

# Packing a healthy lunchbox



Choose a food from each of the 5 food groups.  
Don't forget to include a water bottle too.



Healthy Eating Active Living NSW

@healthyeatingactivelivingsnw





# Vegetables

**Benefit:** Vegetables are packed with vitamins, minerals and fibre to keep kids feeling fuller for longer.

## Lunchbox ideas

- Fresh vegetables\* like carrot, cucumber, corn, celery, capsicum, tomato, mushroom, peas  
**Tip:** you could dip the vegetables in a corn relish dip or hummus. Try adding baby spinach, tomato and cucumber to a sandwich
- Canned or frozen vegetables and legumes like corn\*, peas\*, chickpeas\*, or kidney beans\*
- Baked vegetables like pumpkin, sweet potato, zucchini, carrot
- Baked vegetable pancake or slice



# Proteins

**Benefit:** These foods have protein for growth and iron to carry oxygen around our body.

## Lunchbox ideas

- Canned tuna or salmon, lean cold meats like chicken, beef or ham can be used as fillings in a sandwich, roll or wrap
- Hard boiled eggs
- Baked beans, canned mixed beans\* or tofu cubes



# Grains

**Benefit:** Grain foods provide carbohydrates to give kids energy throughout the day.

## Lunchbox ideas

- Rice, noodles, pasta or cous cous
- Plain crackers and corn or rice cakes
- Sandwiches or rolls, raisin or fruit bread, damper, scones or pikelets  
**Tip:** try to choose wholemeal or wholegrain options if these are available



# Fruit

**Benefit:** Like vegetables, fruit is packed with vitamins, minerals and fibre to help kids stay well.

## Lunchbox ideas

- Fresh fruit\* like apples, bananas, oranges, pears, papayas, plums, peaches, mangoes, strawberries  
**Tip:** try to eat different types of fruit and vegetables each day. You can use canned or frozen fruit or vegetables if fresh is not available
- Tub of diced fruit in natural juice
- Dried fruit like a box of sultanas\* or dried apple rings



# Dairy

**Benefit:** Dairy has calcium to help strengthen bones and teeth for growing bodies.

## Lunchbox ideas

- Plain milk
- Yoghurt in a tub
- Cheese slice, stick or cubes
- Custard (choose types with a Health Star Rating of 3.5 or more)
- Creamed rice

If your child is dairy-free, choose plant-based milk, yoghurt or cheese with added calcium.



# Water

Water is the best drink for kids and tap water has added fluoride to help protect teeth. You can freeze a water bottle overnight to help keep the lunchbox cool and safe.

\*Fresh, raw and hard fruit and vegetables can cause choking in young children. Softened, steamed or baked fruit and vegetables are recommended to prevent choking. Dried fruit like sultanas or foods that have the skin on like chickpeas, canned beans, corn or peas can also cause choking. Try cutting these foods up into smaller pieces to reduce the risk of choking in children.



For more lunchbox ideas go to [healthyliving.nsw.gov.au/healthy-lunchboxes](https://healthyliving.nsw.gov.au/healthy-lunchboxes)

