

## School lunches

### *7 steps to preparing a healthy lunch*



Do you find it challenging, frustrating and maybe overwhelming trying to find healthy affordable school snacks and foods that the kids will eat?

One of my passions as a nutritionist and mother of 3, is childhood nutrition. I believe childhood nutrition has become one of the greatest challenges affecting parents today. Kids are bombarded with advertising on telly, packaging on foods can be misleading and big food take away companies have baited our darlings with toy-give-aways that keep them demanding more. It is tough!

Basic guidelines are a great way to start. 5 vegies/2 fruit per day is a wonderful initiative . Ensure 3 good (main) meals and 3 snack sessions. Often children will graze so snacks form an important part of the nutritive load for the day.

Other important considerations:

- a. Convenience
- b. Palatability for the child (they must like eating it)
- c. cost effective
- d. and is it healthy

When you go shopping there are few things on the aisle shelves that fulfill the above. BUT we do owe it to our children, to give them a healthy start and food is where it starts. PS we also need to lead by example, as children will mimic our eating habits.

## 7 steps to preparing a healthy lunch

1. **buy** all the things you need for the week on a Sat/.Sun
2. **prepare** all lunches on a Sunday night (it will only take an hour – as apposed to an hour every night)
3. **freeze** lunches and even put into separate containers before freezing if you can
4. **allow** one day a week for a treat (eg, scroll, pizza slice etc)
5. **keep it simple** and repetitive – if the menu is healthy and the kids love it, don't vary it. They don't need it
6. write little messages to your children. Eg “well done on being a healthy bear and eating all your yummy lunch” etc.
7. have “cute” names for foods eg: nuts can be ducks nuts, seeds can be bird food, etc.

## Some lunch and snack suggestions

### Snacks

- nuts (almonds, pecan nuts, walnuts, macadamias)
- seeds (sunflower, pepitas, sesame)
- date logs or natural fruit logs (watch for colours though)
- rice crackers and cheese
- cheese sticks
- boiled eggs
- fruit
- popcorn
- bliss balls
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### Lunches

- sandwiches (rye, multigrain or non-wheat much better than white)
- left overs
- tuna bake
- sushi
- salads
- quiche
- ploughman's lunch (make an attractive lunch with celery and carrot sticks, cheese cubes, ham or chicken breast and dollop of mayonnaise)
- celery with philly cheese
- fruit salad
- wraps (rice bread) with silverside + lettuce + mayo
- wraps (rice bread) with tuna, chopped onion, chopped carrot and mayo
- wraps (rice bread) with ham, lettuce, cheese and tomato