



Bòrd SSN nan Eilean Siar
NHS Western Isles

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Packed lunch ideas for children aged 1-5 years



A guide to healthy lunches for young children

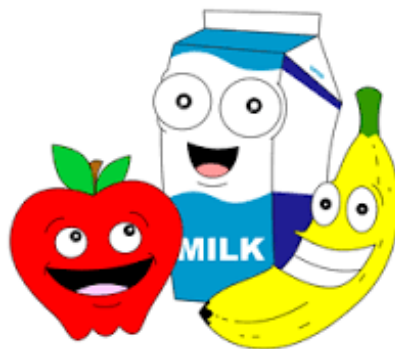
Introduction

Making a packed lunch may be something that you do every day. Including new combinations can help to keep your child interested and encouraging them to try new tastes.

This leaflet will give you some guidance based on “Setting the Table” which is used in nurseries and childcare settings to ensure a healthy diet is provided for pre-school children. You will also find some packed lunch ideas, guidance on portion size and a checklist for you to use when planning lunches.

A healthy diet for children under the age of 5 is slightly different than for adults and children aged over 5, as this is a time of rapid growth.

The foods you provide your child when they are young and the habits they form can have a lifelong impact on their health so it is important to promote healthy choices and attitudes towards food from an early age. This will pave the way for good health and help children develop patterns of healthy eating for life.



The 5 food groups




Healthy eating is based on 5 food groups:

- Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods
- Fruit and vegetables
- Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- Milk and dairy foods
- Foods high in fat and sugar.

Portion size

The table below will give you an idea of how much of each food group a child should be taking a day.


Remember that their tummies are small, so portions should also be small. Using their hand as a guide will help assess portion size for each individual child.





Food group	Portions	Examples	
		1 and 2 years	3 and 4 years
Bread, rice, potatoes and pasta	4 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice bread • 3 tbsp dry cereal • 1 small boiled potato • 3 tbsp cooked pasta • 2 tbsp cooked rice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice bread • 5 tbsp dry cereal • 2 small boiled potatoes • 4 tbsp cooked pasta • 3 tbsp cooked rice
Fruit and veg	5 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cooked sliced apple • 1 tbsp canned fruit (in juice) • 1 tbsp cooked vegetables • 5 quartered grapes • 4 cooked carrot sticks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ large sliced apple • 2 tbsp canned fruit (in juice) • 2 tbsp cooked vegetables • 8 halved grapes • 6 carrot sticks
Meat, fish, eggs and beans	2-3 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 small slice chicken • 2 tbsp fish in sauce • 1 egg • 1 tbsp beans/lentils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice chicken • 3 tbsp fish in sauce • 1 egg • 2 tbsp beans/lentils

Milk and dairy	3 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 small cup milk (100ml) • 1 tbsp unsweetened yogurt • 2 small sticks hard cheese • 3 tbsp custard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup milk (150ml) • 2 tbsp unsweetened yogurt • 2 sticks hard cheese • 4 tbsp custard
High fat and high sugar foods	0-2 a day 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 chips • 1 small piece of cake • 1 plain biscuit • 1 tbsp ice cream 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 chips • 1 medium piece of cake • 2 plain biscuit • 2 tbsp ice cream

Planning meals using food groups

The food groups can be used to plan meals and packed lunches. Here are some examples of how foods can be provided as part of a packed lunch. Foods high in fat and sugar are excluded from this table.

Food Group	Examples
Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods 	<p>Sandwiches are an easy choice for a packed lunch. To give a little variety try different breads such as wholemeal, granary, poppy seed, sesame seed, pitta bread, bagels, baps. Breadsticks and crackers can also be included in this group.</p> <p>Home made pasta and rice salads are ideal for packed lunches.</p> <p>Fruit scones, pancakes or fruit loaf can be offered as healthier alternatives to confectionery.</p>

<p>Fruit and vegetables</p> 	<p>Chopped raw vegetables such as carrots, cucumber, peppers or cherry tomatoes are ideal choices.</p> <p>A wide variety of fruit can be chosen. Include a pot of fruit salad as a change from whole fruit. Dried fruit such as raisins, sultanas, mango or apricots are ideal after a meal.</p> <p>Trying out new fruits and vegetables not normally eaten at home can help increase the variety of fruit and vegetables taken.</p>
<p>Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein</p> 	<p>For sandwich fillings include turkey, chicken, fish, ham, houmous and egg.</p> <p>Too much salad cream or mayonnaise should be avoided as they can be high in fat, salt and sometimes sugar.</p>
<p>Milk and dairy foods</p> 	<p>For a dessert, include milk-based puddings such as yogurt, fromage frais, a small pot of custard or mousse. Check that the sugar content is not too high and choose appropriate portion sizes. Natural yogurt is the best choice.</p> <p>A drink of milk or a small serving of cheese e.g. cheddar, edam or mozzarella, on a sandwich could also be included as part of this group.</p>
<p>Drinks</p> 	<p>Milk or water are ideal choices.</p> <p>If juice is given it should be pure, unsweetened fruit juice diluted with plain water, with no more than 150ml juice.</p>

Being more economical with food

Making lunches yourself will be healthier and cheaper than buying ready made processed packs aimed at children. Some of these products are high in fat, salt and sugar and are not healthy choices for young children. Keep processed meats to a minimum and offer no more than once a week.

Fruit can often be cheaper if it is bought in season. Buy small plastic pots to give plain yogurt and fruit, home made custard, or sugar free jelly - cheaper and healthier.

Wasted food costs money, try to avoid over-filling your child's lunchbox. Use the portion guides to help you decide how much to provide. Giving too much choice in a lunchbox can encourage fussy eaters to be even fussier at lunchtime.

