



*Spending the day learning and playing requires the right sort of fuel. Good nutrition can lead to better concentration, improved classroom learning as well as healthy growth and development. Lunchboxes can be a tricky area. But it's important to load up your child's lunchbox with tasty food that is both healthy and appealing.*



## WHERE TO START

**Involve your child in the decision making.** Together plan the 'top ten sandwich fillings' and place this on the fridge. Not only does this make for easier grocery shopping but also for hassle free lunchbox preparation.

**Set a good example.** If appropriate prepare your healthy lunch at the same time and stock the shelves with foods that make for healthy hearty lunches.



**Lunch is an important part of your child's daily diet.** Choose at least one item from each of the four main food groups; **Breads and Cereals, Fruit and Vegetables, Dairy Products,** and **Meat and Alternatives.**

## TOP TIPS

- Large pieces of **fruit or vegetables** can often be overwhelming for small children. Cut fruit and vege into smaller sized pieces that are easier to eat or choose smaller fruits such as plums or grapes.
- Vary the shape of your child's **sandwiches**. Cut them into triangles or use a biscuit cutter to make different shapes.
- Don't forget a spoon for **yoghurts** or kiwifruit.
- **Leftovers** can be a good option. Fill bread rolls with cold meat, add diced vegetables and cheese to leftover pasta for pasta salad, mix left over kumara, taro and potato with natural yoghurt and sauce.
- Prepare foods such as **cheese toasties** and **fruit muffins** in advance and store in the freezer.
- Store a range of **bread products** in the freezer such as; wholemeal, grainy and fruit bread, pita, rewena, rolls, buns, tortillas/wraps, muffin splits, foccacia. This reduces lunch box boredom and limits spoilage. The bread will have defrosted by morning tea.
- Experiment with your home baking. Reduce the amount of sugar and butter/oil used. Try substituting it with fruit, fruit juice or natural unsweetened yoghurt
- If your child is not a sandwich eater try; leftovers, sushi, noodles, tuna salad, corn thins with peanut butter\*, hummus or cheese and marmite/vegemite.

\*Parents of children with nut allergies should select an alternative choice from the list.



## IDEAS FOR THE LUNCH BOX

Below are a **few** ideas to help you load your child's lunch up with healthy tasty foods. **The possibilities are endless!**

### Breads and Cereals

- Fill bread products with a variety of tasty fillings such as;
  - Lettuce, ham & cheese
  - Tomato & cottage cheese
  - Marmite/vegemite, lettuce & cheese
  - Peanut butter\*
  - Chicken, celery & mayonnaise
  - Mashed egg & salad
  - Tuna & shredded cabbage
  - Ham & mustard
  - Spaghetti and cheese
- Muffins, plain sweet biscuits, crackers, scones, fruit bread
- Leftover rice or pasta dishes
- Couscous or pasta salad
- Sushi, rice wafers or corn thins

*Muesli bars can be high in sugar and fat. Rather than putting them in the lunchbox everyday, have them as a mystery treat and just add them occasionally.*

### Fruit and Vegetables

- Small bananas
- Apples, oranges, pears
- Easy to peel mandarins
- Grapes, strawberries, kiwifruit
- Nectarines, peaches, apricots
- Fruit salad or canned fruit (in juice)
- Vegetable or fruit kebabs
- Baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, peas in the pod
- Vegetables sticks and dip
- Salad fillings in sandwiches, rolls etc
- Leftover cold cooked vegetables e.g. potato, kumara, taro
- Vegetable soup in a flask in the winter

### Drinks

Water is the best drink for your child. Freezing a small drink bottle over night and placing it in the lunch box will help to keep the food cold during the summer months.

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### Dairy Products

- Cheese slices (or wedges) with crackers and vegetable sticks
- Yoghurt
- Small cartons of flavoured milk or smoothies
- Cheese toasties or muffins,
- Cheese or cottage cheese as a filling for sandwiches etc

*Include dairy foods 2 to 3 times a week as they can be high in fat and sugar*

### Meat Products and Alternatives

- Lean meats for sandwich fillings
- Baked bean toasties
- Left over cold meat in sandwiches
- Peanut butter\*
- Canned tuna or salmon in sandwiches
- Boiled eggs
- Chicken drumsticks
- Lentils and beans in vegetable soup

*Try making 'rainbow soup' (vegetable soup) with your child(ren) for them to take to school – they are often keen to eat food they've made!*

### Snacks

There are plenty of good snack foods available. Try some of the ideas below:

- Pretzels
- Plain popcorn
- Rice crackers with tomato salsa or hummus
- Pikelets, iced buns, crumpets
- Small servings of custard or rice pudding
- Natural yoghurt with mashed fruit stirred through it

*Limit the amount of biscuits, crisps, pastry and cakes offered in the lunch box to **once a week if at all.***

