dessert
- Sliced red apple or nectarine
- Carton of pure fruit juice

Keep your child's lunchbox interesting and appetising by varying what you put in each day. A good variety of foods will help to provide all the nutrients children need to grow and be healthy. A healthy lunch should be part of a healthy lifestyle, which includes physical activity and a balanced diet.



Other ideas



- Chicken and couscous salad (with spring onion, red pepper and cherry tomatoes)
- Pear
- Banana flavoured milk
- Tuna bagel (with green salad)
- Tomato
- Kiwi
- Banana and blueberry smoothie (made with semi-skimmed milk)
- Corned beef sandwich

- Low fat soft cheese with vegetable dippers (cucumber sticks, red and green pepper strips)

- Satsuma
- Bottle of water
- Chilli bean rice salad, made with rice, kidney beans, spring onion, yellow pepper, celery and a little sweet chilli sauce
- Hard boiled egg
- Mini cheese (or a small match-box size piece cut off a block)
- Scotch pancake
- Box of raisins
- Pure pineapple fruit juice



Checklist

Have you got...



A good portion of starchy food, e.g. thick wholemeal bread, chapatti, pitta pocket, pasta or rice salad?



Plenty of fruit and vegetables, e.g. an apple, satsuma, handful of cherry tomatoes or carrot sticks, mini can of fruit chunks in natural juice or small box of raisins?



A portion of milk or dairy food, e.g. individual cheese portion or pot of yogurt?



A portion of lean meat, fish or alternative, e.g. chicken, beef, tuna, egg, hummus or bean/lentil salad?



Fancy a treat? From time to time a slice of fruit or carrot cake, a hot cross bun, scone, fruit loaf or flapjack



A drink, e.g. pure unsweetened fruit or vegetable juice, semi-skimmed milk or still or sparkling water?





Tips to make your lunchbox healthy and safe to eat:

- Use an insulated lunchbox or freezer pack
- Freeze a carton of fruit juice or bottle of still water the night before. Add this to the lunchbox in the morning. This will act as an ice pack and keep the food cold
- Make the lunchbox the night before and keep it in the fridge overnight
- Plan ahead if you can to ensure a good variety of foods
- Involve children in decision making, shopping and preparation of foods where possible
- Pack food carefully, avoid using glass bottles or jars, and place soft fruit and crushable items at the top

Vegetarian diets:

If you want your child to follow a vegetarian diet, it's important to make sure the diet is balanced.

Make sure you find an alternative to meat, fish and chicken as the main sources of protein. These could include pulses (lentils and beans), seeds and eggs.

Also, to make sure your growing child is getting enough iron it's a good idea to include wholegrain cereals, leafy green vegetables (such as spinach and watercress), pulses and dried apricots or figs. It's easier to absorb iron from our food if it's eaten with foods containing vitamin C (such as strawberries, oranges and peppers).