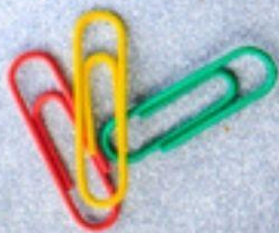




HEALTHY LUNCHBOX GUIDE



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ABOUT HEALTHY LUNCHBOX WEEK



Healthy Lunchbox Week is an initiative of [Nutrition Australia](#) that aims to inspire parents and carers across Australia to create healthy lunchboxes their children will enjoy.

Children consume around 30% of their daily food intake at school, with most of this coming from their lunchbox. What children eat during their day at school plays a crucial role in their learning, development and overall health and wellbeing.




The [Healthy Lunchbox Week website](#) is a hub of useful information to help families create lunches for their children that are nourishing, simple and safe. On the website you will find:

- recipes
- lunchbox inspiration
- fact sheets
- videos and plenty more!

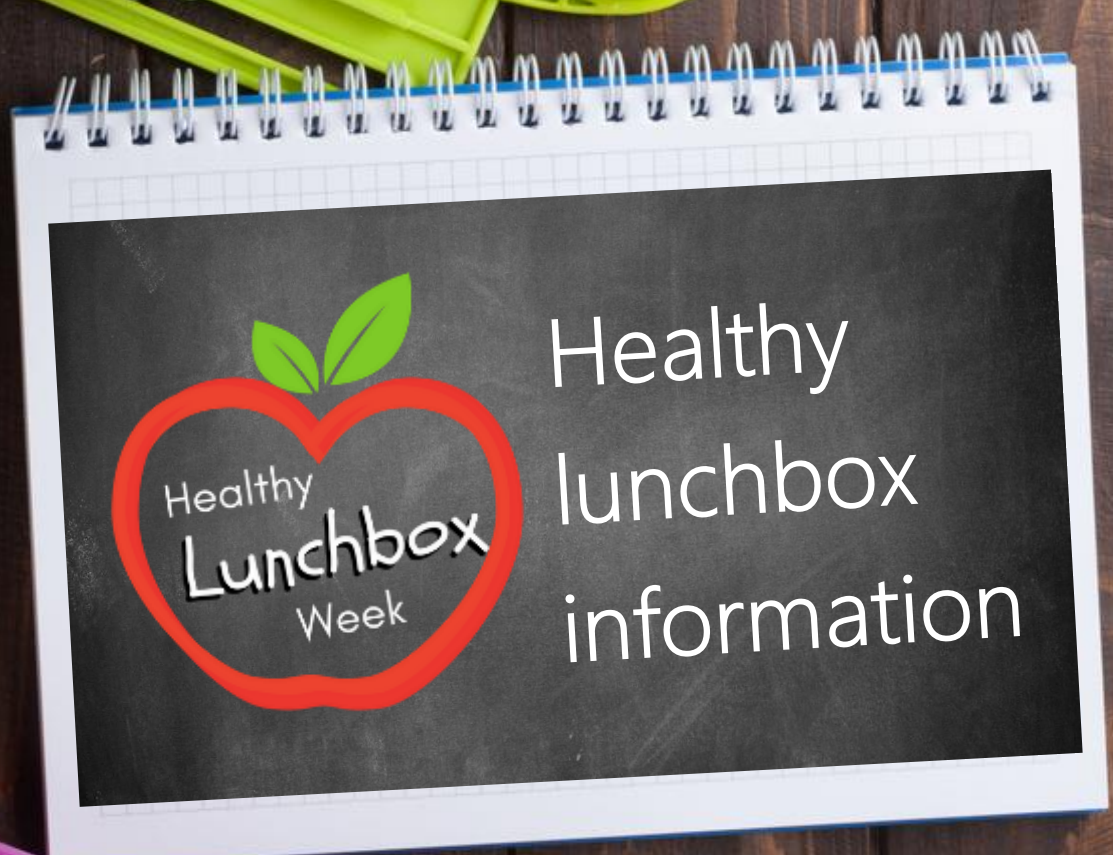
www.healthylunchboxweek.org.au

 Facebook: [@NutritionAustralia](#)

 Twitter: [@NutritionAust](#)

 Instagram: [@NutritionAustralia](#)





FUEL THEIR DAY

A nourishing diet is essential to a child's physical health, mental wellbeing, growth and development. Children eat around a third of their daily intake at school, which means the lunchbox is very important for overall health.

