

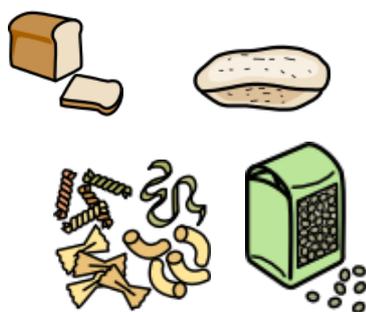
SEND packed lunches guide

Packed lunches can be a great option for children who have specific dietary requirements, allergies, or sensory needs and allows children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to enjoy their favourite and familiar foods in a safe environment. Packed lunches brought from home and consumed in school (or on school trips) should provide children with healthy and nutritious food that is similar in quality to food served at school as per the school food standards.

What should be in a packed lunch?

Starchy foods

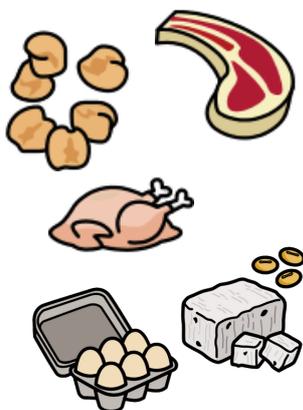
- Wholemeal bread
- Pasta
- Rice
- Couscous or other grains
- Wholemeal bagels



- Wholemeal chapattis or rotis
- Wholemeal bagels
- Wholemeal pitta or wraps
- Oats or cereal products

Protein

- Meat
- Fish
- Eggs
- Beans
- Pulses
- Non-dairy protein



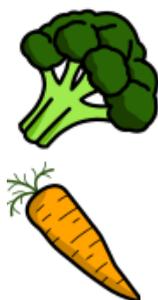
Dairy

- Milk
- Yoghurt
- Cheese
- Soft Cheese
- Soya Products



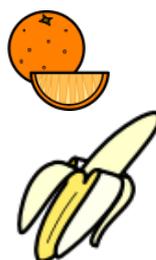
Vegetables

- Grated carrots
- Tomatoes
- Cucumber
- Spinach
- Peppers
- Avocado



Fruits

- Bananas
- Melon
- Apples
- Satsumas
- Strawberries
- Pineapple



Avoid:

- Salty snacks e.g. crisps, salted nuts, fruit or veg with added sugar or salt.
- Confectionery e.g. sweets, chocolate bars, chocolate-coated products, biscuits.
- Any drink that is not water.

A balanced packed lunch

Assembling a packed lunch that meets school food standards can be challenging, especially considering individual dietary and sensory restrictions. It's important to remember that many foods can be adapted to meet these standards without sacrificing taste or enjoyment. We encourage families to explore a variety of options and involve children and young people in the process, making healthy eating an empowering and enjoyable experience both at home and in school.

One portion of starchy food (ideally wholegrain) & one source of protein



lentil and sweet potato curry



chicken wrap



tuna pasta salad



egg fried rice



bean chilli



hummus sandwich



chicken and vegetable noodles

One portion of vegetable & one portion of fruit



apple



banana



orange



pear



strawberries



sugar snap peas



pepper



fruit/veg puree



cucumber



carrot

One snack



rice cakes



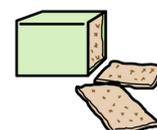
oatcakes



breadsticks



cheese cubes



crackers



yoghurt



dried fruit



malt loaf

Balanced packed lunch examples



hummus sandwich

+

and



pepper

+

and



raisins

+

and



oatcakes



bean chilli

+

and



pitta

+

and



carrot

+

and



banana



chicken wrap

+

and



cucumber

+

and



dried fruit

+

and



yoghurt



tuna pasta salad

+

and



sugar snap peas

+

and



strawberries

+

and



rice cakes

+

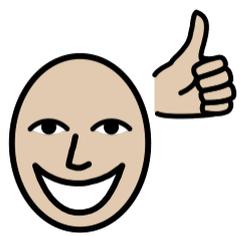
and



water

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Packed lunch tips

Keep different types of wholegrain bread products in the freezer so you have a variety of options that will last longer – bagels, pittas, a sliced loaf, wraps.

Use leftover veg or roast meat from the day before to make cold pasta salads or sandwiches.

Buy tinned fruit in juice (not syrup) and frozen or tinned vegetables - they are just as nutritious and cheaper to buy!

Involve your child with making their own lunch - cutting the fruit and veg or adding salad to their wrap (do it the day before and squeeze some lemon on the fruit to keep it fresh).

Dipping foods are fun and a happy change from a sandwich every day. Provide a low-fat dip such as hummus or tzatziki so they can dunk their carrots or peppers.

Taste the rainbow - try a variety of different fruits and vegetables for a visually fun packed lunch.

Lunch box tips

- Use containers that are easy for your child to open independently
- Consider using small containers to separate items, which can help with portion control, organisation and avoids foods touching each other
- Finger foods can be easier for some children to manage and can make lunchtime fun. Consider things like wraps, pinwheels, or cut-up fruits and vegetables
- Include a small item from home (like a note or a familiar toy) to provide comfort and a sense of connection during lunch
- Encourage your child to share what they liked or didn't like about their lunch and adjust accordingly
- Communicate with teachers/TAs about any other specific needs during lunch