

Eating well: Packed lunches for 1 to under-5 year olds



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Contents

About this guide	3
Why do we need ideas for packed lunches?	4
Key principles of eating well for 1 to under-5 year olds	5
How to pack a packed lunch	7
Making good-value packed lunches	11
What should go into a packed lunch for 1 to under-5 year olds?	14
Ideas for packed lunches for 1 to under-5 year olds	16
Making a gluten-free lunch box	48
Good sources of vitamins and minerals	49
Packed lunch boxes and drinks containers	51

About this guide

This guide has been written to provide practical ideas for anyone who is preparing packed lunches for children aged 1 to under 5 years. We hope it will be particularly useful to early years settings who may want to provide guidance to families and child carers about how to provide a nutritious, cost-effective and practical packed lunch for children of this age.

The packed lunches shown in this resource all provide the amount of energy (calories) needed by children of this age at a main meal and, if a range of packed lunches are eaten over a period of a week or more, they will provide the important nutrients that young children need to develop and grow.

Why do we need ideas for packed lunches?

Many children will take a packed lunch to their early years settings. Shared mealtimes offer an ideal opportunity for young children to learn healthy dietary habits and food preferences as they try new foods and observe the eating behaviours of their peers.

For many families, this will be the first time they have had to provide regular meals for their child outside of the home and preparing a healthy, balanced lunchbox can be a daunting experience.

Early years settings have a unique opportunity to support parents and carers as they learn how to provide low-cost and healthy packed lunches for their children.

A packed lunch should provide the same amount of energy and nutrients as a main meal for children of these ages, and should follow the key principles of eating well for this age group.

Healthy eating and physical activity are essential for proper growth and development in childhood. To help children develop patterns of healthy eating from an early age, it is important that the food and eating patterns to which children are exposed – both at home and outside the home – are those that promote positive attitudes and enjoyment of good food.

The packed lunches in this resource are in line with the national nutrition guidance for early years settings in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (see below).

For more information about eating well for 1 to under 5 year olds in early years settings

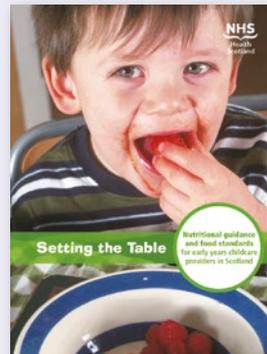


ENGLAND

*Eat better, start better:
A practical guide*

Available at:

<https://foundationyears.org.uk/eat-better-start-better/>



SCOTLAND

*Setting the table:
Nutritional guidance and
food standards for early
years childcare providers
in Scotland*

Available at:

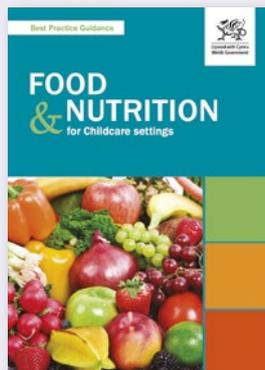
www.healthscotland.com

WALES

*Food and nutrition
for childcare
settings*

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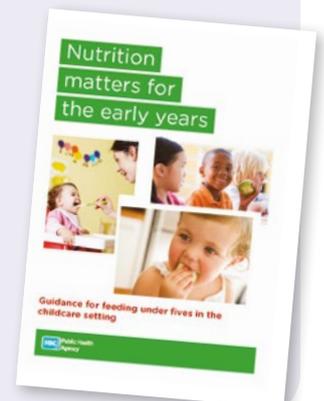
www.gov.wales



NORTHERN IRELAND

*Nutrition matters
Available at:*

www.publichealth.hscni.net



Key principles of eating well for 1 to under-5 year olds

A good variety of different foods is important to ensure all the important nutrients (including vitamins and minerals) are included in the diet. Make sure the content of packed lunches is varied from day to day.

Choose nutrient dense food. Young children need to eat small quantities of nutrient dense foods to support their growth and development. The best foods are those that are unprocessed or minimally processed. Where possible, choose less processed options. For example, you can swap processed meat or fish covered with breadcrumbs or batter (such as sausage rolls, scotch eggs or chicken nuggets) with pieces of chicken or egg, or flavoured yoghurt with unsweetened natural yoghurt and fruit.

Include food that contains iron and zinc in every meal. This includes meat, fish, eggs, ground nuts and seeds, and soya products such as tofu. See page 50 for examples of foods that are high in iron and zinc.

Children should be encouraged to drink tap water if they are thirsty, and fresh drinking water should be available at all times. Unlike sugar sweetened or non-sugar sweetened drinks, water quenches thirst, does not spoil the appetite, and does not damage teeth.

Vitamin supplements

Public health recommendations are that children aged 6 months to 5 years should be given a daily supplement of vitamins A, C and D unless (contrary to recommendations for the over 1's) they are consuming more than 500ml of formula milk a day. These are available for free to families eligible for the Healthy Start allowance. In Scotland all pregnant women can get free Healthy Start vitamins and all breastfeeding women, infants and children up to 3 years can get free vitamin D. For those eligible for Best Start Foods, free Healthy Start vitamins are provided for children aged up to 4 years. More information can be found here:

www.healthystart.nhs.uk/getting-vitamins/

www.gov.scot/policies/maternal-and-child-health/free-vitamins-for-all-pregnant-women/

www.gov.scot/publications/vitamin-d-advice-for-parents/

Serve foods containing calcium, riboflavin and iodine every day.

Whole or semi-skimmed cows' milk, cheeses, and unsweetened yoghurt and fromage frais are good sources of these nutrients. For children who do not have dairy products, an unsweetened fortified milk substitute can provide these nutrients. For details of other dairy substitutes for children, see pages 27 and 35. For more examples of foods rich in these nutrients, see page 49.

Young children should eat child-sized portions of at least five different fruit and vegetables a day.

Where children are reluctant to eat these foods, they should at least taste five different ones every day and have them served with their meals and snacks so they become familiar with them.

Did you know? Young children need to be presented with unfamiliar vegetables on multiple occasions (as many as 8 to 10 times or more for each vegetable) to help develop and support their regular consumption.



Portion sizes

The portion sizes we show for the packed lunches in this resource meet the average energy and nutrient needs of 1 to under-5 year olds as a main meal. Some children will eat less than this, but children's appetites will vary daily and weekly, and particularly when they have growth spurts. Always offer the amounts of fruit and vegetables shown, as it is important that children get used to eating these foods at every meal.

Limit sugar intake. Children do not need sugary foods such as sweets, biscuits, cakes chocolate, soft drinks or sugar for energy. Sugary foods can damage teeth and provide calories but few nutrients. Starchy foods – such as potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and yam – are better sources of energy, as they contain other important nutrients too. Use fruit to sweeten yoghurts and desserts.

Did you know?

Commercial baby food and drinks, such as a fruit purées, are often high in sugar despite being marketed as healthy. These products are best avoided where possible.

Limit foods (including snacks) that are energy dense and high in saturated fat.

These include biscuits, buns, cakes, pastries, pizza, desserts, crisps, savoury snacks.

Make sure food for 1 to under-5 year olds is low in salt. Avoid foods that are high in salt such as processed meat, salty snacks and biscuits, sauces and ready-prepared meals. Salt should not be added to foods given to children under 5 years.



What to avoid?

