

Packed Lunch Standards

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Growing Healthy Families Packed Lunch Standards			
Meal	Essential criteria	Achieved (yes/no)	Comments/suggestions
Lunch	Each day, the following is included in a packed lunch:		
	A portion of starchy carbohydrates (refer to table 1 for examples)		
	A portion of meat, poultry, fish, meat alternative, eggs or pulses (refer to table 1 for examples)		
	A portion of dairy (refer to table 1 for examples)		
	At least one portion of fruit (refer to table 1 for examples)		
	At least one portion of vegetables (refer to table 1 for examples)		
	Water or milk		
	Over the week:		
	Milk or fruit-based desserts only		
	Should include at least three different portions of fruit or vegetables		
	A range of white and wholegrain starchy carbohydrates		
	Limit processed meats, fish and alternatives (refer to table 2 for examples)		
	Avoid packed lunches containing the following foods:		
	HFSS foods e.g. chocolate, cakes, biscuits, sweets, crisps. (refer to table 3 for examples)		
	Drinks other than milk and water (refer to table 3 for examples)		

Table 1. Examples of common foods in each food group which can be included in packed lunches

Starchy carbohydrates	Vegetables fresh/frozen/canned	Fruits fresh/frozen/canned	Meat/meat alternatives	Dairy and alternatives
Bread	Carrots	Bananas	Chicken	Milk
Bagel	Tomatoes	Pears	Lamb	Cheese
Tortilla	Cucumber	Grapes	Pork	Plain yoghurt (full fat up to 2yrs)
Wrap	Celery	Kiwi fruit	Beef	Plant-based milk alternatives: unsweetened calcium fortified soya, oat, pea, coconut or almond milks.
Pitta bread	Peppers	Oranges	White fish	
Chapatti	Sweetcorn	Plums	Tuna	
Potato	Mixed salad	Berries	Cod	Milk based desserts
Yam	Green beans	Melon	Haddock	Plain fromage frais
Pasta	Sugar snack peas	Apple	Salmon	Rice pudding
Rice	Broccoli	Pineapple	Sardines	Semolina
Noodles	Cauliflower	Mango	Pulses/Legumes/Lentils	Custard
Couscous		Fruit based desserts	Eggs	Tapioca pudding
Polenta		Fruit/fruit salad (fresh/ tinned)	Quorn/Soya	
		Fruit fool	Houmous	
		Fruit compote	Tahini	
		Fruit crumble/pie	Nut butters	
		Fruit cake/muffin (sweetened with fresh or dried fruit)	Tofu	
		Fruit jelly	Falafel	
		Steamed/baked fruit		

Table 2. Examples of common foods in sub-groups which should not be included in packed lunches	
Processed meats/ meat alternatives	HFSS Foods
Corned beef	Chocolate
Pressed meats (Luncheon/Salami/Chicken roll)	Sweets
Sausage (meat/Quorn)	Cakes
Pastry (sausage roll/pasty/meat pie)	Crisps
Crumbed/battered (schnitzel/nuggets/fish fingers/Quorn nuggets/fillets/scotch eggs)	Doughnuts
	Pastries
	Ice-cream/lollies
	Jelly
	Chocolate mouse

Table 3. Drinks guidance			
Suitable			
Water			
Milk	0-1 years	1-2 years	2+ years
	Breastmilk	Whole (full fat) or semi-skimmed milk for children growing and eating well	Semi-skimmed milk for children growing and eating well
		WHO recommends breastmilk up to 2 years and beyond	
Not suitable			
Skimmed milk or skimmed milk products, these are low in fat and do not provide enough energy for children under 5.			
Fruit juice (even diluted) as these contain large amounts of fruit sugar (fructose) and is acidic, fruit sugar and acid can cause tooth decay in children.			
Fruit juice drinks such as fruit shoots often contain added sugar or sweeteners, and provide little nutritional value.			
Fruit squash, even those labelled ‘sugar free’ or ‘reduced sugar’ can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value.			
Fizzy drinks, even those labelled ‘sugar free’ or ‘reduced sugar’ can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value.			
Flavoured water, even those labelled ‘sugar free’ or ‘reduced sugar’ can contribute to tooth decay and provide little nutritional value.			

References

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