

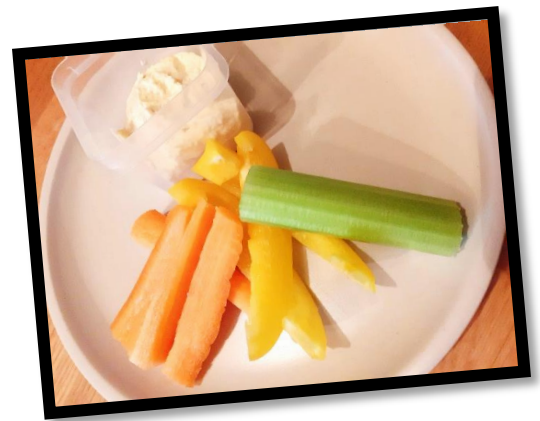


Lunchbox Ideas for the Early Years



Healthy Choices for a Tasty Lunchbox

Send your children on their way for the day with a lunchbox of food that you can be confident they will be getting all the nutrients they need, in an interesting way.



This guide will give you an idea of portion sizes and variety, as well as ideas to cover the week. Some ideas could be made on a day off and eaten over a couple of days e.g. pasta pots.

Switch around ideas to suit your child and what you have in the cupboard. For example, swap pitta breads for rice cakes or wholegrain crackers.

Getting Started

Be **SUGAR SMART!**

Children under 4 years old should **avoid added sugars**

Under 7s should have **no more than 19g of sugar** per day - check the labels, you may be surprised by what's **already in their food!**

Remember, you and your children should aim to eat your 5-a-day.
Aim to get two portions of fruit and veg in their lunchbox!



Keep encouraging the children to try new foods.



Their taste buds do change.



Their enjoyment of different textures will also change.

Getting Organised

Be prepared with **various sized pots** that the child can open, and a main lunch box. Make sure it is all name labelled to help the carers.



Don't forget a water bottle!



Get enough food ideas onto a shopping list to last a week. Think variety, and be open to ideas if you see discounted healthy food.

Main tummy filler

Bread or pittas
Pasta
Crackers
Wraps

Protein - build them up

Meat or fish
Egg
Cheese or yoghurt
Hummus

Fruit n veg - A must

Fresh or frozen
Dried fruit
Tinned fruit in juice
Stewed

Day 1

Pasta pot

Cooked pasta (a good hand sized portion) mixed up with chopped pepper/cucumber/mini tomatoes/sweetcorn. Add small chunks of cheese, sliced ham pieces or tuna. Either drizzle with olive oil or add a teaspoon of mayonnaise. **A small pot of yoghurt.**



Remember to pack a fork and spoon!

Your child's handful of veggies is one portion of their 5-a-day. Could you put in two?



Day 2

Hummus and a sliced pitta for dipping. Sliced carrot/pepper/celery/cucumber for dipping. **Slice of malt loaf and a piece of fruit.**

Top Tip!

Pitta breads can be stored in the freezer and removed one at a time when you need them. This means they will keep for longer.



Choose different fruit each week to keep it exciting



Remember! Small round foods like tomatoes and grapes should always be cut lengthways to prevent choking.

Day 3

Chicken and salad sandwich or wrap. A piece of fruit, and some sesame bread sticks.



Salad doesn't have to be lettuce! Try cucumber or tomato slices, or even a sprinkle of sweetcorn.



Try an egg and cress wrap as an alternative!



If you have no fresh fruit, try a few slices of tinned peaches in a pot.

Day 4

Tuna and sweetcorn wrap, a small carrot, a small pot of fruit jelly and a piece of fruit cake or flapjack.

Aim for wholegrain wraps - some even come with seeds!



Make up an orange jelly with a whole mini tin of mandarins. Put a portion in a pot for their lunchbox.

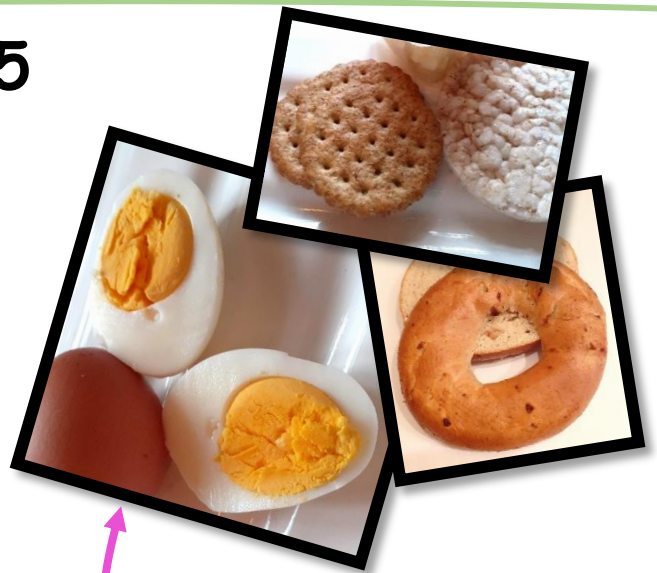


Day 5

Boiled egg with crackers or a bagel.
Sliced carrot/pepper/celery/cucumber.
A small pot of yoghurt and a piece of fruit.



Save Money, Save Waste!
Buy a large pot of yoghurt and put some in a small pot...



Put the egg in its own small pot to keep the crackers from going soggy.

Leave it whole, slice it or mash it, to keep lunches interesting!

Helpful Hints...

These are just suggestions, not a definitive guide - use this to help you decide on your child's healthy lunchbox.

We've shown you five days of ideas but **keep your week simple**. Lunchboxes **don't need to be different everyday**, and you don't want to waste any food!

A pasta pot mix can last **a couple of days** in the fridge.

The hummus could be given **more than once a week** - just choose different dippers!

Aim for **3 or 4 different things** in the lunchbox. Too much choice could mean they'll fill up on their favourites and not try something new.

Useful Websites and Apps

- Be sure to check out the **Change4Life** website for more info on staying healthy as a family: www.nhs.uk/change4life
- The Change4Life **Smart Recipes app** is a great FREE tool for finding new lunchbox ideas, plus tasty breakfast, dinner and snack ideas!
- **Start4Life** is perfect for learning more about healthy weaning and recipes for toddlers: www.nhs.uk/start4life
- Change4Life and Start4Life are also both on **Facebook and Instagram** - follow their pages for regular updates and helpful tips!
- Check out our **Zing Somerset YouTube channel** for plenty of healthy recipes

For more guidance on nutrition, healthy eating and getting active (for all ages), follow Zing Somerset!

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