

Healthy and Fun Lunch Box Tips and Ideas

Keep It Balanced

Nutritionists recommend that a healthy lunch box contains starch (bread, pasta, rice, potato), protein (meat, fish, pulses, eggs), dairy (cheese, yoghurt, milk), vegetables or salad, fruit and a drink of water, milk or juice.



Keep It Cool

Invest in some cool packs to keep in the freezer and pop one in the lunch box to keep it cool until lunchtime. Or you could freeze yoghurt, smoothie tubes or juice boxes and pop one of these in instead. By lunchtime, they will have thawed out, keeping things cool at the same time.



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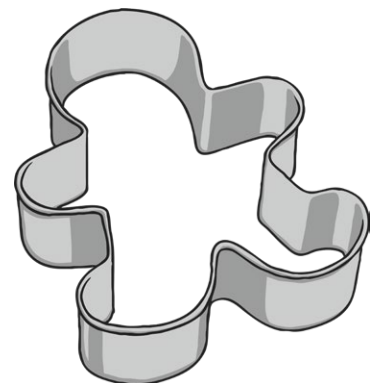
Don't Overpack

Children's appetites are smaller than you think. To avoid overwhelming your child or causing lots of waste, don't pack too much into the lunchbox.



Use Cookie

Use cookie cutters to cut sandwiches into different shapes. You can also use small cutters on slices of cheese or fruit.



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Mix Things Up

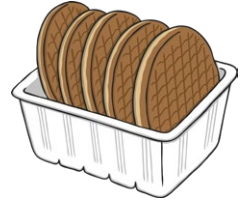
Make things more interesting by giving your child a pot of pasta or rice salad instead of sandwiches. Don't forget a spoon or fork! Or use different types of bread such as wraps, rolls, pitta bread or chapattis. Another great idea is to make a 'triple decker' sandwich with two layers of filling and three of bread.



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Save the Treats

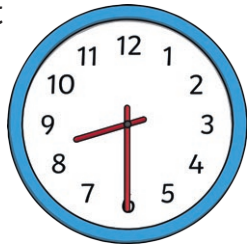
Encourage healthy choices by limiting 'treats' such as crisps or biscuits to one or two days a week. Chocolate-dipped strawberries or satsuma segments make a great alternative to a chocolate bar, and you can make healthier crisps by baking thinly-sliced sweet potato in the oven with a little oil and some herbs.



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Get Ahead

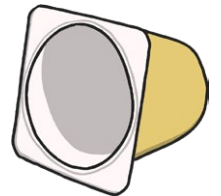
Try to avoid making up lunchboxes in the morning, as time pressures may lead you to add less healthy convenience foods. Instead, pack the night before. Get your child to help you – by the middle years of primary school, most children should be able to make their own packed lunch with supervision.



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Make a Granola Pot

Place chopped fruit such as strawberries, apple and banana at the bottom of a small pot and top with a layer of yoghurt and some crunchy granola. Toss apples and bananas with a little lemon juice to stop them going brown.



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Eat the Rainbow

See if you and your child can find fruit in every colour of the rainbow, then chop and mix to make a rainbow fruit salad.



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Prepare in Bulk

To save time, make pasta and fruit salads in bulk and serve out as much as you need. The rest can be eaten the next day or shared with other family members.



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