

Drinks

The best drink for your child is water. Include a water bottle in your child's lunchbox every day.

What not to include

Sweet drinks such as soft drink, flavoured mineral water, flavoured milk, cordial, fruit drink and fruit juice are 'sometimes foods'. They do not provide much nutrition and can fill children up, leading to a decreased appetite for healthier foods. Sweet drinks can also lead to tooth decay and weight gain, and are not part of a healthy lunchbox.

Include a variety of foods in your child's lunchbox from day to day. Make sure that the foods packed in the lunchbox are from the basic food groups.

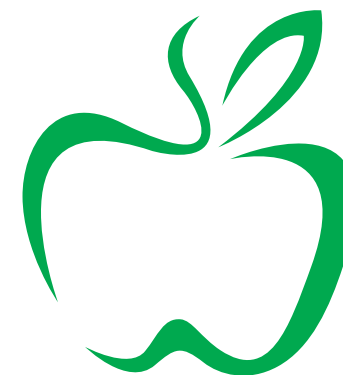
- Breads and cereals – bread, crackers, rice, pasta, noodles and other grains
- Vegetables and legumes – fresh or cooked vegetables; beans, chickpeas and lentils
- Fruit – fresh or canned
- Milk, cheese, yoghurt and/or alternatives
- Lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts and legumes

If you are packing any foods that need refrigeration (such as cheese, yoghurt, milk or cooked eggs or meat), use an insulated lunch bag with a frozen water bottle inside. This will keep the lunch cool and prevent it from spoiling.



GET UP & GROW

HEALTHY EATING AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD



Lunchbox ideas:

Meals for early childhood settings

For more meal and snack ideas

Dietitians Association of Australia
www.daa.asn.au



Australian Government
Department of Health and Ageing



You will need to provide lunch and snacks for your child while they are at family day care, child care or preschool if the setting does not offer meals. Children have small stomachs, so their energy and nutritional requirements are best met with small meals and snacks spread throughout the day.

Remember that babies under nine months are not to have any dairy at all, and infants under 12 months should not be given any milk to drink. Full-cream plain milk is recommended for children aged one to two years, and reduced-fat plain milk is suitable for children over the age of two years.

Depending on how long your child attends the setting, you might need to provide just one snack, or lunch and one or two snacks. Regular meals and snacks help your child to concentrate, play and enjoy their day.

Lunch ideas

- A sandwich, small pita wrap or small bread roll with fillings such as:
 - mashed egg with lettuce
 - shredded chicken with cheese and lettuce
 - tuna, corn and lettuce
 - turkey breast with cucumber and lettuce
 - ham, chutney and alfalfa sprouts
 - cold roast meat, chutney, lettuce and tomato
 - vegemite and cheese
 - cream cheese and grated carrot
 - avocado, tomato and lettuce
 - mashed banana
- A few crackers or rice cakes with cheese
- A small, cold slice of frittata
- A homemade savoury muffin – zucchini or corn and cheese
- One or two slices of homemade pita pizza

What not to include

Try not to include sweet fillings in sandwiches, for example: jam, honey, sprinkles or chocolate spread.

Keep lunches cool by sending them in an insulated lunchbox, with a frozen drink bottle or ice brick inside.

Snack ideas

- Small, fresh pieces of fruit: a mandarin, banana, apricot, pear, plum or a bunch of grapes
- Sliced fruit: apples, oranges, melon or pineapple
- Two or three crackers with cheese or vegemite
- One or two small pikelets – try including grated fruit or vegetables in the mix
- A flavoured scone – pumpkin or cheese
- A few vegetable slices or sticks served with dip (be sure to blanch tough or fibrous vegetables until soft)
- A small tub of yoghurt
- A cheese stick

What not to include

Packaged snack foods such as muesli bars, fruit straps, chocolate bars, lollies, donuts and potato chips. These are ‘sometimes foods’, foods that are high in sugar, salt or fat and should only be offered in small amounts on special occasions (if at all).

If you want to put a ‘treat’ in your child’s lunchbox, choose something other than food. A small note or drawing from you or a bright sticker can be a lovely surprise occasionally. It is not necessary to pack ‘sometimes foods’ in the lunchbox.