

Pack a healthy lunch box



Not sure what to pack for lunch to get your child through their school day? Follow these tips to ensure a balanced, healthy, and tasty lunchbox that will energise your child so that they will be able to perform at their best.

Ensuring that your child gets all the nutrients they need during their school day can be a headache for most parents.

Not only does their lunch need to be healthy, they also need to enjoy it, so that they won't be tempted to buy sweets and crisps at the tuckshop.

Although a peanut butter sandwich may seem like the easiest option, you can also jazz up their lunchbox with toasted sandwiches, smoothies, and fresh fruit.

Five tips for a healthy lunch box

1. Keep it balanced.

Although this is not a main meal, you still want to include all the basic food groups (protein, carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables, and fat). This will ensure that the body and brain is supplied with the adequate nutrients to function properly.

2. Choose the right sources of carbohydrates.

To prevent falling asleep in class, the brain must be continuously supplied with a steady source of glucose. Low GI, high fibre food sources, like wholewheat bread, will make sure that the sugar from the food is slowly released into the blood stream over a longer period of time. This will also prevent your child from being hungry all the time.

3. Fruit and vegetables.

Fresh fruit is easy to pack, low in fat, high in fibre, and excellent brain food (high in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants). Small packs of dried fruit (not sugar-coated fruit sticks) are also convenient and easy to eat during the day. Carrot sticks or cherry tomatoes will also survive a day at school.

4. A bottle of water.

Keep your child hydrated the healthy way. This will force them into the habit of drinking water when they are thirsty and to avoid high sugar soft drinks.

5. Keep it practical.

Always keep in mind that the food you pack will be thrown into a back pack, left in the sun, and most likely be dropped down two flights of stairs by the time it has to be eaten. Leftover stew that can spill all over the place will definitely not be appreciated. Remember to add a spoon if it is yoghurt day.

The amount of food you pack will be determined by the activity level and age of your child. The more they do and the older they are, the more food they will need to sustain their energy levels during the day.

Speak to a dietitian or consult your Employee Wellness Programme for further advice.