

Guidance on packed lunch

Children at school should have about a third of their daily nutrient requirements at lunchtime. This means they need foods that are going to provide them with enough energy, protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

A healthy packed lunch should contain a mix of foods.

A good packed lunch contains:

- A starchy food, such as bread, rolls, pitta bread, naan bread, potatoes, rice, noodles. These foods are good for children to fill up on.
- A good source of protein, iron and zinc such as meat, fish, beans, nuts or eggs.
- A good source of calcium such as milk, cheese, yoghurt or fromage frais.
- And one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad to provide all the other vitamins and minerals. A piece of fruit could be a 100% juice or piece of fresh fruit, dried fruit or tinned fruit in fruit juice. A piece of vegetable could be a fresh vegetable such as carrot stick, salad or a vegetable soup or vegetable dish.

No single food contains all the essential nutrients the body needs to be healthy and function efficiently, so it is important that the content of the packed lunch is varied.

What about snacks such as crisps, cakes, pastries and sweets? Can you give these?

They should only be given occasionally. Children will then appreciate them more. If these foods are included in packed lunches they might eat these first and not have the appetite to eat the other foods that will provide them with the important nutrients they need to grow and develop, be healthy and active.

Sweets should NOT be given at all as we are not allowed any sweets in school. Crisps should only be given on a Friday as that is when we have chips in school. However, crisps have a lot of salt so every week is not a good idea.