

School Lunches

According to a Food Standard's Agency study, nine out of 10 packed lunches contain foods high in sugar, salt and saturates and fewer than half contain fruit. Here's how to pack a nutritious lunch for your kids...

- Use wholegrain or wholemeal bread, rolls and pitta and try wholemeal tortillas, mini baguettes, bagels and raisin or sun dried tomato bread for variety
- Pack pasta or rice salads instead of sandwiches from time to time
- Cut fat by using less butter, spread or mayo in sandwiches and choose low-fat fillings like, turkey, chicken, tuna in water, cottage cheese, Edam or banana and no sugar peanut butter (Whole Earth is a good brand) and hummus
- Add two portions of fruit – don't just stick to apples and pears, though. For variety, add grapes, fruit salad, a slice of melon, a small box of raisins or dried apricots
- Include cherry tomatoes, carrot and pepper sticks and add salad to sarnies
- In the winter, fill a flask with vegetable, tomato or carrot soup – or even a casserole or stew.
- Replace cakes, biscuits and chocolate with scones, fruit bread or low-sugar cereal bars (check the labels)
- Swap fizzy drinks for water, unsweetened fruit juice, fruit smoothies, cartons of semi-skimmed milk or unsweetened yogurt drinks.

Healthy Snacks for Children and Teenagers

- Fresh fruit – chop it into bite-sized pieces for young children to make it easier to eat or buy packs of ready-prepared fresh fruit slices or chunks and serve with some organic hard cheese
- Mini boxes of dried fruit such as raisins or small packs of apricots or mixed fruit, again serve with organic cheese

- Bowl of soup with parmesan cheese and flaxseeds on the top
- Chopped up vegetables such as carrot, celery, pepper sticks and cherry tomatoes with a dip (look for those low in salt and fat if you're buying ready-made dips) and peanut butter
- Fresh popcorn made without salt or sugar
- Wholemeal toast with peanut butter and banana or low-fat soft cheese and tomato
- Fruit smoothie
- Unsweetened yogurt drinks or a pot of low-fat fruit yogurt or fromage frais
- High-fibre cereal with semi-skimmed milk
- Wholemeal sandwiches filled with lean meat, chicken, tuna in water, cheese or egg and salad.
- Small packets of unsalted nuts and seeds – try mixing with dried fruit.