

Packed Lunch Information



The information below is from the Children's Food Trust. At Paganel we encourage all children to have a school meal, but children do have the choice to bring in a meal from home. We request that the guidance below is followed. We do provide a sandwich choice as part of the school meal which meets all of the required nutritional standards.



What should my child's packed lunch include?

Drinks

Children can bring water, fruit juice or diluted sugar free squash to school. Please do not send in fizzy drinks as they are not allowed.

Snacks

- instead of chocolate bars or cereal bars, pack lower-sugar alternatives like scones, malt loaf, fruit bread, plain popcorn or fruit in sugar-free jelly
- instead of processed fruit snacks, choose fresh fruit or plain dried fruit
- instead of crisps, try plain rice cakes, oat cakes or breadsticks with cheese
- get children involved in choosing and preparing what goes into their lunchbox, to help encourage them to eat it
- pre-prepared fruit and veg are generally more expensive than doing it yourself, so get some small pots and prep them yourself to cut the cost
- using leftovers as part of packed lunches is a good way to cut down the prep time, but make sure it's cooled and stored properly
- make sure that what you pack is easy for little fingers to open, and to eat
- children often love a bit of DIY – wraps and pots of fillings can be more exciting if they get to put them together
- dipping foods rule for many kids, so give breadsticks or toast fingers, veg sticks and a pot of houmous

Starchy Food

Bread, pasta, cous cous or potato. Wholegrain varieties contain more fibre so choose these where you can. While sandwiches are often our go-to choice, you can use different types of bread to give kids variety – pitta, wraps, bagels, chapattis or toast fingers with a dip. Some children prefer to make their own sandwich up if you give them the components. Don't forget, leftover pasta, noodles, potatoes or cous cous can be the makings of a cold packed lunch salad the next day as long as you cool and store them properly. We request that jam or chocolate spread is not used for sandwiches.

Dairy Foods

Pack milk as a drink (go for semi-skimmed or 1% milk – all the same vitamins, just less fat). If you want to go for flavoured milk, check the label and choose one with lower sugar. You can also put cheese in sandwiches, with crackers or fruit, or as sticks or cubes. Don't forget, cheese can be high in fat and salt so choose stronger-tasting ones (you can use less of it) or reduced-fat varieties cheese,

and don't pack cheese every single day. Yoghurt or fromage frais are also great choices – go for the plain varieties or check the labels and choose pots that are lower in sugar. Rice pudding pots or custard with fruit are also good packed lunch puds.

Fruit and Veg

We all need to eat more of these, whatever our age! Get veg into packed lunches in all sorts of ways: on their own (e.g. sticks of cucumber, carrot, pepper, celery, cherry tomatoes, baby corn, sugar snap peas, pots of mixed salad), as part of sandwiches or stick pulses like kidney beans and chickpeas in pasta salads. Halved cherry tomatoes in a pot, instead of tomato slices in sandwiches, can help to avoid the soggy sandwich effect.

For fruit, children often prefer a pot of chopped fruit rather than whole fruit (especially younger children). Try chopped apple (stop it turning brown by rinsing it in diluted lemon juice), satsuma segments, strawberries, blueberries, halved grapes (longways) or melon slices on their own, or as a mixture. Small pots of canned fruit in juice can work well, or with some yoghurt (remember the spoon!)

Raisins, sultanas and dried apricots are another popular choice – and they're cheaper and often healthier than processed fruit snacks, which may contain added sugar and be more damaging to children's teeth.

Beans, Pulses, Fish, Meat and other Protein

Mix it up rather than the failsafe ham sandwich: try strips of chicken, beef, pork, cooked or canned tuna or salmon. Meat alternatives like soya, tofu, Quorn, or cooked egg can also work well in sandwiches or salads. Try houmous or other bean dips with strips of pitta and veg sticks, or as a topping for crispbreads and crackers. Peanut butter's another option.

The information below is what the Government advise should be in a school lunch

Government packed lunch advice

The UK government produced packed lunch guidance to support the implementation of new school food standards for school lunches and ensure that all children benefit from eating quality food during the school day.

The guidelines are:

- One portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad every day to be included in packed lunches
- Meat, fish or another source of non-dairy protein should be included every day. Non dairy sources of protein include lentils, kidney beans, chickpeas, hummus, peanut butter and falafel
- An oily fish, such as salmon, should be included at least once every three weeks
- A starchy food, such as bread or pasta, rice, couscous, noodles, potatoes or other cereals, should be included every day
- A dairy food, such as semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais or custard should be included every day
- Free, fresh drinking water should be available at all times
- Include only water, still fruit juice, semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, yoghurt or milk drinks and smoothies
- **Snacks such as crisps should not be included. Instead, include nuts, seeds, vegetables and fruit (with no added salt, sugar or fat). Savoury crackers or breadsticks served with fruit, vegetables or dairy food are also a good choice**
- **Confectionery such as chocolate bars, chocolate-coated biscuits and sweets should not be included. Cakes and biscuits are allowed but these should be part of a balanced meal**

- Meat products such as sausage rolls, individual pies, corned meat and sausages / chipolatas should be included only occasionally

What's in a healthy packed lunch?

A child at school should have about a third of their daily nutrient requirements at lunchtime. This means they need food that are going to provide them with enough energy, protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

A healthy packed lunch should contain a mix of foods from the [EatWell Plate](#). The EatWell Plate shows how much should be eaten from each of the 5 food groups.

