

# What's for lunch?

Providing healthy lunches that under fives will eat can be a challenge! Some children will insist on having the same thing every day – don't worry, so long as it is a healthy choice. Provided there is some variety over the day, children can still maintain a balanced diet.

Try to get children involved in choosing their lunch. If children are given only healthy options to choose from they can't go wrong.

**To keep food chilled and fresh, include a frozen water bottle in the lunch box.** An insulated lunch box also reduces the chances of harmful bugs growing and is also a good idea if you regularly include cold meat, cheese or yoghurt in your child's lunch.

**Water and milk are the best drinks for children.**

Fill your child's drink bottle with water - get out of the habit of giving them cordial or juice. Remember trim milk is best for the 'over 2s'

Be aware - sipping on fruit juice and soft drinks contributes to tooth decay and weight gain in children. A 600 ml bottle of fizzy drink can provide up to 20 teaspoons of sugar!

**What about muesli bars and chippies?**

Pre-packaged snacks should not be everyday foods. Many are high in sugar, fat or salt so should only be eaten occasionally, even by active healthy children. Try not to give into pressure to buy packaged foods all the time. Remember **seasonal fruit and vegetables are cheaper than chippies and bars.**

## Other useful tips

- Cut fruit and vegetables into bite-sized pieces to make it easier for children to eat e.g. orange quarters, carrot sticks.
- Try a variety of breads such as french stick, wholemeal, pita, white, naan, crackers.
- Filling ideas: cheese, canned fish, hummus, banana, marmite/vegemite, grated carrot, lettuce, beetroot and sprouts - some children may prefer only one filling and will eat a chopped tomato or cucumber on the side.
- Keep sweet spreads such as honey, jam and chocolate spread to once or twice a week.
- If your child does not eat sandwiches, try left over pizza, cold pasta, potato/kumara/rice salad, taro, muffins, scones, crumpets, crackers and cheese, weet-bix and spread or other breakfast cereal.
- Snacks – cheese slices, or cheese and crackers, popcorn, pikelets, fruit loaf, custard in pottles, fruit and vege sticks, yoghurt. Dried fruit is sweet and sticks to the teeth. It is better given as part of a meal rather than as a single snack.

For more lunch and snack ideas, see the 'What's for Lunch?' pamphlet produced by Community and Public Health

## Healthy Nibbles for Tots

Nutrition and physical activity Information for Under 5s

For more information visit: [www.cph.co.nz](http://www.cph.co.nz)

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