

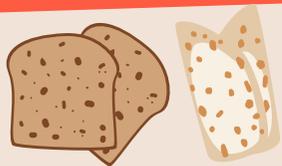
# Why do we need a healthy packed lunch?

Print me and stick me on your fridge

A healthy packed lunch will give children the **energy** and **nutrition** they need to get the most from their school day – helping them to **stay healthy**, **feel good** and **be ready and able to learn**. Just like school meals, packed lunches should be made up of foods from the four main food groups in the **Eatwell Guide** and portions should be appropriate for a child's age and size. This will ensure every child has a healthy and nutritionally-balanced lunch.

## What should I include in my healthy packed lunch?

Please try to include **ONE** of each of the following in your lunch each day:



### STARCHY CARBOHYDRATE

e.g. bread, wrap, pasta, rice, pitta, cracker, bagel (preferably wholemeal, which is higher in fibre).

**Gives you energy for the day ahead!**

**How much?** One sandwich (two slices of bread from a normal-sized loaf), one medium pitta pocket, one wrap or two dessert spoons of rice or pasta.



### DAIRY FOOD (or non-dairy alternative)

e.g. cheese, yoghurt, fromage frais, milk or custard. Choose low fat, low sugar options where possible.

**Good for healthy bones and teeth!**

**How much?** A 125g pot of yoghurt or a small matchbox-sized piece of cheese. Try to ensure dairy alternatives are enriched with added calcium.



### FRUIT (fresh, frozen, tinned or dried)

e.g. apple, banana, satsuma, small box of raisins, cherry tomatoes, handful of grapes.

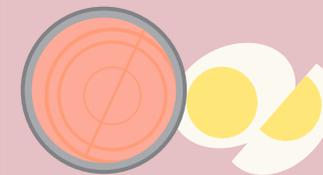
**Fruit and vegetables give you vitamins, minerals and fibre to stay healthy. Part of your '5 a day'**

**How much?** A portion is one child-sized handful.



### VEGETABLES OR SALAD

e.g. carrot/cucumber sticks, salad in sandwiches.



### PROTEIN

e.g. meat, fish, eggs, or non-dairy protein such as lentils, beans, chickpeas. Try to include oily fish such as salmon or sardines at least once every 3 weeks (tuna doesn't count – sorry!).

**Helps your body to grow and develop**

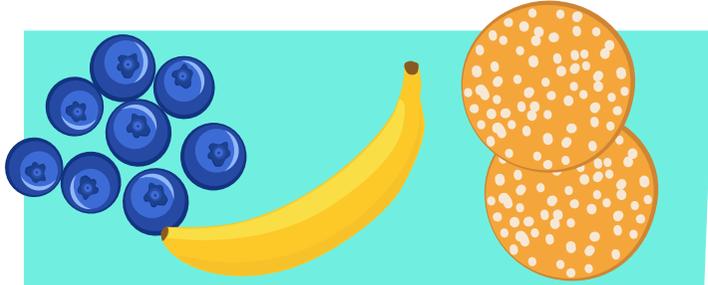
You could try sliced lean ham, chicken or beef in a sandwich, tuna or salmon as a filling, a couple of tablespoons of hummus in a pot, a boiled egg or a couple of tablespoons of beans mixed into pasta or tuna.



**DRINKS** – plain tap water is the best option, especially for teeth (please send your child to school with their own named, clean water bottle each day). Other options are milk (semi-skimmed or skimmed) or a small carton of fruit juice (no more than 150mls please – and only drink juice with your meal).

**Drinking enough each day helps keep your body working well and your skin looking healthy!**





## What about snacks for break time?

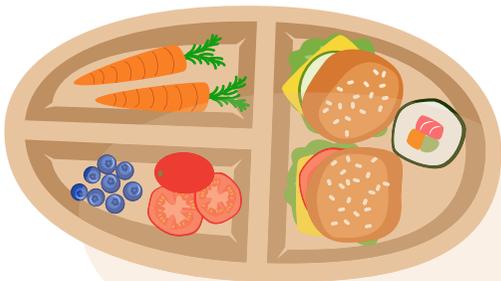
Have a look at this link which shows your school's own rules about what snacks your child can bring into school:

[link to go in here](#)

Schools – please insert a link to your own school policy on snacks / school website. You can delete the text below if it doesn't match your policy.

### Here are some ideas for healthy snacks to bring to school:

- ✓ Portion of fruit, vegetable sticks, rice cakes, bread sticks, bag of plain popcorn.
- ✓ No dried fruit as snacks please (as the sugar can stick in teeth. Stick to having dried fruit only at lunchtime when eating a range of food).
- ✓ Be careful of cereal bars as these may have lots of sugar in – check the label.
- ✓ Try to avoid including crisps if you can, because they are high in salt and fat. If you do include them (occasionally), please use small (25g) bags.



