

Ideas for a healthy lunch box

Suggestions from the food groups that you can include in lunch boxes to help keep Lea Pre-School a healthy place to be. **Please do not include nuts** as some children may have extreme allergies within the school. Ensure grapes are cut in half to avoid choking.

Choosing an item from each group will help to provide a balanced diet and help children towards the goal of five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. You also might like to include some of these ideas in your lunch box.

Cereals, breads and starches

- breads such as wholemeal, pitta, granary, tortilla wraps, bagels, or soft grain bread.
- whole-wheat muffins or muffins made with fresh fruit such as banana, dried fruit or cheese muffins
- rice, noodle, couscous or pasta-based salads
- potato salad (use light salad dressing or mayonnaise with fat-free yoghurt)

Protein foods

- lean cold cuts (ham, beef, chicken, tongue or vegetarian alternative)
- grilled chicken pieces (wings or drumsticks)
- cooked, chopped or minced meat or chicken/turkey
- homemade hamburger patties (use lean mince)
- meat or fish spreads and paste
- fish: cooked flaked, tinned e.g. tuna or pilchards or sardines
- beans, such as kidney beans or hummus
- boiled eggs

Milk and dairy foods

- yoghurt (plain mixed with honey and nuts or fresh fruit, or ready-made flavoured, low-fat varieties)
- cottage cheese (try flavouring with piccalilli, mashed banana or avocado or dried fruit)
- cheeses (all types, use grated or cut into cubes)

Vegetables

- carrot or celery sticks, baby tomatoes, cucumber wedges, lettuce
- vegetable muffins (grated carrots and baby marrows can be added to a basic muffin mix).
- vegetable soups (keep hot in flask)

Some vegetable soups can contain high levels of sugar and salt.

Here are some suggestions for sweet items and drinks. Be aware that some fruit yogurts, fromagefrais and rice puddings can contain high levels of sugar, it is always a good idea to check the nutrition label.

Fruit

- fresh fruit e.g. apples, pears, oranges, plums, peaches, grapes (cut in half), lychees, mango, pineapple
- mashed banana (add lemon juice to prevent discolouration)
- dried fruit

Sweet treats

- fruit yoghurt
- fromagefrais
- a pot of rice pudding
- fruit scone
- fruit bun
- oat cakes
- whole wheat biscuits
- piece of fruit cake

Drinks

- water
- milk
- fruit smoothie
- yogurt drink
- homemade milk shakes (puree fruit with low-fat milk, add honey and/or vanilla flavouring)
- pure fruit juice, still and sparkling

Tip: If you want to introduce new food to your children it can often help if you involve them in lunch box planning and/or shopping. If that still doesn't tempt them, you could reward them with stickers for trying new food.