- Children aged 1 to under-5 should not be given foods or drinks containing artificial sweeteners (such as saccharin and aspartame), the preservative E211 or the artificial colours E102, E104, E110, E122, E124 or E129.
- Children should not be given tea, coffee, cola, energy drinks or other drinks that contain caffeine as these disrupt children's sleep. Tea and coffee are also not suitable drinks for under-5s as they contain tannic acid, which interferes with iron absorption.
- Children over 1 year of age do not need fortified milks such as toddler milks or growing-up milks. These are sweeter than animal milks. Also, they do not contain enough of some nutrients and may have too much of others.
- Children under 5 years should not be given rice drinks as they may contain too much arsenic.

How to pack a packed lunch

If packed lunches are provided regularly, it is worth investing in a suitable lunch box and other containers, including a drink container. Early years settings may be able to support families in choosing appropriate containers or buying in bulk so that prices are lower. You can use any suitable packed lunch box, but for information about the boxes and drinks containers we have used, and photos showing 'how to pack a lunch', see pages 8 and 51.

It is useful to have some small containers, within the main lunch box, to keep individual items separate. This will help to keep different components in a good condition and make it easier for children to eat when they are out and about. You may want to wrap sandwiches to keep them whole. Cutlery may also be needed for some items, and we have used simple, reusable spoons and forks where needed. For details of where to get all these items, see page 51.

Things to think about when packing a packed lunch

- Is the food easy for little ones to eat?
- Are the pieces manageable?
- Is anything a choking risk: for example, small round fruit, whole nuts, popcorn, white bread, pieces of sausage and hot dogs, chunks of cheese, peanut butter or jelly cubes? If so, don't include them in a lunchbox. Make sure small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes are cut into quarters (4 small pieces), hard pips or stones are removed from fruit and nuts are only served finely chopped or ground. More information on how to food serve food safely can be found here: <https://www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby/weaning/safe-weaning/preparing-food-safely/>
- Can children easily see what it is they are eating?
- Will the food travel well? Will it stay in one piece?
- Is there a fork or spoon for items that are hard to eat with your fingers?
- Are the contents colourful and appetising when the box is open?
- Is there a variety of small amounts of different foods that will tempt small appetites?
- Have children tried the foods at home first so the foods will be familiar to them when they open the lunch box?
- Does the lunchbox include nuts or nut butters? Many early years settings have a "no nuts" policy to protect children with allergies. Nuts or nut butters can be replaced with another source of protein such as egg or pulses.

Choosing a lunch box

Choose a simple lunch box which is able to keep the contents safe and well packed.

A box with compartments is a good option as different parts of the lunch can be kept separate and it is easy to see what is in the lunch box. Include a re-usable spoon or fork if needed.



Using small containers in the lunch box

Small containers with lids can be used inside the lunch box, to keep ingredients separate. These can be used, for example, for yoghurt or houmous, or for portions of fruit and vegetables.



Drinks containers and cups

Some of the example packed lunches shown in this resource include milk, while others include water.

Drinks can be sent in a simple bottle that the child can drink from. It is easy to add the child's name to the bottle, and it can be kept cold with the packed lunch in a fridge. In many early years settings, simple drinking cups will be available and children might like to pour or to have their drink poured into the same type of cup used by the other children. Cups should be open-topped and children should be encouraged to sip and swallow rather than 'suck' a drink. If bottles are used, these should have a 'free flow' spout. Remember to wash the bottle regularly to avoid bacterial contamination.



Children who are not used to drinking out of a cup might find it easier to start with a small cup that is easy to hold.

Keeping packed lunches cool

Packed lunches should be kept in a fridge after they have been prepared. You can prepare the lunch box the night before and keep it in the fridge. When the children arrive at the early years setting, the packed lunch should again be put straight into a fridge, or stored with cold packs in a cold bag.

Food safety and hygiene tips

It is important to wash your hands before preparing a packed lunch.

If you make foods in advance and store them in the fridge, use them within 48 hours. It's particularly important to store meat safely in the fridge, to stop bacteria from spreading and to avoid food poisoning:

- Store raw meat and poultry in clean, sealed containers on the bottom shelf of the fridge, so they can't touch or drip onto other food.
- Follow any storage instructions on the label, and don't eat meat after its use-by date.
- Keep cooked meat separate from raw meat.

'Best before' and 'use-by' dates

- Food with a 'use-by' date goes off quite quickly and it can be dangerous to eat after this date.
- Food with a 'best before' date is longer-lasting. It should be safe to eat, but may not be at its best quality after this date.

Anything left over in the packed lunch should be thrown away at the end of the day. Families may want to see how much their child has eaten and may prefer to throw out the leftovers themselves rather than that being done in the childcare setting.

Supporting children to eat safely at lunchtime

Children under 5 should always be supervised when eating.

Children should wash their hands before eating, and this is equally true when they are given a packed lunch or a snack.

Making good-value packed lunches

We have calculated the costs of each of the example packed lunches shown in this resource. They range from 70p to £1.40 per lunch, with an average cost of £1.

We have shown the cost of each lunch as:



How did we calculate the costs of the lunches in this resource?

We used standard supermarket prices to calculate the costs:

- We used supermarket own-brand prices for foods such as pasta, rice, lentils, butter, vegetable oil, fresh carrots, onions, potatoes, canned tomatoes and canned beans, as these foods are nutritionally similar regardless of the branding or range.
- We used fruits and vegetables from the supermarket ranges. These foods may be cheaper if you buy them from market stalls or local produce providers.
- For packed lunches that include eggs, we used free-range eggs.

If you shop around, buy in bulk and use fruits and vegetables seasonally, it is likely that the cost of these packed lunches could be reduced.

The more expensive lunches contained more expensive fruit and vegetables, such as blueberries, mango or baby sweetcorn. These could be replaced with cheaper items to bring the costs closer to the average packed lunch cost. Lunches that contain meat, eggs and fish may be more expensive than protein alternatives such as lentils, beans, or peanut butter. However, it is important to ensure that children are regularly being served sources of iron and zinc (as outlined on p5).

Tips for keeping food shopping costs down

At home

- **Cook from scratch.** If you have the facilities, making meals from scratch is usually cheaper and healthier than buying ready-made items which also often have a lot of unnecessary sugar, salt and preservatives added. You can make larger quantities of dishes and use some for meals for the family and some for packed lunches. The more you make of something, the cheaper it usually is to make it at home.
- **Plan meals ahead.** This means you can use up any leftovers you may have and can try to base meals on foods that are in season, which are often cheaper. Write a shopping list and stick to it to avoid unnecessary spending.
- **Serve meat less often.** Meat is a good source of iron (see page 50) but is expensive. You can use less meat in dishes by adding more vegetables, as well as peas and beans (such as chickpeas, lentils or red kidney beans) to add extra protein. The example packed lunches on pages 18-48 give lots of ideas for non-meat ingredients.

When shopping

- **There's no need to buy 'children's food.'** Children don't need 'children's food' such as fruit snacks, purées in pouches and puffs. You pay a lot for a logo, small portion pack or convenient food item. An alternative is to make your own lunch box items and make the packed lunch look fun – for example, by decorating the lids of containers with stickers.
- **Choose own-brand foods.** Supermarket-branded foods such as pasta, rice, cheese and yoghurt are often cheaper and quality is generally the same as popular brands. The only real difference is the price.
- **Beware of offers.** Only buy offers such as 'buy one get one free' if you would buy that food or brand anyway. Compare prices using the unit price to see the lowest cost options where possible, for example price per 100ml or 100g.



Check the ingredients for meat products like sausages or burgers, as some cheaper products may be low in meat content and high in fat and salt.

