

Guidance for making a Healthy Lunchbox

Variety is the key to a healthier lunchbox. Making a lunchbox healthier and appetising to pupils does not mean that they miss out on all the things that they enjoy eating. It is all about getting a balance and good variety of foods over a period of time, e.g. a week. The following guidance has been taken from Hounslow Healthy Schools Food Toolkit resource.

The 'Healthier Lunchbox Checklist' is based on the food groups of the Balance of Good Health, which promotes balance and variety. Its purpose is to ensure that something from each of the food groups is included in the lunchbox, providing a better balance of nutrients and that a drink is included.

Try to include:

- a good portion of starchy food, e.g. wholegrain bap, thick sliced wholemeal bread, chapatti, pitta pocket, pasta or rice salad
- plenty of fruit and vegetables, e.g. cherry tomatoes, carrot sticks, small box of raisins, mini can of fruit chunks
- a portion of semi-skimmed milk or dairy food, e.g. portion of cheese or pot of yoghurt
- a portion of lean meat, fish or alternative, e.g. ham, chicken, beef, tuna, egg or hummus
- a drink e.g. fruit juice, semi skimmed milk or bottle of water

Bright and colourful foods with different tastes and textures should be included. Fruit and vegetables do this naturally. If the food looks great, even if it is healthier then the chances are that children will want to try it. Adopting a colour theme for each day, take inspiration from holidays or different countries and foods that are in season or grown in the garden. Try to choose items that are lower in salt, fat and sugar.

The Food Standards Agency gives ideas and suggestions for healthier lunchboxes, including a menu planner, www.food.gov.uk