Packed lunch ideas



The following packed lunch ideas have been provided by parents and nursery staff in the Western Isles, following the "Setting the Table" guidelines. Portion sizes will vary with the age and size of the child.

- Turkey sandwich, carrot sticks with a houmous dip, banana, pot of custard, water.
- Cheese and lettuce wrap, strawberry/grapes, small pot of yogurt, water.
- Pasta with chicken, cucumber, peppers and grated cheese, orange/kiwi, water.
- Oatcakes and cheese, sliced peppers, melon, small pot of rice pudding.
- Pasta salad with grated carrot, ham, cheese, pepper and cucumber, banana, rice cake, milk.

- Chicken salad wrap, apple, cheese cubes, water.
- Wholemeal egg and cress sandwich, fruit salad pot - melon, strawberries, pineapple and plain yogurt, water.
- Bagel with cream cheese, 1 hard boiled egg, 4 cherry tomatoes, 4 cucumber sticks, pear, milk.
- Bagel with cheese, carrot sticks, fruit salad pot (in fruit juice), small pot of fromage frais, water.
- Three crackers with edam cheese and ham, peppers, sweetcorn, tomatoes, an apple, water.
- Pasta salad with tuna, peppers and sweetcorn, strawberry/ grapes, water, pot custard, water.
- Cheese sandwich on wholemeal bread, cherry tomatoes, banana, rice cake, water.
- Homemade vegetable soup, a slice of bread, carrot sticks with a houmous dip, apple, milk.
- Peanut butter sandwich, chopped raw carrots, peppers and cherry tomatoes, plain yogurt with berries.
- Tuna sandwich, carrot sticks, banana, water.
- Tuna pasta with sweetcorn, melon and strawberries, small pot of fromage frais, water.
- Chicken salad - chicken, lettuce, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, peppers, bread sticks, custard and pureed apple, milk.
- Chicken sandwich, 4 carrot sticks, 8 grapes, pot of custard, water.
- Wholemeal bread roll with cheese and tomato, hard boiled egg, banana, water.
- Pitta bread with ham and salad, rice cake and peanut butter, strawberries, milk.
- Tuna and cucumber sandwich, carrot and pepper sticks with houmous dip, satsuma, water.
- Cheese and vegetable muffin (look online for recipes), pot of fruit salad in fruit juice, water.
- Carrot sticks, cucumber sticks, bread sticks, houmous dip, apple, small pot of yoghurt, water.



- Pitta bread, chicken salad, lettuce, tomato, cucumber, banana, custard, water.
- Homemade lentil soup, bread/roll grapes, milk.
- Bagel, cream cheese, salmon, fruit cocktail of melon, strawberries and pineapple, water.
- Tuna pasta, cherry tomatoes, peppers, carrot sticks, pancake, milk.
- Pitta bread with salmon and cream cheese, carrot and cucumber sticks, milk.
- Egg and cress sandwich (wholemeal bread), cheese and apple cubes, water.

Reducing risk of choking

It is important to supervise young children when they are eating and provide assistance if required.

Young children are still learning about different textures and tastes.

- Remove any stones or pips before serving.
- Slice, halve or chop small fruit and vegetables like cherry tomatoes and grapes.
- Cut large fruits into slices rather than chunks.
- Avoid whole nuts.



Checklist

Use this checklist to work out if you are giving your child a healthy packed lunch.



At least one serving from the starchy foods group	
Minimum of two servings from the fruit & vegetable group	
At least one of the following: meat, fish, eggs, pulses, seeds and nuts, cheese	
Oily fish once a week	
Highly processed foods limited to a maximum of once per week	
No deep fried foods	
Spreadable fats are monounsaturated or polyunsaturated and contain at least 70% fat	
No savoury snacks	
No confectionery	
If home baking is provided it is a mini-serving (less than 30g) as an accompaniment to fruit as a dessert	
No salt added during or after cooking	
Water or milk only to drink (or diluted pure unsweetened fruit juice and plain water containing no more than 150ml juice - to be taken at mealtime only.	

Remember to vary what you offer your child on a day to day basis to expose them to different tastes and improve the nutritional content of their diet.

Vitamin supplements

All children under the age of 5 should take a supplement of vitamins A, C and D. This is regardless of how healthy their diet is as it is **not possible** to take enough vitamin D through diet alone.

Although most of our vitamin D intake comes from sunshine, we still do not get sufficient sunshine to keep our levels high enough and this can have an impact on bone health and other non-bone related health issues.

All young children in the Western Isles can get the Healthy Start vitamin drops free of charge and parents should ensure that their child takes these daily.

The vitamin drops are available from GP practices, health visitors, the Health Information & Resources Service, and dietitians.



Feeding problems

If you have specific concerns about your child's diet or are worried about their growth you can self-refer to see a dietitian.

Please email wi-hb.Dietetics@nhs.net or phone 01851 708279 to complete a self-referral form.

You can receive help and advice on fussy eating, concerns about your child not gaining enough weight, gaining too much weight, allergies, intolerances, bowel problems or any food related concern.

HENRY

HENRY (Health, Exercise and Nutrition for the Really Young) is an 8 week, one-to-one programme for families who want to find out more about encouraging a healthy lifestyle for their children.

HENRY can help with achieving and maintain a healthy weight, general healthy eating and fussy eating.

For more information visit www.henry.org.uk and to register please contact the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics on 01851 708279 or email wi-hb.Dietetics@nhs.net

Notes

Further Information

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NHS Western Isles Dietitians



NHSWI Dietitians (@NHSWI_Diet)

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.patientopinion.org.uk or 0800 122 31 35
- Tel. 01851 704704 (ext 2408) on a Tuesday and Friday afternoon between 1pm and 4pm.

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