

Food Facts



Sugary sweetened drinks fill you up and contain very little goodness.

Children eat too many foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt. Food manufacturers market these products to appeal to children, their labels can be misleading and confusing.

Processed food is treated to extend its shelf-life and usually contains high levels of fat, sugar and salt. SO ALWAYS CHECK THE LABEL!

High sugar foods are converted into glucose faster giving a sudden increase in blood glucose (the body's fuel supply), which is controlled by releasing a hormone called insulin. Insulin brings the glucose levels under control and blood sugar drops very quickly, leaving children feeling tired and unable to concentrate on their lessons.

A lunch that contains foods such as wholemeal breads, pasta or rice, with fresh fruit and salad/vegetables will help your child to keep blood sugar levels constant which in turn will help him/her to concentrate for longer and do better at school.



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If you need this leaflet in another format such as audio or large print please contact Communications on 0845 155 0500.

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Sandwell **NHS**
Primary Care Trust

Making healthier choices



Top Tips for healthy lunchboxes

in Sandwell
Eatwell

Eat well, look good, feel great

Top tips for a healthy lunchbox

Pick low-fat fillings. Lean meats, fish, cottage cheese, edam, mozzarella or sliced banana.



Try chopping up different fruit to make a fresh fruit salad. You could include a small box of raisins or a mini can of fruit in juice.

Instead of fizzy drinks that are high in sugar try to include unsweetened pure fruit juices, water, milk, milkshake, flavoured bottled water, dilute pure juice with water, lassi or yoghurt drinks.

Cut down on crisps, which are high in fat, and choose plain popcorn, breadsticks or rice cakes.

Replace cakes, chocolates and biscuits with scones, currant buns, fruit bread and dried mixed fruit (without added sugar) instead.

Include some vegetables, such as cherry tomatoes, sticks of carrot, cucumber, celery and peppers. Remember to include salad in sandwiches or even have a mixed salad instead of a sandwich?

Make lunches more interesting by choosing a variety of foods, it is important to give children all the nutrients they need to grow and be healthy.



Ideas for packed lunches



Breads and alternatives

Offer a variety of breads; pitta, best of both, multigrain, wholemeal, bagels, tortillas, naan and chapatti, crispbreads, cheese scones, crackers and oatcakes. Good alternatives are pasta, rice, cous cous, lentils and boiled potatoes.



Vegetarian options

Cheese (cheddar, cottage cheese, soft cheese) is good with; apple, onion, chives, chutney, beetroot, salad, grated carrot, tomato, cress, coleslaw or red pepper. Egg can be sliced or mashed with mayonnaise and goes well with cress or salad. Try hommous on its own or with salad, carrot, cucumber or pepper sticks.

Meat options

Ham, chicken and beef are good in sandwiches especially with salad, coleslaw or tomatoes. Give it some flavour with tikka or herbs.



Fish options

Tuna and sweetcorn, tuna and salad, salmon and cucumber.



For a change from bread you could make a pasta, rice or potato salad and add any of the above fillings. Remember to put a fork in the lunch box!

Healthy choices

1 For a balanced meal include fruit such as apple, banana, grapes and small satsumas.



2 Bread sticks are a good alternative to crisps and are lower in salt.

3 Malt loaf, scones and fruit bread are healthier alternatives to high sugar snacks such as biscuits and cakes. If you want a treat just include a small one.

4 Remember to include a drink; water, pure fruit juice or milk are good choices. In hot weather you could freeze cartons of juice or water, it will have melted by lunch time and will help to keep their lunches cool.



5 Remember to add salads to sandwiches it counts towards 5 a day.



What's in your snack?

There are 43 teaspoons of sugar in a 225g bag of jelly babies. A can of coke contains nine teaspoons of sugar. An average chocolate bar contains about six teaspoons of sugar.

Here's how to work out how much sugar is in your favourite snack

There are 4 grams of sugar in a teaspoon. Read the label and look for the words **carbohydrate of which sugars**. Sometimes you will see carbohydrate or energy instead because some food manufacturers don't really want you to know how much sugar there is in their product so they try to disguise it.



Example 40g of sugar per 100g = 10 teaspoons of sugar
If the product weight is 150g
40g divided by 100 = 0.4
0.4 times by 150 = 60
60 divided by 4 = **15 teaspoons of sugar**