

# Why School Meals?

In Northamptonshire, Nourish provides school meals directly in line with the School Food Standards. School meals are a convenient and cost effective way to ensure your child is getting the nutrition they need at school.

Following the introduction of the Universal Infant Free School Meals, early evidence undertaken by the Department for Education suggest positive outcomes including: pupils eating habits, a willingness to try different foods and to eat a wider variety of foods. To find out more about school dinners in Northamptonshire please go to:

[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/nourish](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/nourish)

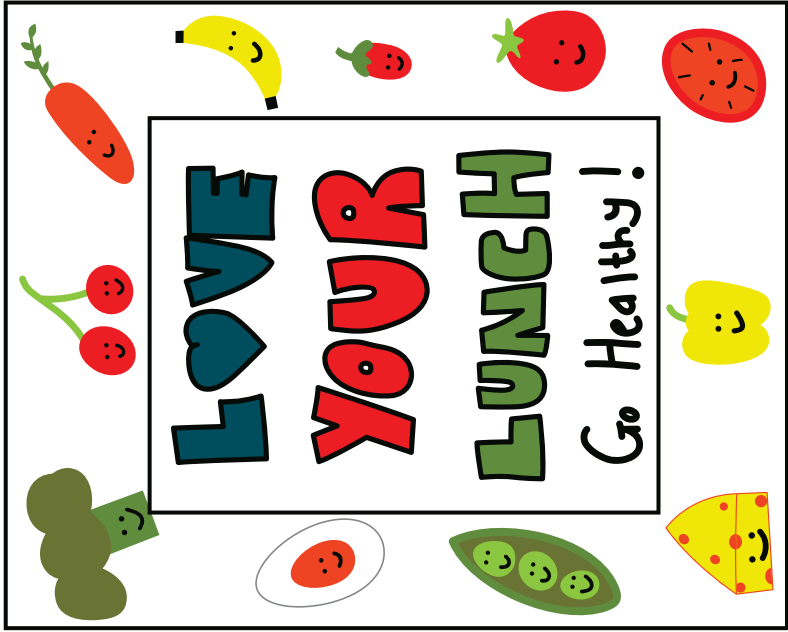


# Healthy Lunchbox Tips

## Some practical tips for a Healthy Lunchbox

- Try to vary the contents of the lunchbox daily, that way you can ensure your child is getting all of the nutrients they need to help their bodies function and grow.
- Leftovers are **GREAT!** For example, pack your child last night's rice and curry, stew, chilli con carne, homemade pizza or pasta and sauce!
- Involve your child whilst preparing their lunchbox. They're more likely to enjoy what they've made themselves.
- Always wash your hands before handling food and wash all containers before adding food to them.
- To keep food fresh make sure it is stored correctly; lunches prepared the night before should be stored in the fridge. If you are using rice make sure it is cooled quickly and stored in the fridge overnight.
- To keep lunch fresh during the day use a thermally protected lunch box, a cool bag and/or put in a frozen drink, reusable ice pack, frozen grapes, or even a frozen sponge!
- If your child doesn't like wholemeal or seeded bread, try using other varieties of bread, mixing wholemeal and white or use different substitutes such as pittas or crackers.
- Make a salad using leftovers from the night before using rice, pasta, or potatoes mixed with vegetables, beans and so on.
- Ensure you read the labels - usually if a food product has the word 'healthy' on it, it's a marketing ploy! Most products have nutritional information on the label. Some products also have colour coding on the front, which tells you at a glance if the food has high (red), medium (amber) or low (green) amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt - the more green(s) on the label, the healthier the choice.
- Know your sugar: The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) recommends that free sugars account for no more than 5% of our daily energy intake. This is:
  - » 19g or 5 sugar cubes for children aged 4 to 6,
  - » 24g or 6 sugar cubes for children aged 7 to 10,
  - » 30g or 7 sugar cubes for 11 years and over.

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# More Guidance on Children's Nutrition

The following are trusted sources of guidance about preparing and providing a nutritionally balanced diet for your child.

[www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)

[www.nhs.uk/livewell](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell)

[www.nutrition.org.uk](http://www.nutrition.org.uk)

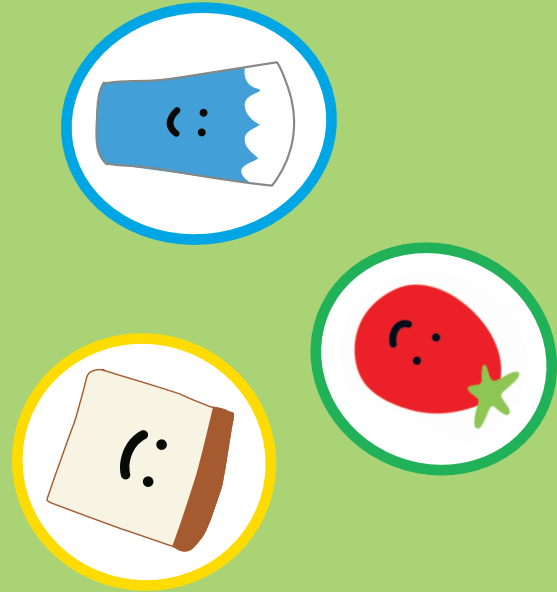
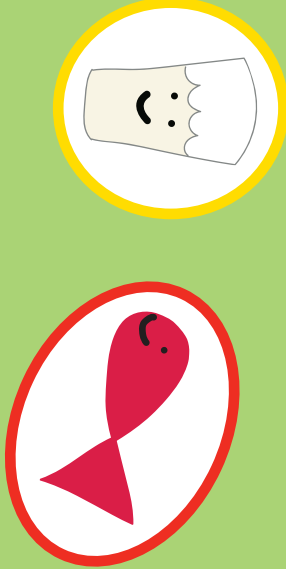
[www.schoolfoodplan.com](http://www.schoolfoodplan.com)

