

# How to: Lunchbox

When children come home with a lot left in their lunchbox, it can be tempting to put in many different options to eat. This, along with the uprise of Bento Box style lunch boxes, can make us feel like we need to fill up every lunch box compartment. Unfortunately this can go the other way and results in children eating a little bit of everything and coming home with lots of open packets.

If you are feeling lost with lunches, try going back to the basics, pack in 3 or 4 things like what you might have had growing up. This could be; an apple, a spread sandwich (like butter and vegemite) and a yoghurt. Add another thing like a couple of biscuits or crackers if this doesn't fill your child up.

If you are worried about food getting too warm, buy a good cold-bag as a lunch box and freezer brick, and encourage your child to eat their cold thing first (i.e. yoghurt). Children in prep, preschool and kindy are often reminded to eat their cold food first.

*Choose one fruit, one main, and two snacks from the table below to make up your child's school lunchbox.*

## After school

Children need 3 meals plus 2-3 snacks each day. It's important to give your child afternoon tea, especially if they do not eat much at school. You can give your child their lunch box to finish off, or something from the "Snacks" list, or something easy to make at home such as a smoothie (1 banana, milk, handful of spinach), milkshake .

it's hard to get the balance right with "sometimes foods" for kids. Try to give them a serving of "sometimes food" once each day to help ensure they get enough energy as well as to prevent a food hierarchy. Children who are greatly restricted on "sometimes foods" tend to see them as more valuable, rather than all foods being neutral.

<p><b>Fruit (choose 1 serve)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·summer (stone fruit, watermelon, grapes, mangoes)</li> <li>·winter (mandarins, kiwifruit)</li> <li>·berries (fresh/frozen)</li> <li>·apples, bananas</li> <li>·handful of dried fruit</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Main (choose 1)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·zucchini slice/quiche</li> <li>·sandwich (spread/cheese/egg/ham)</li> <li>·leftovers (use a thermos for children who prefer hot food)</li> <li>·wraps</li> <li>·meatballs/rissoles</li> <li>·savoury muffin</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Snack (choose 2)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>·cheese cubes/sticks</li> <li>·biscuits/crackers</li> <li>·bliss balls</li> <li>·cake/slice</li> <li>·nuts (check rules)</li> <li>·yoghurt</li> <li>·salami stick</li> <li>·baked beans</li> <li>·veggies sticks &amp; dip (carrot, cucumber, celery, snow peas, green beans, capsicum)</li> <li>·corn cob</li> <li>·cherry tomatoes</li> <li>·soy beans (edamame)</li> <li>·sugar snap peas</li> <li>·plain milk popper</li> <li>·hard boiled egg</li> </ul>	

*If your child does not accept many of the foods on this list, consult with a dietitian.*

# What about “junk food”?

Almost all foods should be provided in unlimited amounts in order to allow children to eat when they are hungry and stop when they are full or satisfied.

However, with “junk foods”, or “sometimes foods” we allow a typical serving approximately once per day, either with dinner or another meal and then allow children to eat an “unlimited” amount of a “sometimes food” approximately once per week so they are able to learn to self-regulate all types of foods.

For example, after Saturday morning sport, you may provide your child with a box of hot chips, or a bag of crisps, or a tray of sweet biscuits and allow them to eat as much or as little as they want.

<b>Sometimes foods serving sizes</b>	2 scoops ice cream 30g snack pack of salty crackers or chips 2-3 sweet biscuits 1 donut 1 slice cake/muffin 5-6 lollies ½ bar chocolate 1 can soft drink 12 fried hot chips	
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*At all meals and snacks, maintain a consistent environment, with children sitting at the table, bench or on a blanket on the floor so there are clear boundaries and expectations around when mealtime is and when playtime is. If your child has difficulty with this or finds mealtimes stressful, consult with a dietitian.*