

Loading up the lunchbox

Ngā kai tika ō te tina

Top Tips/Kai Pai

- Involve your children in lunchbox options and preparation
- Be a role model – prepare your own healthy lunch at the same time
- Think outside the (lunch)box – vary the shape of sandwiches by cutting them into triangles or use a biscuit cutter for different shapes
- Avoid soggy sandwiches – keep bread and fillings separate and let your child create their sandwich at lunchtime
- Experiment with different breads e.g. wraps, muffin splits, rewana, pita, fruit bread. Use wholemeal or wholegrain varieties
- Cut large fruit and vegetables into smaller pieces, include healthy dips for dunking (hummus, salsa, tzatziki)
- Keep it interesting – leftovers are a great option or try sushi, noodles, corn thins or tuna pasta salad as alternatives to sandwiches
- Prepare lunchbox items in bulk and store in the freezer until required e.g. fruit muffins, mouse traps (cheese and vegemite/marmite toasted fingers)
- Make sure lunchbox snacks come from the four food groups (see overleaf)
- Muesli bars are not the best everyday choice as they are often high in sugar and fat. Remember to check nutrition information on labels or look for the Heart Foundation Tick
- Experiment with your home baking. Reduce the amount of sugar and fat used by substituting with fruit, fruit juice or natural unsweetened yoghurt
- Water and plain milk are the best drinks for children
- Freezing a drink bottle overnight and placing it in your child's lunchbox will help to keep the food cold and safe.



Lunchbox ideas

Ngā tauira kai



Pack a lunch so good it won't come home! A lunchbox should include at least one item from each of the four food groups:

Vegetables and fruit



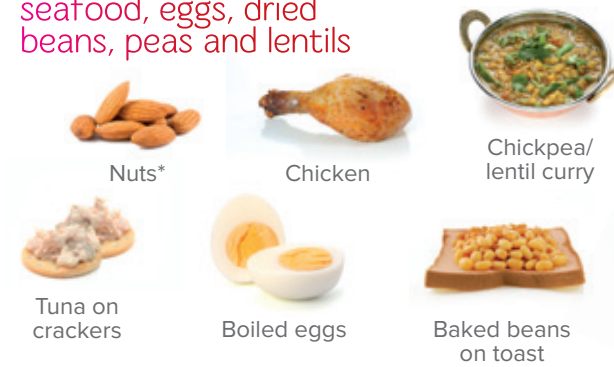
Breads and cereals (include wholemeal and wholegrain varieties)



Milk and milk products



Lean meats, chicken, seafood, eggs, dried beans, peas and lentils



*Parents of children with nut allergies should select an alternative choice. Whole nuts not recommended for children under 5 years due to choking risk.

Healthy lunches made easy

Community and Public Health

group 1: starchy foods i.e. breads, rice & pasta



step 1

Choose foods that help children learn and grow.

The foods illustrated in the 3 groups shown here provide useful amounts of the nutrients and energy children need to grow, learn and stay healthy.

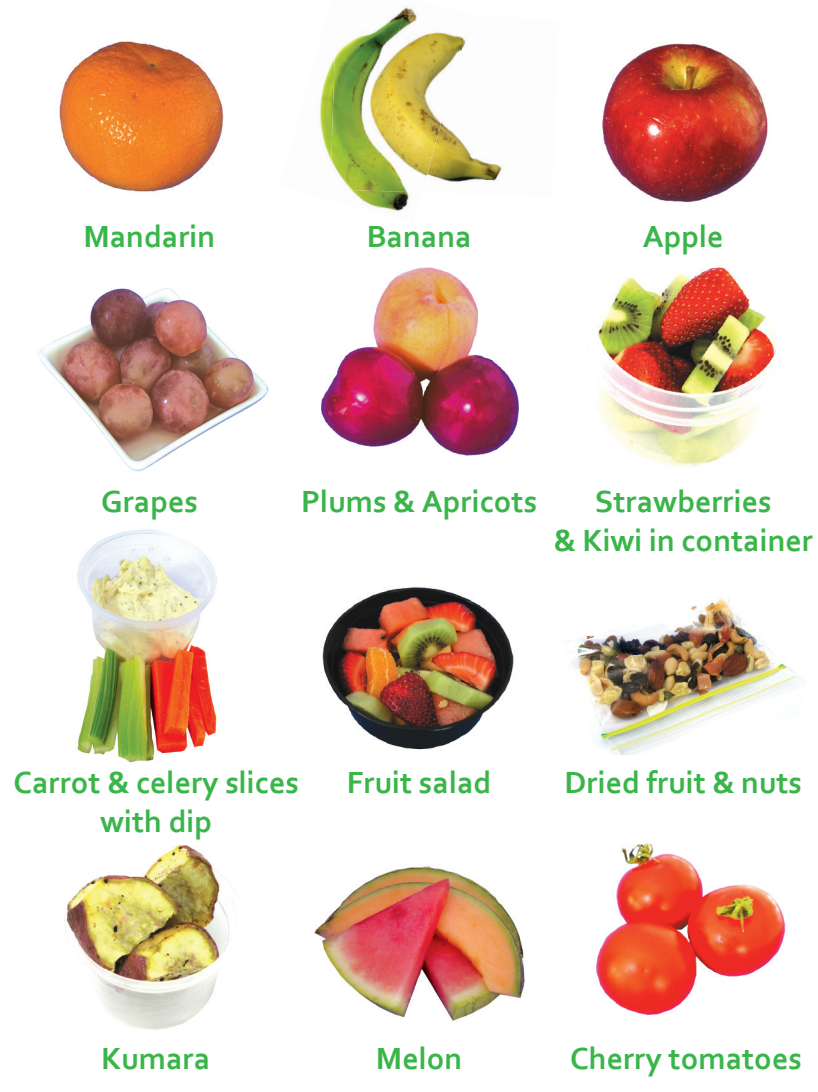
These foods are suggestions only.

step 2

Put it all together!

