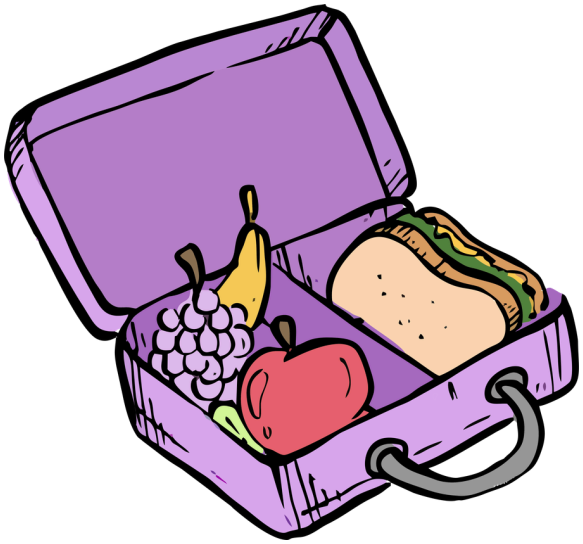
JUMPING BEANS GREENHITHE

# Packed Lunch Booklet



Healthy packed-lunch guidance and ideas for children aged 1-5 years

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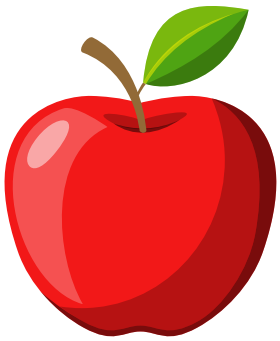
# Introduction

Preparing a packed lunch is part of many families daily routine. Offering different combinations can help keep children interested in food and encourage them to explore new tastes and textures.





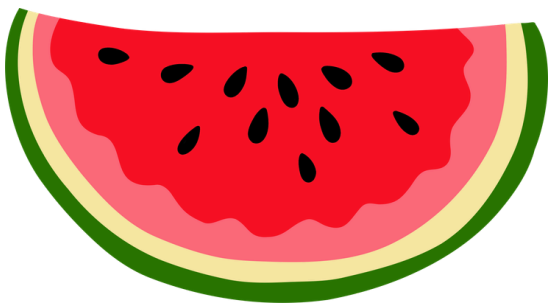
This booklet provides practical guidance for creating balanced packed lunches for children aged 1-5 years. Young children grow quickly and have small tummies, so they need nutritious foods in child-sized portions.

The habits formed in these early years can support healthy eating throughout life.

# The Five Food Groups

A varied diet is built from five food groups. A balanced packed lunch will include a starchy food, fruit or vegetables, a protein food and a dairy food or suitable alternative. Foods high in fat, salt or sugar should be limited.

| Food Group | Packed Lunch Example |
|---|---|
| Carbohydrates | Wholemeal/seeded bread, wraps, pitta, bagels, rolls, oatcakes, crackers, pasta salad |
| Fruit and Vegetables | Soft fruit, sliced apple/pear, melon, berries, satsuma segments, fruit salad, cooked vegetables, cucumber |
| Proteins | Chicken, turkey, fish, egg, beans, lentils, houmous, keeping highly processed meats to a minimum |
| Dairy | Plain yoghurt, fromage frais, cheese, or a suitable milk alternative |
| Fats and Oils | Offer only occasionally and in small portions. Avoid confectionary, savoury snacks and deep fried foods |



# A Simple Lunchbox Formula

Use this easy pattern when planning a lunchbox. Choose suitable textures and portions for your child's age, development and appetite.

- One child sized serving of starchy food, such as a sandwich, wrap, pitta, roll, pasta, rice, oatcakes or crackers
- At least two child sized servings of fruit and vegetables, ideally offering different colours and textures
- One protein choice such as egg, chicken, fish, beans, lentils, houmous or cheese
- One dairy food  such as plain yoghurt, cheese or a suitable alternative such as oat milk
- Water as a drink



## Keep Portions Small!

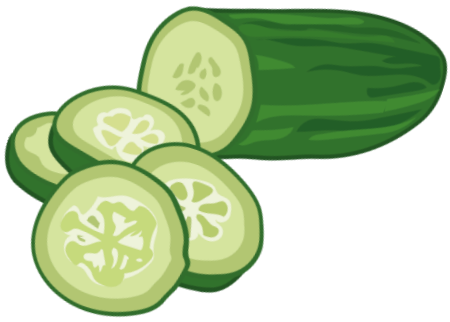
Young children have small stomachs. Start with modest portions and add more if needed. Overfilling a lunchbox can lead to waste and may feel overwhelming.