## What should I NOT bring to school?

Please do **NOT** include the following items:

- ✗ Sweets and chocolate bars – these foods are high in sugar and calories, low in goodness, and are harmful for teeth.
- ✗ Squash or fizzy drinks – water is best for teeth.
- ✗ **NO NUTS** – in case of allergies – please refer to your school's allergies policy.

Thank you!



## Top tips for your packed lunch

- Pop a freezer pack in your lunch box to keep food cool. You could freeze a (reusable) bottle of water which will be ready to drink by lunchtime.
- Get your child to help pack their lunch box – that way they are more likely to enjoy it.
- Children love to dip – cut up pitta bread or use veg sticks they can dip into a pot of hummus or tzatziki.
- Use pastry cutters to cut funny-shaped sandwiches.
- Keep costs down and save on packaging by buying food (e.g. yoghurt, popcorn, breadsticks) in bulk and put in smaller containers.
- Check out some tips here for upping the veg content in your lunchboxes [here](#)
- Keep your fruit safe from getting squashed by putting it in a small plastic container or by using an apple/banana guard.



## Be safe!

- Please cut up food into small sizes for young children. Cut grapes and cherry tomatoes in half (lengthways if oblong).
- Be aware of allergies – please check your school's allergies guidance.

## Making packed lunches can be time consuming and expensive – why not try school dinners?

- School meals provide your child with a nutritionally balanced variety of foods.
- Every infant child (aged 5-7) in North Yorkshire is entitled to a **FREE**, healthy and nutritious school lunch. Also, **FREE** school meals for all age groups are provided to families who receive qualifying incomes such as income support and universal credit. Ask your school office how to order yours.
- More information is available from your school's website or the North Yorkshire County Council website [northyorks.gov.uk](http://northyorks.gov.uk)

## Here is some more information that can help your family to stay healthy, happy and well:

[Healthier Lunch Boxes](#)

[Healthier Lunch Parent Information](#)

[Packed Lunch Inspiration](#)

[Active While You're at Home](#)

[Live Well - Healthy Weight](#)



## Healthy teeth! Keep Kids Smiling!

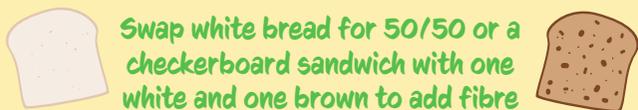
Sugary food and drinks cause bacteria on teeth that produce harmful acid that rots them. This can lead to painful toothache, low confidence and worse! In fact, tooth decay is the most common reason children aged 6-10 years are admitted to hospital!

### Top tips for healthy teeth:

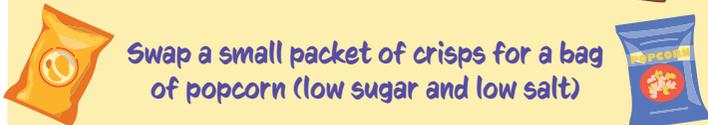
Eat less sugar, less often and only at mealtimes  
Swap out sugary drinks – they have no place in a child's daily diet. Plain water or lower fat milks are best.

## Healthy swaps

Here are some ideas for healthy swaps:



Swap white bread for 50/50 or a checkerboard sandwich with one white and one brown to add fibre



Swap a small packet of crisps for a bag of popcorn (low sugar and low salt)



Swap split yogurt pots (high in sugar) to lower sugar fromage frais or yogurt

[www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes#lunchbox-swaps](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes#lunchbox-swaps)

<b>ENERGY</b> 924KJ 220kcal 11%	<b>FAT</b> 13g MED 19%	<b>SATURATES</b> 5.9g HIGH 30%	<b>SUGARS</b> 0.8g LOW <1%	<b>SALT</b> 0.7g MED 12%
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% of an adults reference intake.  
Typical values per 100g: Energy 966kJ/ 230kcal

## Food labels

Traffic light nutritional information on food packaging tells us at a glance if the food has high, medium or low amounts of fat, sugars and salt. Try to pick snacks with mainly greens and oranges and avoid the reds.



## Me-sized meals

Young children don't need as much food as teenagers and adults. When they eat more than they need, the excess energy is stored as fat in their bodies.

## Check your sugar intake

The **Food Scanner app** from Change4Life can help you check how much sugar you or your child is having. Using your smartphone, the app can scan the barcode on food packets to find out exactly how much sugar is in it.



## Healthy Schools

**Food in Schools** is a key theme of North Yorkshire's Healthy Schools award scheme. We run training and offer support around Food and the other key themes of Active Lives, Emotional Health & Wellbeing and PHSE throughout the school year. Your school can work to achieve your Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. Find out more and register to take part at [Home – Healthy Schools North Yorkshire](http://Home - Healthy Schools North Yorkshire)



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Leaflet developed by Public Health, North Yorkshire County Council and the North Yorkshire Healthy Schools Programme.