- **Swap fresh fruit, vegetables and fish for cheaper tinned or frozen alternatives.** It's often cheaper to buy tinned or frozen fruits and vegetables. They contain the same minerals and nutrients as fresh ones, need no preparation and, if you can store them, they are often the cheapest way of adding vegetables to dishes.
- **Choose your fruit and vegetables carefully.** Don't buy fruit and vegetables that are overly ripe unless you are sure that you will use them quickly. Avoid pre-cut, pre-peeled and packaged fresh vegetables and fruits as they are more expensive than buying loose fruits and vegetables and lose nutrients as soon as the pack is opened.
- **Find out if there is a food pantry, social supermarket or Co-operation Towns network in your area.** In some communities, quality fruit and vegetables are sold at a lower price through local food partnerships to help people access affordable fresh food.

Information on the food pantries, social supermarkets or co-operative town networks that may be available in your area can be found here;

www.sustainablefoodplaces.org/members
www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk • www.cooperation.towns

These websites also provide information and support for those wanting to set up a food pantry or social supermarket where they do not already exist.

Healthy Start/ Best Start Foods

The cost of food has risen considerably in recent years, forcing many families to make difficult choices about what foods to buy for their children.

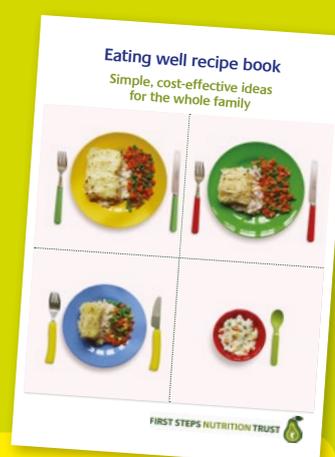
Help to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses and milk is available for some families through the NHS Healthy Start Scheme, including those who are more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four and are receiving a qualifying benefit.

More information can be found here;

www.healthystart.nhs.uk/

or through Best Start Foods if you live in Scotland;

www.mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods



Do you want ideas for simple, cost-effective recipes to make at home? You can download our *Eating well recipe book* from firststepsnutrition.org

What should go into a packed lunch for 1 to under-5 year olds?

Where possible choose unprocessed or minimally processed foods. For example, swap flavoured yoghurt for plain yoghurt and fruit, packaged fruit snacks for fresh fruit, and children's veggie straws, puffs and crisps for pitta bread or a roll. You can also swap refined grains (such as white bread, rice and pasta) for more nutritious whole grains (such as wholemeal bread, brown rice and pasta).

DID YOU KNOW?

Animal milks contain high quality protein, are complete with all essential amino acids and are a good source of highly bioavailable calcium, vitamin A, B vitamins, zinc and iodine.

1 or 2 portions of STARCHY FOOD	1 portion of PROTEIN FOOD: meat, fish, eggs, beans, lentils or other alternatives	At least 1 portion of VEGETABLES	At least 1 portion of FRUIT	At least 1 portion of MILK OR DAIRY FOODS, or alternatives
<p>For example: Bread or rolls, bagel, tortilla or wrap, pitta bread or chapatti</p> <p>Cooked potato, yam, pasta, noodles, rice, couscous, polenta or other grains</p> <p>Fruit bun, malt loaf or raisin bread</p>	<p>For example: Chicken, turkey, beef, lamb, pork, sardine, tuna or salmon</p> <p>Egg</p> <p>Houmous or other pulses and beans</p> <p>Dahl or other lentil dishes</p> <p>Tahini or other seed spreads</p> <p>Tofu</p> <p>Nut butters</p>	<p>For example: Cucumber Carrots Tomatoes Celery Red or green peppers Sweetcorn Mixed salad Green beans Sugar snap peas Peas</p>	<p>For example: Apple Pear Banana Clementine Strawberries Grapes Kiwi Melon Pineapple Mango Fruit canned in fruit juice Dried fruit: raisins, apricots, figs or dates</p>	<p>For example: Milk to drink: Pasteurised whole or semi-skimmed cows', goats' or sheep's milks</p> <p>Plant-based milk alternatives: Unsweetened calcium-fortified oat, soya, pea, coconut or almond milks (see p35 for more information)</p> <p>Dairy foods: Plain yoghurt Plain fromage frais Cheese Rice pudding Semolina pudding Custard</p>

MAKING A VEGAN LUNCH BOX

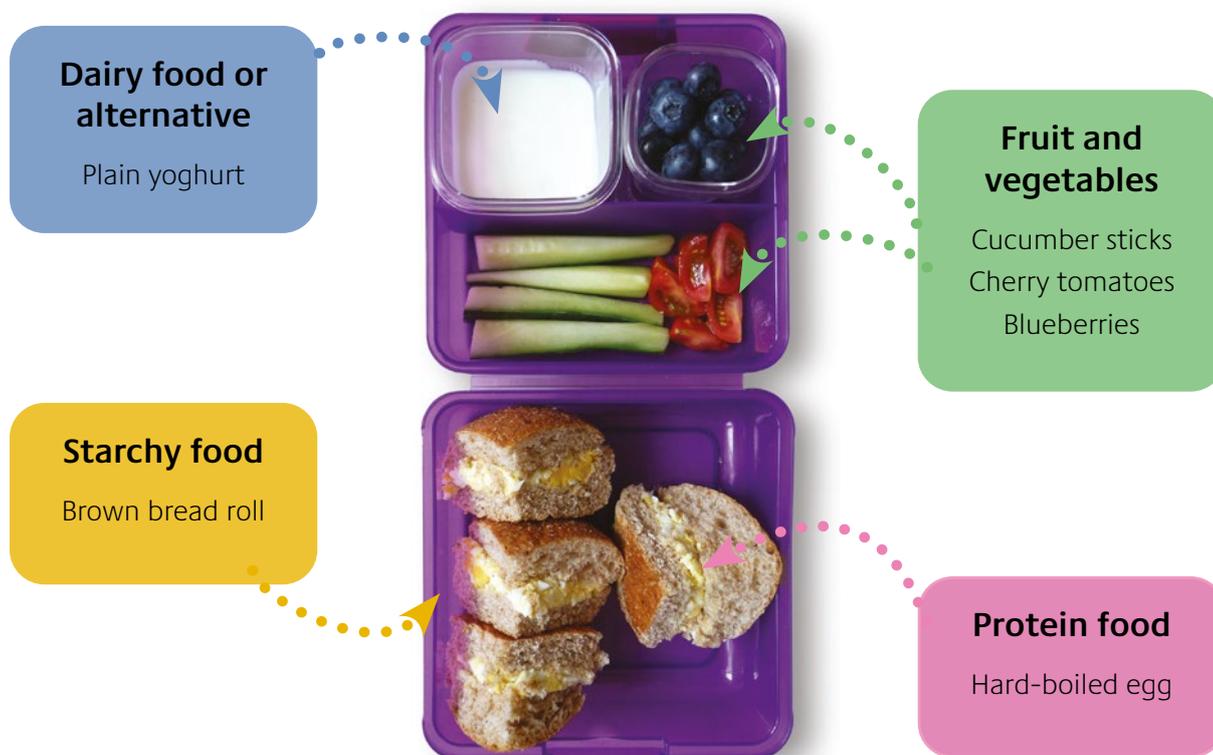
It is important that all those that support families with infants and children on a vegan diet have clear, expert information on how to ensure energy and nutrient needs are met. Our guide, Eating well for vegan infants and under-5s, provides information, recipes and portion size information as well as practical advice relevant to all infants and children on eating well.