Make up the lunchbox using a variety of foods from each of the 3 groups. For active children, bump up the quantity of foods from groups 1 & 2.

group 2: fruit & vegetables



group 3: others



tips for healthy lunches

1. Base lunches around sandwiches i.e. bread with fillings, plus fruit and/or vegetables. Try different breads such as French stick, wholemeal pita, rolls, flat bread, panini, naan and English muffins. Choose fruit and vegetables that are fresh and in season.
 2. Concentrate on savoury fillings for sandwiches: cold meat, cheeses, tinned fish, peanut butter and hummus are great choices for growing children and team up well with grated carrot, lettuce, tomato and other salad fillings. Try to keep sweet sandwich spreads such as jam, honey or chocolate spread to no more than once a week
 3. Keep food items small and manageable. Bite sized sandwiches and muffins, fruit cut into small pieces, vegetable sticks and cherry tomatoes are more likely to be eaten than larger food items.
 4. For the non-sandwich eater try left over pizza, cold pasta, salads, scones, crackers and cheese, wheat biscuits with spread or other breakfast cereal.
 5. Include a frozen water bottle in the lunch box over summer to keep food chilled and fresh. Insulated lunch boxes are also a good way to keep food cold.
 6. Water and milk are the only drinks recommended for children. Sweet drinks such as soft drinks, fruit juice and flavoured milks are not recommended as they contribute to weight gain and tooth decay.
- * Although muesli bars may appear to be healthy, many are too high in sugar and fat. Look for bars with less than 600kj and less than 2 grams saturated fat per serve. Unless your child is very active and not overweight, they should be occasional foods only.

avoid giant portions!

Giant versions of food have no place in a child's lunchbox...



Boosting veges in the lunchbox



Aim to add a range of coloured veges to the lunchbox each day to provide tamariki with vitamins, minerals and fibre to grow strong and healthy.

- ♥ Add to your child's favourite marmite sandwich – shredded lettuce, grated carrot, beetroot or add drained corn to cheese toasties.
- ♥ Leftover roast veges can be eaten cold and make a filling snack – add in leftover potato, kumara, pumpkin or parsnip.
- ♥ Chop up veges to have with a dip like hummus – carrot, celery, capsicum, green beans.
- ♥ Try adding chopped spinach or grated carrot to recipes for fritters, quiche, muffins or scones. Bread cases with egg are a great vehicle for mixed frozen veges.
- ♥ Add a little container of frozen veges – peas, corn or beans.
- ♥ Leftover fried rice with mixed veges or cauliflower mac 'n' cheese can make a delicious lunch.



Make the SMART choice

Choose water and plain milk



Sugary drinks like fizzy drinks, fruit juice, cordial and sports drinks have no benefit to our bodies and contribute to tooth decay.



1 can of fizzy = 10 teaspoons of sugar
(375 ml)



1 glass of juice = 10 teaspoons of sugar
(350 ml)

Choose tap water, it's free and contains zero sugar.

Water quenches your thirst better than any other drink.

Eat your fruit - don't drink it.

Choose plain milk for strong teeth and bones.



WHOLE GRAIN GOODNESS

Whole grain foods are packed with nutrients that are good for our bodies, like fibre, vitamins and minerals. They keep you full for longer and often cost no more than refined grains, which have all the goodness removed during processing.

Here are some simple affordable swaps, from refined grains to whole grain foods.

- ♥ Breakfast: Rice bubbles → porridge or weetbix
- ♥ Lunch: White bread, roll or wrap → wholemeal/whole grain bread, roll or wrap
- ♥ Snacks: Shapes or Snax crackers → whole grain crackers
- ♥ Dinner: White rice or white pasta → brown rice or wholemeal pasta



Eat whole grain foods alongside plenty of other foods that are close to how they're found in nature like vegies, fruit, legumes (lentils, chickpeas and kidney beans), oily fish and some dairy, chicken and meat.

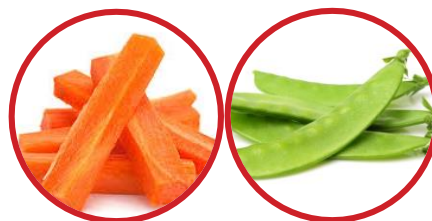
Spring lunchbox

**Sandwich on
wholemeal bread:**

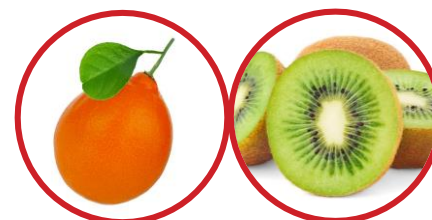
Tuna, avocado,
lettuce and mayo



Choose one or more from **each**
group to have on the side:



Carrot and/or snow peas



Tangelo and/or kiwifruit



Cheese and/or yoghurt



Grainy crackers and/or hummus

The importance of sleep



Sleep is essential for children's growth, development and for restoring energy. It helps promote good behaviour, learning, wellbeing and a healthy weight.

Tips:

- ✓ Have a regular bedtime and wake up time
- ✓ Have a consistent bedtime routine to help the brain wind down
- ✓ Ensure the sleep environment is comfortable, warm, quiet and dark
- ✓ Keep distractions (digital screens, devices and phones) away from wind down time and bedrooms
- ✓ Avoid food and drinks containing caffeine
- ✓ Ensure children are active and outside throughout the day

Recommended total amount of uninterrupted sleep:

5-13 years: 9-11 hours each night

14-17 years: 8-10 hours each night