Fuel their body

Filling their lunchbox with nourishing foods can help give children the energy and nutrients they need to **GO**, **GROW** and **GLOW** throughout the day.



GO

These foods contain carbohydrates that kids use for energy to run, jump, think and play. **GO** foods include grainy breads and wraps, pasta, rice, oats or quinoa to fuel body movement and brain power.

GROW

Grow foods contain important nutrients for building strong muscles, bones and teeth. Include some **GROW** foods such as lean meats, eggs, legumes, dairy (milk, yoghurt, cheese) and calcium-containing dairy alternatives to help their bodies

GLOW

These foods are important for glowing skin and hair, eye health and a strong immune system. **GLOW** foods are vitamin rich fruits and vegetables. Include different coloured fruits and vegetables to increase the variety of nutrients.

Fuel their curious minds

Children need the right food to allow them to concentrate, learn and maintain good brain health and mental wellbeing.

Hydration

Dehydration can make it hard to concentrate and think clearly. Pack some fluids, preferably water or milk into their lunchbox.

Limit highly processed foods

Highly processed foods often have excessive salt, sugar and/or fat content which can lead to poor health and displace healthier options.



BALANCE THE BOX

To balance the box, mix 'n' match a variety of foods from each of the five food groups.



Go foods

Glow foods

Grow foods

1 Grain foods

- Wholemeal, multigrain and high fibre white breads and rolls
- Wraps and pita pockets
- Focaccias and Turkish bread
- Fruit bread
- English muffin
- Pasta, noodles and rice
- Quinoa and cous cous
- Crispbreads and corn cakes
- Wholegrain crackers
- Crumpets
- Bagels

2 Vegetables

- Cherry tomatoes
- Celery, capsicum, cucumber or carrot sticks
- Corn cob and baby corn spears
- Air popped popcorn
- Green beans, snow peas and sugar snap peas
- Mixed lettuce
- Leftover cooked vegetables
- Lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans

Try serving crunchy vegies with hummus, tzatziki or salsa

3 Fruit

- Fresh fruit
- Frozen fruit
- Tub of diced fruit (in natural juice)
- Fruit puree
- Sultanas, apricots or other dried fruits
- Fruit salad

4 Milk, yoghurt and cheese

- Tub of yoghurt
- Cheese stick, slices or cubes
- Custard
- Tetra pack of milk, flavoured or plain
- Calcium fortified soy or other plant-based milks

5 Meat and alternatives

- Lean chicken, beef, lamb, pork or turkey
- Hardboiled egg
- Canned tuna or salmon in spring water
- Lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans
- Baked beans
- Falafel balls
- Tofu cubes

SMART SWAPS

Try out these healthier swaps to boost lunchbox nutrition.



SWAP OUT
White bread, rolls, wraps, crackers and crispbreads



SWAP IN
Wholegrain or high-fibre options



SWAP OUT
Butter on bread, rolls and wraps



SWAP IN
Avocado, hommus or plant-based dips and spreads



SWAP OUT
Cordial, juice poppers or sugary drinks



SWAP IN
Water or plain milk or milk alternative



SWAP OUT
Potato chips



SWAP IN
Veggie sticks with hommus



SWAP OUT
Sweet and savoury biscuits



SWAP IN
Plain popcorn or [basic pikelets](#)



SWAP OUT
Iced cakes, muffins and buns



SWAP IN
Fruit loaf or [muesli slice](#)



KEEP IT SAFE

However you like to pack your child's lunch, be sure to keep it safe.

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

If food is not stored properly bacteria in the food can grow and make your children sick. Lunches kept in children's school bags all day, are likely to get warm, and foods such as meat or cheese sandwiches, milk and yoghurt need to be kept cool.



Follow these tips to keep lunchbox food safe!

Keep it clean

- Wash your hands before and after preparing food.
- Keep benches and chopping boards clean and dry.
- Wash lunchbox and utensils before use.



