

Lunchtime is an important part of your child's day at nursery. We spend time together as the children eat and explore their food. Not only is lunchtime a great social opportunity, but it also plays a key role in giving children the energy they need to continue their active day of learning. We want to support you in being adventurous and creative when preparing lunchboxes.

These healthier ideas will help keep children interested and more open to trying new things. They also ensure that important nutrients—such as essential vitamins and minerals—are included. We hope you find the inspiration we all need from time to time.



Look what some of us have brought in for lunch.....



A guide to a healthy packed lunch



Why healthy lunchboxes matter

A balanced packed lunch gives children the energy, nutrients and comfort they need for a busy nursery day. Shared mealtimes help children learn healthy food preferences early in life.

What to include in every packed lunch

1. **Starchy Foods:** Wholemeal bread, wraps, rice, pasta, potatoes.
2. **Protein Foods:** Chicken, fish, egg, lentils, beans, houmous, tofu.
3. **Fruit:** Fresh fruit, tinned fruit in juice, dried fruit at mealtimes only.
4. **Vegetables:** Carrot sticks, cucumber, peppers, peas, broccoli.
5. **Dairy or fortified alternatives:** Plain yoghurt, cheese, milk or unsweetened fortified milk alternatives.

Keep it Colourful

Children are more likely to eat foods that look fun and colourful. Include:

- Cherry tomatoes, cucumber sticks, peppers, or carrots
- Bite-sized fruit such as blueberries, melon, satsuma segments

Tip: Add a small pot of hummus or dip to encourage veggie eating.

Choose Healthier Carbs

Use wholegrain or mix 1 slice white + 1 slice brown if children dislike full wholegrain. Try wraps, bagels, pittas or even chapatti for variety.

Healthy Protein Choices

Opt for lean meats, fish (tuna/salmon), eggs, beans or lentils. Avoid too many processed meats like sausages or nuggets.

Choose Better Dairy Options

Go for low-fat, lower-sugar yoghurts or fromage frais. Watch out for high-sugar yoghurts marketed at children.

Reduce High-Fat, High-Salt Snacks

Limit crisps—swap for plain popcorn, rice cakes, or veg sticks. Replace cake or chocolate bars with fruit breads, teacakes or fresh/dried fruit (keep dried fruit to mealtimes to protect teeth).

Keeping costs low

Use supermarket own-brand staples, tinned and frozen produce, cook extra portions, buy seasonal produce and avoid expensive “kids’ snacks”.

Smart swaps

Swap flavoured yoghurt for plain yoghurt with fruit.

Swap crisps for rice cakes, popcorn or vegetable sticks.

Swap sweet snacks for fruit teacake, malt loaf or oat cookies.

What to limit or avoid

Limit ultra-processed foods such as processed meats, sweetened yoghurts, fruit snacks, crisps, cakes and biscuits. Avoid sugary drinks, salty snacks, and foods containing artificial sweeteners or colourings.



Safety & choking guidance

Cut grapes, berries and cherry tomatoes into quarters. Remove stones from fruit. Ensure food is soft enough to chew and stored safely.



A gentle reminder that all lunches brought into nursery must be completely nut-free. This helps us keep every child safe, especially those with severe allergies. Please avoid sending any items that contain nuts or may contain traces of nuts, including:

- Peanut butter
- Nutella or chocolate–nut spreads
- Snack bars with nuts
- Pesto
- Cakes or bakes containing nuts

Thank you for helping us maintain a safe, healthy environment for everyone.