# Child-Sized Portion Guide

These examples are approximate guides rather than targets. Appetite varies from day to day, and portions should reflect the child's age, size, development and appetite.

| Food Group | 1-2 Years | 3-4 Years |
|---|---|---|
| Carbohydrates | 1 slice bread, 3 tbsp dry cereal, 1 small boiled potato, 3 tbsp cooked pasta, 2 tbsp cooked rice | 1 slice bread, 5 tbsp dry cereal, 2 small boiled potatoes, 4 tbsp cooked pasta, 3 tbsp cooked rice |
| Fruit and Vegetables | Half a cooked sliced apple, 1 tbsp fruit in juice, 1 tbsp cooked vegetables, 5 quartered grapes, 4 cooked carrot sticks | Half a large sliced apple, 2 tbsp fruit in juice, 2 tbsp cooked vegetables, 8 halved grapes, 6 carrot sticks |
| Proteins | 1 small slice chicken, 2 tbsp fish in sauce, 1 egg, 1 tbsp beans or lentils | 1 slice chicken, 3 tbsp fish in sauce, 1 egg, 2 tbsp beans or lentils |
| Dairy | 100ml milk alternative, 1 tbsp unsweetened yoghurt, 2 small sticks hard cheese, 3 tbsp custard | 150ml milk alternative, 2 tbsp unsweetened yoghurt, 2 sticks hard cheese, 4 tbsp custard |





# Packed Lunch Ideas

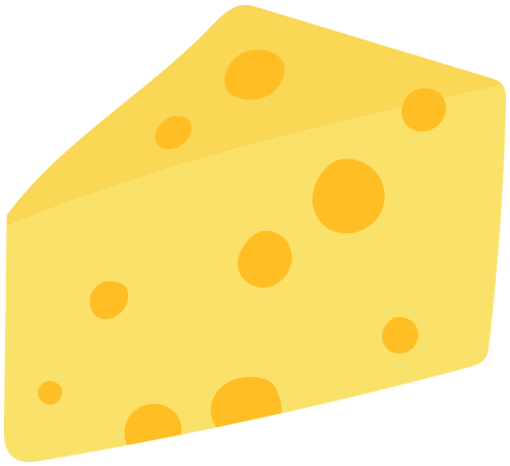
Mix and match these ideas – adjusting portions and preparation for your child.

Ingredients containing allergens should only be included where they are permitted and safe for the individual child

| Main | Fruit and Vegetables | Dairy or extra | Drink |
|---|---|---|---|
| Turkey sandwich | Carrot sticks with houmous; banana | Small pot of custard | Water |
| Cheese and lettuce wrap | Strawberries and prepared grapes | Small pot of yoghurt | Water |
| Chicken pasta salad | Cucumbers, peppers, orange or kiwi | Grated cheese | Water |
| Oatcakes and cheese | Sliced peppers, melon | Small pot of rice pudding | Water |
| Egg & cress wholemeal sandwich | Melon, strawberries, pineapple | Plain yoghurt | Water |
| Houmous with breadsticks | Carrot and cucumber sticks | / | Water |
| Tuna pasta with sweetcorn | Melon and strawberries | Small pot of fromage frais | Water |

# Planning, Variety and Value

Homemade lunches are often less expensive and can make it easier to manage portions and ingredients. Ready-made children's packs may contain more fat, salt or sugar than expected. Keep processed meats to a minimum and offer them no more than occasionally.



- Buy fruit and vegetables in season where practical
- Use resusable pots for plain yoghurt, fruit, homemade custard or other suitable foods
- Plan a few lunch combinations before shopping so ingredients can be used across the week
- Vary breads, fillings, fruit and vegetables to introduce different tastes without adding too many choices at once
- Use an insulated lunch bag and an ice pack for foods that need to stay chilled

# Reducing the Risk of Choking

Young children should sit down and be supervised while eating. Food must be prepared in a way that suits the child's age and development.