It is available at: www.firststepsnutrition.org/eating-well-resources

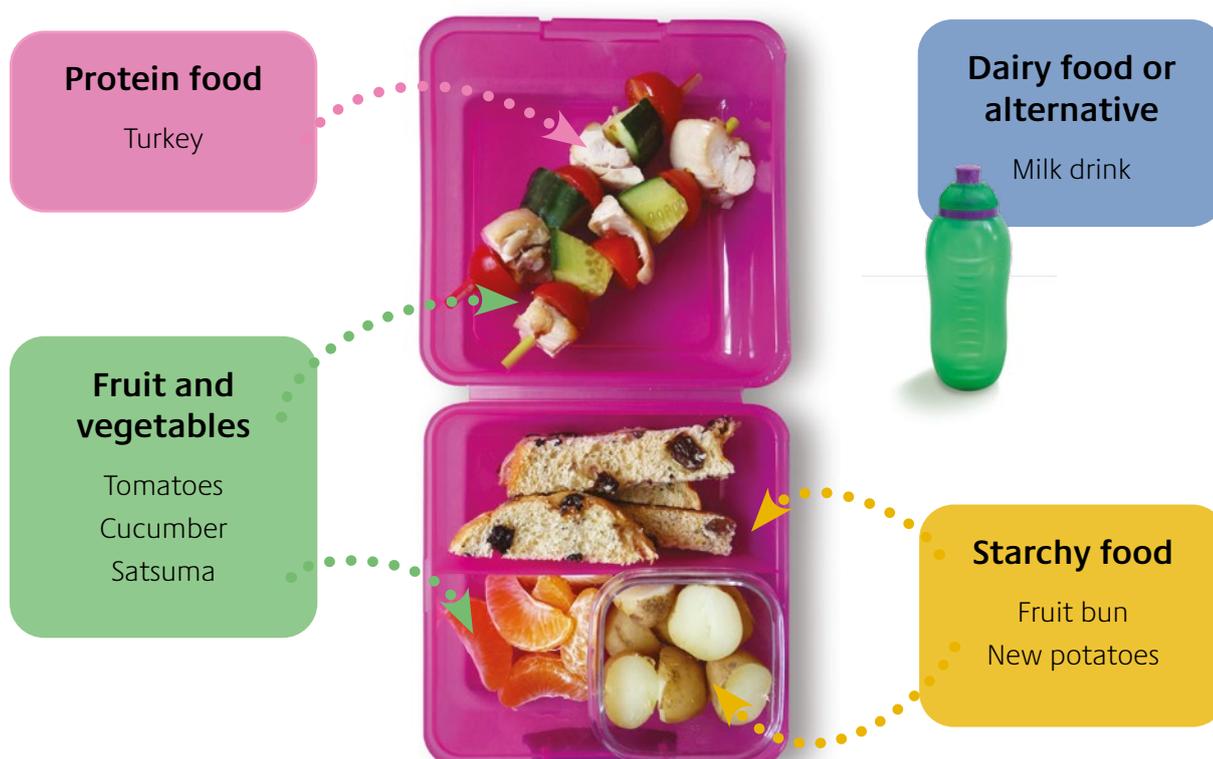
For more information on which fruit and vegetables are in season, visit Food for Life; <https://www.foodforlife.org.uk/skills/cooking/planning-cooking-activities/seasonality-chart>

Examples

Egg roll, cucumber and tomato, and yoghurt and blueberries



Turkey kebabs, new potatoes, fruit bun, satsuma and milk drink



Ideas for packed lunches for 1 to under-5 year olds

On the following pages we give examples of 15 packed lunches (see the list on the next page). When putting together our packed lunches we have considered the following:

- ✓ Do the packed lunches, on average, meet the energy and nutrient requirements for a main meal for children aged 1 to under-5 years?
- ✓ Are the packed lunches varied?
- ✓ Are some of the packed lunches suitable for children who may eat a vegetarian or vegan diet or who avoid gluten, dairy products or eggs?
- ✓ Are the packed lunches robust? Will they travel to the early years settings and be manageable for children of this age to eat?
- ✓ Will the ingredients discolour or go soggy once prepared?
- ✓ Are the packed lunches cost-effective?
- ✓ Are they easy to prepare, and are the instructions clear and simple?

No-cook packed lunches

Even in situations when cooking facilities are not available, it is still possible to offer young children a variety of nutritious packed lunches. Peanut butter and banana sandwiches, cucumber and dried apricots and milk drink (p32), pitta bread with houmous and carrot, banana and a milk drink (p34) and sardine sandwiches, tomatoes, peas and banana and milk drink (p42) do not require cooking.

DID YOU KNOW?

Eggs can be boiled in kettles where the element is covered. Boil the kettle once and leave the egg to cool before removing the shell and serving.

Many of the other packed lunches outlined in this guide don't need to be cooked if you replace the dessert with a no-cook alternative, such fruit or yoghurt. For more information on which foods to substitute, that provide similar vitamins and minerals, see pages 49-50.

Packed lunches in this resource

KEY: **DF** = Dairy-free **EF** = Egg-free **GF** = Gluten-free
V = Suitable for vegetarians **VV** = Suitable for vegans
£ = 70p to 94p **££** = 95p to £1.19 **£££** = £1.20 to £1.45

						Page
<i>For more on gluten-free alternatives, see page 48.</i>						
Boiled egg, cheese cubes, toast slices and broccoli spears, and raisins	V	££				18
Cheese and cucumber sandwiches, green beans and red pepper, and rice pudding with raisins	V	EF	£			20
Chicken tortilla, carrot and green pepper sticks, satsuma segments and Greek yoghurt		EF	£			22
Chicken, pasta, red pepper, lettuce, kiwi and milk drink		EF	£			24
Dahl, chapatti, rice and tomato, and soya yoghurt with grapes	V	VV	EF	DF	£	26
Egg roll, cucumber and tomato, and yoghurt and blueberries	V	££				28
Mixed beans, pitta bread, houmous and cucumber, and apple sauce and custard	V	EF	£			30
Peanut butter and banana sandwiches, cucumber, and dried apricots, and milk drink	V	(VV)	EF	DF	£	32
Pitta bread with houmous and carrot, banana and milk drink	V	(VV)	EF	DF	£	34
Pizza, carrot sticks, yellow pepper, dates and milk drink	V	EF	£££			36
Rice and peas, jerk chicken, sweetcorn, tomatoes and mango		EF	DF	GF	£££	38
Roast vegetable and chickpea couscous, with soya yoghurt and strawberries	V	VV	EF	DF	££	40
Sardine sandwiches, tomatoes, peas and banana, and milk drink	EF	DF	£			42
Tuna and sweetcorn pasta, red pepper, celery, malt loaf and melon	EF	£££				44
Turkey kebabs, new potatoes, fruit bun, satsuma and milk drink		EF	£			46

Boiled egg, cheese cubes, toast slices and broccoli spears, and raisins

V

££



1 boiled egg, shelled and sliced

A small matchbox-size piece (20g) hard cheese or Edam cheese, cubed

1 slice wholemeal bread, toasted and sliced

2 or 3 broccoli spears, cooked

1 tablespoon (20g) raisins

KEY: DF = Dairy-free EF = Egg-free GF = Gluten-free V = Suitable for vegetarians VV = Suitable for vegans
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DRINK

Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

If children like softer cooked vegetables, instead of cooked broccoli you could serve:

- cooked carrot sticks, parsnip sticks or butternut squash cubes
- steamed mange tout or sugar snap peas, or
- cooked frozen peas, broad beans or green beans.