Keep it cool

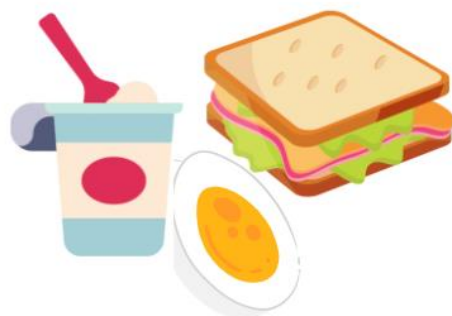


- Use an insulated lunchbox.
- Pack a frozen water bottle, ice brick or yoghurt pouch to keep everything cool.
- Refrigerate the lunchbox where possible.
- Keep the lunchbox out of the sun.

High risk foods

Be extra cautious with the following foods as they are more likely to spoil

- meat
- poultry
- soft cheese
- eggs
- dairy products
- seafood
- cooked pasta or rice



INVOLVE THE KIDS

Kids are more likely to enjoy their lunchbox food if they are involved in putting it together. Try these ways to get them involved.



In the kitchen

- Select easy lunchbox recipes to cook up on weekends together.
- Share simple tasks such as cracking eggs, stirring and measuring ingredients.
- Help kids build their own lunchbox by keeping a selection of healthy grab and go items.
- Encourage kids to fill their drink bottles with water.

Set healthy lunchbox rules that include choosing a food from each food group.

At the shops

- Allow kids to choose their own fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid the junk food aisles and set limits on highly processed foods.
- Ask kids to help look for products with the most stars.



In the garden

- Set up a vegetable patch or pot with some easy to grow vegetables and fruit.
- Let children plant and pick their own vegetables, for snacks.
- Set garden tasks such as weeding and watering.



Easy grow ideas are cherry tomatoes, snow peas, baby cucumbers, and strawberries



BECOME A WASTE WARRIOR

Did you know that more than half of items in school bins come from food packaging brought from home?

- ✓ Choose foods that create less waste and minimise use of single use plastics.
- ✓ Eliminate the need for portion packing and wrapping by using rubbish free lunchboxes.



SWAP

- Swap out the cling wrap and zip lock bags for reusable containers.
- Use durable drink bottles and phase out disposable poppers and drink bottles.
- Use a sandwich box to keep sandwiches fresh and in tact.

REDUCE

- Use reusable bags when shopping.
- Try reusable food wraps such as beeswax wraps or reusable durable zip lock bags.



MINIMISE

- Only buy what you need.
- Choose foods that create less waste to minimise use of single use plastics.
- Avoid overloading the lunchbox with food that won't be eaten.

Choose fruit and vegetables
with their own natural packaging



READING FOOD LABELS

As much as we love home cooked and fresh produce, packaged food will always play a role in many lunchboxes. Get to know what to look for to help find the healthiest choice.

Most packaged foods have an ingredient list and Nutrition Information Panel (NIP). Know what to look for to choose the healthier product.

Ingredients list

Ingredients are listed in order of most weight to least. If a source of sugar, salt or saturated fat is listed in the first three ingredients, it may not be the healthiest choice.

HOT TIPS

- Sugar may be listed as syrups, sucrose, maltose, glucose, fructose, honey.
- Salt may be listed as sodium, sea salt, sodium bicarbonate, rock salt.
- Saturated fat may be listed as palm oil, coconut oil, tallow, butter, cream, copha, lard.

Nutrition information panel (NIP)

When reading the NIP always compare similar products, for example compare one brand of yogurt with another brand of yogurt.

Nutrition Information		
Servings per package: 1		
Serving size: 30g		
	Per Serve	Per 100g
Energy	432kJ	1441kJ
Protein	2.8g	9.3g
Fat	0.4g	1.2g
-saturated	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrate	18.9g	62.9g
-sugars	3.5g	11.8g
Fibre	6.4g	21.2g
Sodium	65mg	215mg

Energy:
For packaged snacks look for less than 600kJ per serve

Saturated Fat:
Aim for the lowest per 100g, less than 3g is best

Sugar:
Aim for less than 15g per 100g

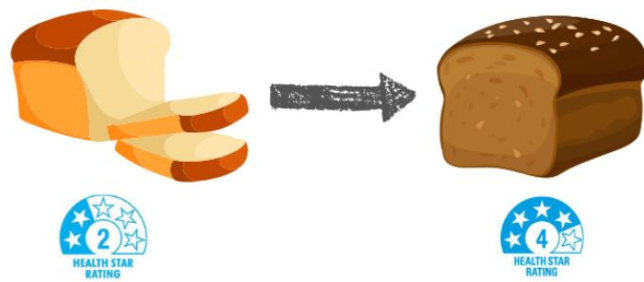
Fibre:
Not all labels include fibre. For breads, cereals & crackers look for more than 5g more per 100g