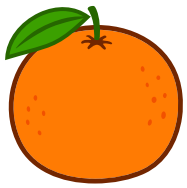
- Remove stones, pips and hard cores before serving
- Cut grapes lengthways into quarters for younger children, do not serve whole
- Cut cherry tomatoes lengthways into quarters and prepare other small round foods safely
- Cut large fruit into thin slices rather than firm chunks
- Cook hard vegetables until soft for younger children where needed
- Do not provide whole nuts to young children, follow the setting's allergy policy for nut and seed products (no nuts to be brought to nursery, or nut products)
- Remove bones from fish and check food carefully before packing it



Always consider the individual child's chewing skills. Seek professional advice if your child has swallowing difficulties or needs a modified texture.

# Packed Lunch Checklist

## Use this checklist when preparing a lunchbox!



| Check | Included? |
|---|---|
| At least one child-sized serving of starchy food | |
| At least two child-sized servings of fruit and veg | |

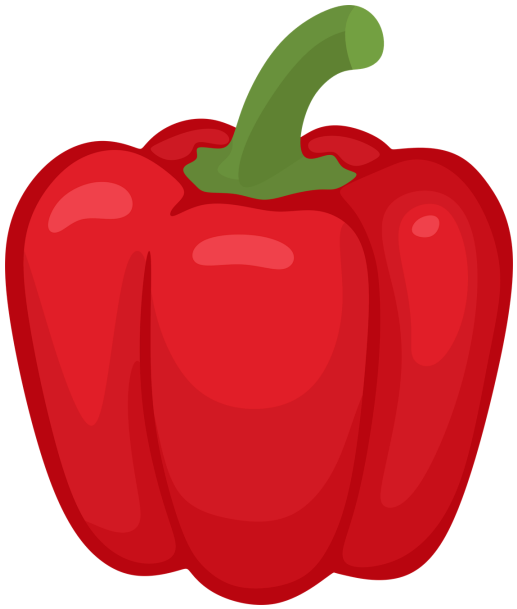
| Check | Included? |
|---|---|
| A protein food such as meat, fish, egg, beans, lentils, or cheese | |
| An age-appropriate dairy food or suitable alternative | |
| Water to drink | |
| Food is prepared to reduce choking risk | |
| Foods needing refrigeration are packed with an ice pack | |
| The lunch follows Jumping Beans Greenhithe's current allergy policy | |
| Confectionary, savoury snacks and deep fried foods are left out | |
| The portion is suitable and the lunchbox is not overfilled | |

# Healthy Habits

Keep offering a variety of foods without pressure. Children may need to see or taste a food many times before accepting it. A calm routine and positive role-modelling can help children develop confidence around food.

Children under five may need vitamin supplements, including vitamins A, C and D, depending on their age and circumstances. Ask a pharmacist, health visitor, GP or other qualified healthcare professional for current individual advice.

If you are concerned about your child's growth, eating, allergies, intolerances, bowel health or ability to chew and swallow, seek advice from an appropriate healthcare professional.



# 12 Allergens to Avoid

Please check every ingredient and follow Jumping Beans Greenhithe's current allergy policy. Tell staff about any diagnosed allergy, intolerance or dietary requirement.

- Celery
- Cereals containing gluten
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Milk
- Molluscs
- Mustard
- Peanuts
- Sesame
- Soya
- Any types of nuts

At Jumping Beans Greenhithe, the following foods must not be included in lunchboxes:

- Nuts – whole nuts or nut products including those prepared in nut oil
- Popcorn
- Chewing gum
- Sweets (boiled, hard, gooey or sticky
- Any drink other than plain water
- Marshmallows
- Raw jelly cubes

Please ensure that none of the above are included in your child's lunch. We have children and staff members who have severe allergies and could cause serious harm to their health if they are exposed to any of the above allergens.

# Weekly Lunch Planner

| Day | Starchy Main | Fruit and Veg | Protein/Dairy | Drink |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday | | | | |
| Tuesday | | | | |
| Wednesday | | | | |
| Thursday | | | | |
| Friday | | | | |