LUNCH BOX TIPS

Why are eggs a good food choice for young children?

- Eggs are a very nutritious food, and a great lunch box addition for young children. Eggs provide protein, iron, zinc, phosphorus, selenium, antioxidants, vitamins A and D, riboflavin, iodine, choline and many other nutrients.
- Eggs can be boiled and mashed or sliced into halves, quarters or rounds.
- Make sure that eggs are thoroughly cooked when serving to under-5s – both the white and yolk should be cooked until hard. Eggs need to be boiled for at least 7 minutes to ensure the white and yolk are cooked through.

Cheese and cucumber sandwiches, green beans and red pepper, and rice pudding with raisins



- 1 wholemeal roll
- 1 tablespoon grated cheese
- 6 slices cucumber
- 10 green beans
- 5 strips pepper
- 2 tablespoons (60g) rice pudding with raisins (See recipe below.)

RECIPE

Rice pudding with raisins

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 60g.

- 60g pudding rice
- 250ml semi-skimmed milk
- 80g raisins

1. Place the pudding rice and semi-skimmed milk in a pan and slowly bring to the boil, stirring all the time.
2. Simmer gently for about 15 minutes until the rice is softening, stirring regularly.
3. Add the raisins and cook for a further 5 minutes.
4. Cool before serving.

DRINK

Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

- Instead of rice pudding, try semolina pudding.
- Instead of raisins, try dried chopped apricots, dates or figs.
- For vegan children rice pudding and other puddings can be made with unsweetened calcium-fortified oat, soya, pea, coconut or almond milks instead of cows' milk. You will probably need to use more of these milks for the same amount of rice, and the pudding may take longer to cook.

LUNCH BOX TIPS

Say 'cheese'!

- Cheese is a convenient packed lunch food, and in small amounts
- can be a useful addition to lunch boxes for young children. However,
- cheese is high in salt and it is important not to serve it every day.
- Cottage cheese and soft cheese are lower in salt than hard cheeses.
- Mozzarella, Emmental and Wensleydale cheeses are lower in salt than most other hard cheeses.

Chicken tortilla, carrot and green pepper sticks, satsuma segments and Greek yoghurt

EF

£



1/4 cooked breast of chicken (40g),
cut into strips

1/8 cucumber, cut into thin strips

1 tortilla or wrap

3 baby carrots (40g), topped and tailed,
washed, and cut in half lengthways

1/4 green pepper, washed and cut into
sticks

1 satsuma or clementine, divided into
segments

1 large tablespoon (40g) Greek yoghurt

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DRINK

Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

- Instead of chicken you can offer turkey or any other plain roast meat. For vegetarian or vegan children, you can substitute meat with beans or tofu.

LUNCH BOX TIPS

Serving tortillas

- Some children might like a filling wrapped in a tortilla and cut into pieces. Others may prefer their food served separately so they can see the component parts they are eating.
- You can cut the tortilla into triangles and serve it as it is, or lightly grill it to make it into crispy tortilla triangles.

Take care when cooking and serving chicken

- Make sure chicken is cooked thoroughly to ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed.
- When cooking chicken, cut into the middle to check that the meat is no longer pink, the juices run clear and it's piping hot (with steam coming out).
- Don't store cooked chicken in the fridge for more than 2 or 3 days, and make sure it is kept well away from any raw meat.
- It is particularly important that, when packed lunches which contain meat are brought into child care settings, they are kept cold until serving.

Chicken, pasta, red pepper, lettuce, kiwi and milk drink



Check that the pasta is egg-free.



3 tablespoons cooked pasta shapes
(about 30g dried pasta)

Meat from half of a chicken thigh,
cooked and cut into pieces (40g)

1/4 red pepper, washed and cut into
chunks or slices

2 leaves crispy lettuce, sliced

1 kiwi fruit, peeled and cut into slices or
chunks

100ml full fat or semi-skimmed milk, or
a suitable plant-based milk alternative

KEY: **DF** = Dairy-free **EF** = Egg-free **GF** = Gluten-free **V** = Suitable for vegetarians **VV** = Suitable for vegans
£ = 70p to 94p **££** = 95p to £1.19 **£££** = £1.20 to £1.45

DRINK

Serve milk with this packed lunch.
(See page 35 for information on choosing an appropriate plant-based milk.)



LUNCH BOX TIPS

Pasta

Pasta is a useful addition to lunch boxes as it is easy for small children to pick up and eat, and it comes in a variety of shapes. We used multi-coloured alphabet-shaped pasta (made with tomato for red pasta and with spinach for green). You could try spirals (fusilli), penne quills, macaroni, shells (conchiglie), bows (farfalle) or little ears (orecchiette).

Don't overcook pasta, as it will taste better cold if it has some 'bite'.

The key to good nutrition is having a variety of foods, so don't serve pasta every day. Alternate it with other starchy foods such as potato, rice or bread.

Dahl, chapatti, rice and tomato, and soya yoghurt with grapes



1 small chapatti (30g)

2-3 tablespoons dahl (80g)
(See recipe below.)

1-2 tablespoons cooked white or brown rice (50g)

3 cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters (30g)

2 tablespoons soya yoghurt (60g)

10-12 grapes, halved (40g)

RECIPE

Dahl

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 80g each.

75g red lentils

300ml water

1/2 onion, diced

1/2 teaspoon garlic paste

1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder

1. Place all the ingredients in a pan and bring to the boil.
2. Simmer for 15 minutes until the lentils are soft.

DRINK

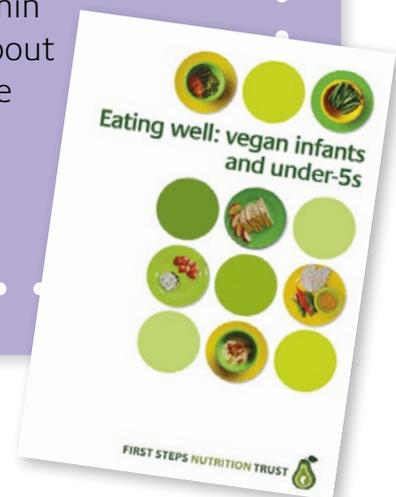
Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



LUNCH BOX TIPS

Non-dairy alternatives

- If children do not eat or drink dairy foods, or are on a vegan diet,
- there are alternatives you can use for cows' milk or cows' milk yoghurt. Make sure any alternative you choose is unsweetened and calcium-fortified. Many plant-based milk alternatives are also
- fortified with other nutrients such as riboflavin (vitamin B2) or vitamin B12. You can find more information about non-dairy alternatives on page 35 and in the resource *Eating well: vegan infants and under-5s* at www.firststepsnutrition.org.



Egg roll, cucumber and tomato, and yoghurt and blueberries

V

££



1 brown roll (60g)

1 boiled egg (60g), mashed with
1 teaspoon vegetable fat spread

4 sticks of cucumber (30g)

3 cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
(30g)

2 tablespoons whole-milk yoghurt
(60g)

1 handful blueberries (40g)

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DRINK

Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

- Instead of a roll you could serve:
 - 2 slices of bread (brown, wholemeal or granary are best)
 - 1/2 pitta bread in slices, or
 - 1/2 bagel
- You can spread the vegetable fat spread on the roll and serve the roll and egg separately.

LUNCH BOX TIPS

Some children may prefer to eat their packed lunch meal from a plate rather than out of the lunch box. In some settings moving the food on to a plate can help all the children to eat together and feel part of the group. It might be possible for some food sent from home to be heated up in child care settings as well if this can be done safely.