Sodium:
Foods with less than 400mg per 100g are good, but less than 120mg are best



















Health star rating

Health Star Ratings are a quick and easy way to compare products. The more stars the healthier the choice.

Remember to always compare products within the same category.



Recommended minimum health star rating of common pre-packaged snacks

Breakfast Cereal  	Sweet snack foods  	Savoury snack foods  
Dips eg. Hummus  	Processed meats  	Muesli Bar  
Fruit and vegetable juices  	Dairy snacks  	Liquid breakfast drinks  

Not all packaged foods have a Health Star Rating. For an easy way to compare products, use the FoodSwitch Australia app developed by the George Institute for Global Health. Visit www.foodswitch.com.au to learn more.



LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION?

Cancer Council

Build your own virtual lunch box using the Cancer Council's interactive lunchbox builder or check out their healthy lunchbox swaps for some healthier alternatives.

www.healthylunchbox.com.au



Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council

For some more recipes and great sandwich ideas

www.glnc.org.au



Healthy Lunchbox Week

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MINI WRAPS

Makes 8 portions

Ingredients

- 2 pieces of flat bread
- 2 tablespoons reduced fat cream cheese
- 1 cucumber
- 1 small carrot
- 1 spring onion
- 4 cos lettuce leaves
- ¼ red capsicum



Method

1. Grate carrots and finely chop remaining salad vegetables. Transfer all vegetables into a large bowl and mix together.
2. Add the cream cheese to the chopped vegetables and mix until well combined.
3. Place flat bread on a chopping board and spoon vegetable mixture evenly over the bread.
4. Carefully roll the bread and cut into 4 equal portions.

Optional

Jazz up your mini wrap by mixing the cream cheese with a teaspoon of sweet chilli sauce, corn relish or mustard.

Other protein options could include egg, tuna or hummus.

CORN FRITTERS

Makes 10

Ingredients

- 2 spring onions
- 100g reduced fat fetta
- 2 x 400g can of corn, no added salt
- 2 eggs
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup reduced fat milk
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- Olive oil spray



Method

1. Finely slice spring onions. Crumble fetta. Drain and rinse corn.
2. Add flour to a mixing bowl and make a well in the centre.
3. In a separate mixing bowl, whisk together eggs and milk. Slowly add to the flour, stirring constantly. Fold through corn, spring onions and fetta. Be careful to not over mix the mixture.
4. Lightly spray a frypan with olive oil. In batches of four, drop heaped tablespoons of the mixture into the pan. Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side, or until golden brown.

SANDWICH SUSHI

Makes 6 small pieces

Ingredients

- 2 slices wholemeal bread, crusts removed
- 2 tablespoons vegetable-based dip (e.g. hummus, beetroot, pumpkin)
- 1 small tin sandwich tuna
- ½ Lebanese cucumber cut into strips
- ¼ avocado cut into strips



Method

1. Flatten bread with a rolling pin.
2. Spread dip over each slice of bread.
3. Arrange tuna on bread leaving a 2cm strip on one edge that is free of filling.
4. Top with an avocado and cucumber strip at the opposite end to the 2cm strip.
5. Roll up firmly to enclose filling.
6. Cut each sandwich into 3 rounds.

Optional

Replace strips of avocado and cucumber with strips of cheese, capsicum or carrot. For more protein options replace tuna with shredded chicken, egg or strips of roast beef.

PICK ' N ' MIX TRAIL MIX

Pick from the following ingredients to make your own personalised trail mix.

Ingredients

- Sultanas
- Air popped or plain popcorn
- Diced dried apricot
- Cereal bites or bran cereal (try to choose cereals with a health star rating over 4 stars)
- Pepitas (pumpkin seeds)
- Sunflower seeds
- Pretzels



Place in a small container or paper bag.