[www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk](http://www.childrensfoodtrust.org.uk)

[www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/nourish](http://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/nourish)

For more information please contact:

[HealthyChild@northamptonshire.gov.uk](mailto:HealthyChild@northamptonshire.gov.uk)



*If you are printing this leaflet yourself, please make sure your printer settings are set to double-sided and short edge bind on A3.  
Please fold along the black dotted lines to create the leaflet.*

Thank you

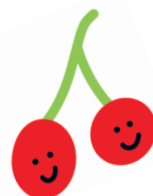
# Healthier Packed Lunches for Children:

## A Guide

Making a nutritionally balanced packed lunch can be difficult. According to the Children's Food Trust, only 1 in 100 packed lunches in the UK meets children's nutritional needs; to tackle this, health professionals in Northamptonshire have created this useful guide following government guidance to help you pack the most into your child's lunch.

# Pack a healthy lunch

Choose a selection of items from different sections to build a healthy packed lunch. Where appropriate, portion sizes are provided as a guide using recommendations from the School Food Standards.



## Snacks and Confectionery

Snack foods may be included occasionally, but aim to make healthier choices. Snack foods tend to be high in fat, sugar and salt. Foods high in fat can cause excessive weight and may lead to heart disease. Higher salt can increase blood pressure and high sugar foods are high in calories and bad for teeth.

*\*Due to allergies, please do not include nuts in any part of your child's lunch\**

For a healthier snack try these:

- Vegetable batons e.g. carrots/celery/ cucumber
- Cherry tomatoes
- Crackers (10-15g/1-2 crackers)
- Bread sticks (10-15g)
- Sultanas/dried fruit (15-30g)
- Plain popcorn (10-20g)
- Oat cakes (10-15g/ 1-2 oat cakes)
- Rice cakes (10-15g/ 1-2 rice cakes)

We see the following as 'sometimes foods' or 'treats' and should be included no more than once per week (max portion size for all: 25-30g)

- Fruit loaf
- Cereal bars
- Flapjacks
- Fun sized/small chocolate bar
- Small cakes

## Starches

It is recommended that this food group makes up 50% of the total content of an individual's daily intake. Starchy foods provide us with energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Starchy foods consist of: breads, potato, rice, pasta and sweet potatoes.

Wholegrain varieties of breads and pastas are healthier and best for B-vitamins and fibre, which is vital for the digestive system.

Also, look out for higher-fibre white bread, half/half wholemeal and white mixers such as 50/50 mix of wholemeal and white bread, rice and pasta.

Examples of starchy foods are:

- A portion of bread including: wholemeal, granary, brown, wheatgerm, multi-grain, potato bread, naan, bagels, pitta, wraps, 50/50 mix, or wholegrain rolls (1 small unit/2 slices).
- Sweet potato (raw weight: 120-170g)
- Wholemeal spaghetti, noodles, pasta shapes (dried weight: 45-65g)
- Couscous and quinoa (dried weight: 40-60g)
- Rice (dried: 35-55g)
- Noodles (dried: 45-65g)

## Milk and Dairy Foods

A dairy food should be included every day; these foods contain calcium necessary for strong bones and teeth, as well as providing added protein and vitamins.

Such as:

- Yoghurts/fromage fraise (80-120g)
- Low sugar custard and rice pudding (80-100g)
- Semi skimmed-skimmed milk (150-200ml)
- Low fat cheese (20-30g)

## Drinks

It is important that children drink regularly throughout the day to stay properly hydrated. Fluids, especially water, help children feel their best. Water makes up more than half of children's body weight and is needed to keep all parts of the body functioning properly. Water benefits digestion and supports proper blood circulation.

Other healthy drinks such as milk, reduced sugar fruit juice, no added sugar fruit smoothies, sugar free squash can also be included.

Fizzy drinks should not be provided.

## Fruit and Vegetables

Include one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad every day. You can use fresh, frozen tinned or dried. Fruit and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre necessary for the body to function properly and to keep you strong and healthy.

Such as:

- One small sized apple, banana, pear, peach, orange, plum, apricot etc (50-100g)
- One portion of dried fruit/raisins (15-30g)
- One portion of fruit salad, fruit tinned in juice, and stewed fruit (raw/cooked 50-100g – 40g minimum of fruit)
- One portion of raw/cooked vegetables (40-60g)

## Meat, Fish and Alternatives

Meat, fish or another source of non-dairy protein should be included every day. Amino acids in protein are the 'building blocks' to our body, repairing tissues, helping children grow and regulating optimal bodily functions.

Examples of protein-containing foods are:

Lean meats, such as chicken, turkey or sliced beef (raw weight: 60-85g)

Pulses, beans, lentils, chickpeas (raw weight: 20-25g)

Low fat cheese, cottage cheese, mozzarella, cheddar or soft cheese (20-30g)

Meat alternatives such as soya, tofu and Quorn: (cooked: 50-70g)

Vegetarian sausages or burgers (raw/cooked: 50-70g)

Eggs, such as boiled or omelette

Dishes containing pulses, beans or meat, such as stew, chilli con carne or a bean salad.

### Savoury meat products, snacks and pastries

Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages/chipolatas should be included only occasionally.

### Fish

An oily fish should be included at least once every three weeks.

Such as:

Tinned (in spring water) or frozen salmon, sardines, mackerel, herring and fresh or frozen tuna.

(All as raw weight: 55-80g)

(NB. Tuna is only an oily fish when fresh as the Omega-3 fatty acids are removed during the canning process)