Mixed beans, pitta bread, houmous and cucumber, and apple sauce and custard



2-3 tablespoons (75g) canned mixed beans, drained (Choose canned beans in water.)

1 tablespoon houmous (See recipe on page 34.)

$\frac{3}{4}$ pitta bread, sliced (40g)

6 sticks cucumber (40g)

2 tablespoons custard (40g) (See recipe below.)

1 tablespoon apple sauce (30g) See recipe below.)

RECIPE

Custard

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 60g.

1 heaped tablespoon custard powder

250ml semi-skimmed milk

1. Mix the custard powder with a little of the cold milk. Bring the rest of the milk to the boil in a saucepan.
2. Add the custard powder mixture to the hot milk and simmer until thickened, stirring all the time.

Apple sauce

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 30g.

2 medium eating apples, peeled and cored

1 tablespoon water

1. Cut the apple into small pieces. Place in a saucepan with the water and gently bring to a simmer, stirring until the apple cooks down to a sauce consistency.

DRINK

Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



LUNCH BOX TIPS

Sugar in desserts

There is no need to add sugar to custard, rice pudding or cakes if you are using fruit to sweeten them. You can use dried fruit, fresh fruit or mashed fruit to add sweetness and bulk. Never use artificial sweeteners in food for children.

See page 45 for a recipe for apple-sweetened cookies.



Peanut butter and banana sandwiches, cucumber, and dried apricots, and milk drink



2 slices wholemeal bread (50g)

1 level tablespoon peanut butter (30g)

1/4 banana (30g)

5 sticks cucumber (40g)

6 dried apricots (30g)

150ml full fat or semi-skimmed milk, or
a suitable plant-based milk alternative

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DRINK

Serve milk with this packed lunch.
(See page 35 for information on choosing an appropriate plant-based milk.)



LUNCH BOX TIPS

Peanut allergy

- If any child in a childcare setting has a nut allergy, then all parents and carers should be asked to avoid sending in packed lunches that contain any nuts or nut products. However, nuts are a useful source of energy and nutrients for vegan children, and there is no need for children to avoid nuts unless an allergy has been diagnosed.
- You can also find nut butters made from cashew nuts, hazelnuts and almonds, and spreads made from seeds such as tahini (sesame seed) spread.

Pitta bread with houmous and carrot, banana and milk drink



1 pitta bread (60g)

1 falafel (25g)

1 heaped tablespoon houmous (60g)
(See recipe below.)

4 carrot sticks (40g)

1 banana

150ml full fat or semi-skimmed milk, or
a suitable plant-based milk alternative

RECIPE

Houmous

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 60g.

1 large can (400g) chickpeas, drained
(240g drained weight)

1/2 teaspoon garlic paste

1 tablespoon (30g) tahini (sesame seed
spread)

1 teaspoon lemon juice

1 tablespoon water

1. Place all the ingredients in a blender and blitz to the desired consistency. Houmous can be smooth or lumpy.
2. If you don't have a blender, you can mash the ingredients together with a fork.

DRINK

- Serve milk with this packed lunch.
- (See page 35 for information on choosing an appropriate plant-based milk.)



LUNCH BOX TIPS

Dairy-free milk options

There are a number of plant-based milk alternatives available for children who don't drink cows' milk, including oat, soya, pea, coconut or almond milks. However, plant-based milk alternatives have very variable composition and many have limited nutritional equivalence to animal milk, so it is important to consider their nutrient content to avoid nutrient deficiencies in the diet. Some non-dairy milk alternatives also contain added sugar so choose unsweetened versions of milks to avoid excess sugar intake.

Animal milks typically provide a significant proportion of a number of important nutrients to the diets of young children in the UK, including high quality protein (complete with all essential amino acids), and highly bioavailable calcium, vitamin A, B vitamins, zinc and iodine. Select a fortified alternative to dairy milk to minimise the chance of micronutrient deficiencies in the diet and consider incorporating additional sources of these nutrients into the diet.

Soya, pea, coconut or almond milks are also lower in energy than cows' milk and therefore greater amounts may be needed as a drink and in some dishes to meet energy requirements.

On page 35 we give information about some of the unsweetened fortified plant-based milk alternatives that are available and compare them with the energy and micronutrient content of whole cows' milk.

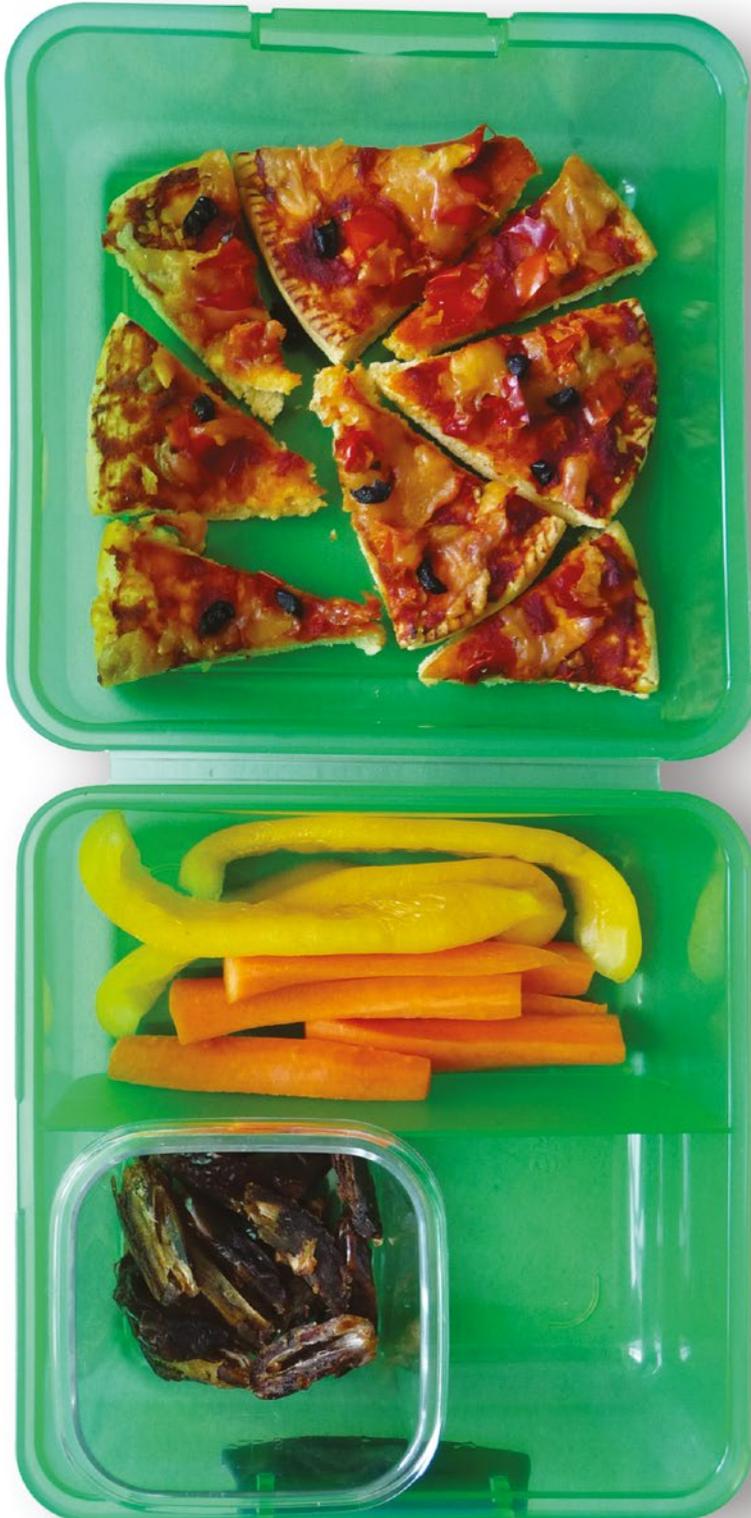
Parents and carers may benefit from individual advice from a health professional if their child is following a dairy-free or vegan diet to ensure that the nutritional needs of the child are met.