APRICOT BITES

Makes 30

Can be stored in the fridge for up to 5 days

Ingredients

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 2 cups dried apricot
- 2 cups rice puff cereal
- ¼ cup honey
- 2 tablespoons monounsaturated margarine
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Desiccated coconut for coating



Method

1. Place all ingredients into a food processor, blend until well combined.
2. Using clean wet hands roll teaspoons of the mixture into ball shapes.
3. Toss in desiccated coconut.

BANANA BREAD

Makes 12 slices

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- 4 soft bananas, mashed
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour
- ½ cup reduced fat milk
- 1 tsp bicarbonate soda



Method

5. Preheat oven to 180°C and line a loaf tin with baking paper.
6. Combine oil, sugar, and mashed bananas in a large bowl.
7. Add flours and mix well until combined.
8. In a cup dissolve bicarbonate of soda into milk. Add to mixture, mix until combined.
9. Pour into a loaf tin and bake for 50 minutes or until golden brown.

Optional

Add some berries or dried fruit for extra flavour and fibre or make banana muffins by pouring mixture into a lined muffin tray and bake for 25 minutes.

CHOC BALLS

Makes 24

Can be stored in the fridge for up to 5 days

Ingredients

- 2 cups pitted dates
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 2 cups rice puff cereal
- 1/3 cup cocoa
- 1/4 cup honey
- 2 tablespoons monounsaturated margarine
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup desiccated coconut - for rolling
- Water - as needed



Method

1. Roughly chop dates and add to food processor. Pulse dates until they are finely chopped. Add a sprinkle of warm water to soften dates if needed.
2. Place remaining ingredients into the food processor, blend until well combined.
3. Pour coconut into a shallow bowl. Using clean wet hands roll teaspoons of the mixture into ball shapes.
4. Toss in desiccated coconut and serve in a mini patty case.

SAVOURY SCROLLS

Makes 15

Ingredients

- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour
- 3 teaspoons poly or monounsaturated margarine
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 tablespoons chopped basil
- 1 spring onion finely chopped
- 50g lean ham chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup canned crushed pineapple (drained)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup grated mozzarella cheese



Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. In a mixing bowl, rub margarine into the flour with your fingers until it resembles fine breadcrumbs.
3. Add the milk and mix until it forms a soft dough.
4. Place dough on a floured surface and roll out in a rectangle 1-2 cm thick.
5. Spread tomato paste evenly over the dough and sprinkle the remaining ingredients evenly on top.
6. Roll the dough lengthways until it resembles a log.
7. Cut the log into 2 cm rounds and place on a lined baking tray. Sprinkle with a little more cheese.
8. Place scrolls on a lined baking tray and bake for 12 -15 minutes until lightly browned.

RICE PAPER ROLLS

Makes 10

Ingredients

- 50g rice vermicelli noodles
- 2 carrots
- 1 red capsicum
- 2 cucumbers
- 100g bean shoots
- 10 rice paper sheets



Method

1. Soak noodles in hot water until they are soft and transparent. Drain and set aside.
2. Peel and grate carrots.
3. Wash and finely slice capsicum and cucumber.
4. Thoroughly wash bean shoots and drain.
5. Soften rice paper sheets with water and keep moist by covering the stack with a damp towel.
6. Lay out a rice paper wrapper flat on a plate or chopping board, add noodles and vegetables as desired.
7. Fold the bottom of the rice paper roll up to cover the filling, then fold in each side and roll.

Optional

Add some tuna, shredded chicken breast or prawns to make these yummy rolls into a more filling meal. Serve with a dollop of sweet chilli sauce.

MUESLI SLICE

Makes 24

Ingredients

- 2 cups rolled oats
- 1 cup wholemeal flour
- ½ cup desiccated coconut
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ¾ cup sultanas or other mixed dried fruit
- ½ cup canola oil
- ½ cup honey
- 2 mashed bananas



Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C. Line a slice tray with non-stick baking paper.
2. In a mixing bowl, add the dry ingredients and mix through.
3. Add the remaining ingredients and mix with a wooden spoon until fully combined.
4. Place mixture into a lined slice tray and press down firmly.
5. Cook for 30 minutes until golden.
6. Allow to cool before cutting into squares.



www.healthy-lunchbox-week.org.au

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