Pizza, carrot sticks, yellow pepper, dates and milk drink

EF

V

£££



- 1 small pizza (80g) (See recipe below.)
- 4 carrot sticks (40g)
- 4 sticks yellow pepper (40g)
- 6 dates, sliced
- 100ml full fat or semi-skimmed milk, or a suitable plant-based milk alternative

RECIPE

Pizza

This recipe makes 4 small pizzas, of about 80g each.

- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, peeled and diced
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste
- 1 large can (400g) chopped tomatoes
- 1 teaspoon dried mixed herbs
- 4 small round pitta breads (40g each)
- 2-3 tablespoons grated cheese (80g)

1. Place the oil in a pan and heat. Add the diced onion and garlic paste and cook until softening, stirring occasionally.
2. Add the chopped tomatoes and dried herbs and simmer until reduced by at least a half, to make a pizza topping consistency sauce.
3. Spread the tomato sauce on the round pitta breads and sprinkle with the grated cheese. Place the pizzas under a hot grill and cook until the cheese is melted.
4. Allow to cool and then cut into pieces.

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DRINK

Serve milk with this packed lunch. (See page 35 for milk alternatives.)



LUNCH BOX TIPS

Pizza base

- You can also use English muffins or French bread as a quick pizza base.

Pizza toppings

- You can put all sorts of things on mini-pizzas and, if children like food with faces or patterns on, you can use vegetables to do this. For example, you can add peppers, mushrooms, fresh tomatoes, canned pineapple, onion or sweetcorn.
- You can use either mozzarella or hard cheese as a topping, but you only need a small amount of either type of cheese.
- You can make pizza without cheese for children who avoid dairy products. Sprinkle the tomato topping with extra vegetables and some chopped beans or seeds to add protein.
- You can also top pizzas with canned tuna fish or sardines.

Rice and peas, jerk chicken, sweetcorn, tomatoes and mango

DF

EF

GF

£££



3 tablespoons rice and peas (100g)
(See recipe below.)

40g jerk chicken

4 baby sweetcorn, steamed and cut in half (50g)

3 cherry tomatoes, quartered (30g)

1/4 mango, cut in cubes or slices (50g)

RECIPE

Rice and peas

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 100g.

5 tablespoons water (150ml)

100ml coconut milk (1/4 of a 400ml can)

1 teaspoon dried thyme

4 tablespoons dried white rice (120g)

4 tablespoons drained red kidney beans (100g)

1. Mix the water with the coconut milk and dried thyme, and add the rice.
2. Bring the mixture to the boil and then simmer for 15 minutes, stirring regularly until the rice is tender.
3. Add the kidney beans and stir well.

DRINK

- Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



RECIPE

Jerk chicken seasoning

You can rub chicken breasts or thighs with a low-salt jerk seasoning rub. Use 1-2 teaspoons seasoning rub per chicken breast. Leave the chicken to marinate in the rub for several hours in the fridge, and then grill or bake the chicken until cooked all the way through.

This recipe makes enough rub for 4 chicken breasts.

1 teaspoon allspice

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

1/4 teaspoon ground cumin

1/4 teaspoon chilli powder

1 teaspoon garlic purée

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1. Mix all the ingredients together.

OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

- You can use a low-salt seasoning like the jerk seasoning recipe here on other meat (such as turkey or pork), or on fish, if children like well-flavoured foods. You can adapt the amount of chilli you add so that it is not too fiery for young palates, or you can leave the chilli out altogether. You can also use the mix on beans or tofu for children who have a vegetarian or vegan diet.

Roast vegetable and chickpea couscous, with soya yoghurt and strawberries

DF

EF

V

VV

££



5 tablespoons roast vegetable couscous (125g) (See recipe below.)

1 heaped tablespoon drained chickpeas (40g)

3 tablespoons unsweetened fortified soya yoghurt (75g)

4-6 strawberries, sliced (40g)

RECIPE

Roast vegetable couscous

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 125g.

1/2 tablespoon vegetable oil

1/2 onion, peeled and diced

1/2 courgette, diced

1/2 red pepper, de-seeded and diced

1/2 yellow or orange pepper, de-seeded and diced

100g dried couscous

200ml boiling water

1. Toss the diced vegetables in the oil in a baking tray and place in the oven at 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4 for 15 minutes until the vegetables are soft.
2. Pour the boiling water over the couscous and leave to stand, covered, for 4 minutes and then fluff up the couscous with a fork.
3. Add the diced vegetables to the couscous and stir well.

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DRINK

Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

- You can serve the couscous and vegetables separately, instead of mixing them together.
- You can add lots of different things to couscous. It is a popular dish with most children, as it looks very colourful.
- You can add other small or chopped vegetables such as peas, broad beans, cut green beans, leek, aubergine, chopped mint leaves or parsley, fresh tomato, cucumber or mushroom.
- You can also add dried fruit such as raisins or chopped apricots with the vegetables.
- Instead of chickpeas, you can add other cooked pulses, such as black-eyed beans, red kidney beans, borlotti beans or butter beans. For a non-vegetarian version, you can add diced cooked chicken or tuna fish.



Sardine sandwiches, tomatoes, peas and banana, and milk drink

EF

£



 2 slices brown bread (50g)

 1 teaspoon butter (5g)

 2 sardines, drained and mashed (50g)

 1 tablespoon peas (40g)

 3 cherry tomatoes, quartered

 1 banana

 100ml full fat or semi-skimmed milk, or
 a suitable plant-based milk alternative

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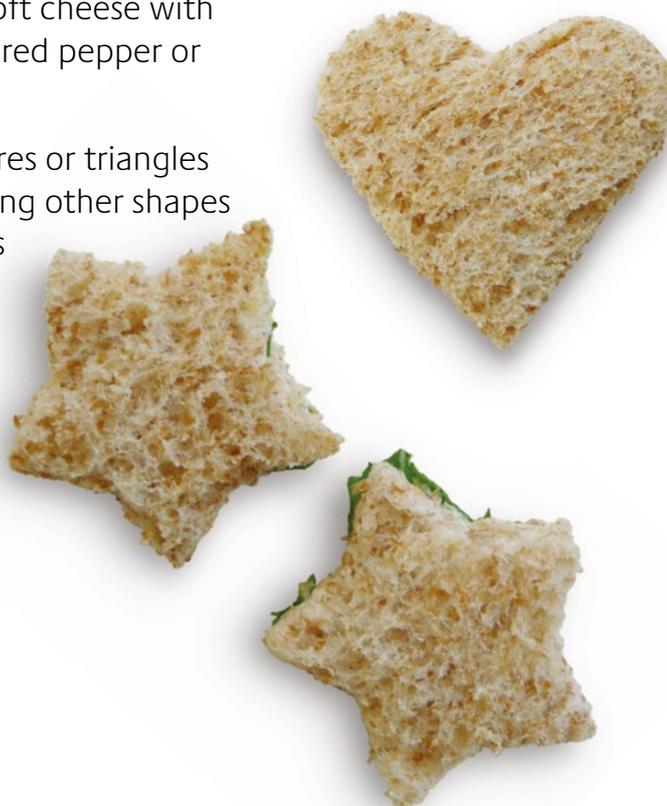
DRINK

- Serve milk with this packed lunch.
- (See page 35 for information on choosing an appropriate plant-based milk.)



OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

- You can make mini-sandwiches with a range of fillings. Make sure fillings are moist but won't make the bread soggy if left for a few hours. A thin layer of butter can help prevent fillings seeping into the bread.
- Canned fish is a rich source of nutrients and can be easily mashed as a sandwich filling. The bones in canned fish are soft and can be mashed into the fish, but check there are no bones remaining. Or you can try sardine, tuna, mackerel or canned salmon.
- Other useful sandwich fillings include: nut butters, egg, houmous, roast meats, roast vegetables, avocado, or soft cheese with vegetables such as cucumber, tomato, red pepper or spring onion.
- You can cut sandwiches into little squares or triangles without creating waste. Although cutting other shapes from the sandwiches like stars or hearts can look interesting, they do make a lot of waste sandwich so you will have to make twice as many.



Tuna and sweetcorn pasta, red pepper, celery, malt loaf and melon



Check that the pasta is egg-free.



3-4 tablespoons tuna and sweetcorn pasta (165g) (See recipe below.)

4 strips red pepper (30g)

3 sticks celery (30g)

1 slice fruited malt bread (35g)

1/8 melon, cubed (50g)

RECIPE

Tuna and sweetcorn pasta

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 165g.

120g dried pasta, boiled until tender

4 tablespoons sweetcorn canned in water (120g)

1 can (160g) tuna in brine, drained (drained weight 120g)

2 tablespoons medium fat soft cheese (80g)

1. Boil the pasta, following the instructions on the packet.
2. When cooked, drain the pasta and immediately toss it with all the other ingredients until well mixed.

DRINK

Serve water with the packed lunch shown on the left.



OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

- Fruited malt bread is a useful occasional food for lunch boxes as it is lower in sugar and fat than most cakes or biscuits and is a good source of fibre, iron, folate and other B vitamins.
- Replace cakes and biscuits with lower-fat and sugar options such as fruit teacakes, plain or fruit scones or fruited scotch pancakes.
- A recipe for a home-made alternative is shown below.

Apple and raisin oat cookie

This recipe makes 4 portions of about 30g.

1 tablespoon butter (25g)

5 tablespoons rolled oats (50g)

1/2 eating apple, cooked and made into a purée (30g)

1 heaped tablespoon raisins (30g)

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon powder



1. Heat the oven to 180°C / 350°F / Gas 4.
2. Grease a baking sheet with a little vegetable fat spread, or line it with baking paper.
3. In a bowl, mix all the ingredients together and make into a soft mixture.
4. Put heaped dessertspoonfuls of the cookie dough on to the baking sheet and flatten with a fork. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes until lightly golden.
5. Take the tray out of the oven and leave the cookies to cool on the tray for a few minutes before transferring them to a cooling rack.

You can make these simple healthy cookies for 12p each.

Turkey kebabs, new potatoes, fruit bun, satsuma and milk drink

EF

£



Cooked turkey cut into cubes (40g), 3 cherry tomatoes cut in half (30g), and 4 chunks cucumber (30g) made into kebabs. (See recipe below.)

2-3 new potatoes, cooked (80g)

1/2 fruit bun (50g)

1 small satsuma, divided into segments

100ml full fat or semi-skimmed milk, or a suitable plant-based milk alternative

RECIPE

Turkey and vegetable kebabs

This recipe makes 8 kebabs of about 50g each. Serve 2 kebabs per portion.

160g cooked turkey, cut into cubes

12 cherry tomatoes, cut in half

1/2 cucumber, cut into 16 chunks

4 plastic drinking straws

1. Cut the drinking straws in half.
2. Using a skewer, make holes in the turkey, tomato and cucumber so you can thread them on to the straws as a kebab.

Do not use cocktail sticks, wooden sticks or shorter pieces of straw to make kebabs.

DRINK

- Serve milk with this packed lunch.
- (See page 35 for information on choosing an appropriate plant-based milk.)



OTHER PACKED LUNCH IDEAS

- Instead of making the ingredients into a kebab, you can serve the turkey, tomato and cucumber in cubes. Remember to cut them into small pieces to avoid choking.

LUNCH BOX TIPS

Potatoes

- Potatoes are a versatile, starchy food that contain lots of the nutrients also found in vegetables.
 - Small new potatoes make a good packed lunch choice for young children.
 - Potatoes can be used in salads.
 - Home-made potato wedges can be served cold in a lunch box.

Making a gluten-free lunch box

Potatoes, rice and maize (corn) are all naturally gluten-free and are easy and versatile options when making gluten-free packed lunches.

Instead of ...	Use these gluten-free options ...
Bread or rolls	Bread made with gluten-free flour, buckwheat flour, or cornmeal, or combinations of gluten-free flours such as rice flour, potato flour, maize flour, corn flour, soya flour or tapioca flour
Scones	Potato cakes made with rice flour
Crackers	Rice cakes
Wraps or chapattis	Flat breads made with chickpea flour or maize flour
Tortilla	Cornmeal or maize flour tortilla
Pasta	Rice, quinoa, buckwheat or potatoes; gnocchi made with potatoes and rice flour; polenta (made with cornmeal)
Noodles	Rice noodles

Good sources of vitamins and minerals

Vitamin A

Animal sources

butter
canned salmon
cheese
egg
full-fat milk
herrings
kidney
liver
pilchards canned in tomato sauce
smoked mackerel

Non-animal sources

apricots (dried, fresh or canned)
blackcurrants
broad beans
broccoli
Brussels sprouts
cabbage (dark)
cantaloupe melon
carrots
honeydew melon
mango
nectarine
orange
peach
peas
prunes
red peppers
runner beans
spinach
sweet potatoes
sweetcorn
tomatoes
watercress
vegetable fat spread

Riboflavin

Also called vitamin B2.

Animal sources

cheese
eggs
kidney
lean meat or poultry
mackerel
milk
pilchards
salmon
sardines
tuna
yoghurt

Non-animal sources

almonds
fortified breakfast cereals
granary bread
mushrooms
soya beans
spinach
wheatgerm bread

Folic acid

'Folic acid' is the name given to the synthetic form of the B vitamins known as folates, but is used as a general term here for this vitamin.

broccoli
Brussels sprouts
cabbage
cauliflower
fortified breakfast cereals
green leafy salads
melon
oranges
parsnips
peanuts

potatoes
runner beans
spinach
tomatoes
wholemeal bread
yeast extract

<p>Calcium</p>	<p>peas Dairy sources milk cheese cheese spread yoghurt fromage frais</p>	<p>Non-dairy sources canned salmon dried fruit egg yolk muesli orange peas, beans and lentils pilchards, sardines soya drink fortified with calcium spinach tofu white bread / flour</p>
<p>Iron</p>	<p>Animal sources All meat and meat products provide iron, but very good sources include darker meats and meat products made from beef, lamb, duck, venison, and offal meats such as heart, liver, kidney, oxtail and tongue. Oil-rich fish – including herrings, pilchards, sardines, salmon, whitebait and tuna – are also a good source of iron. Eggs (particularly egg yolk) are also a good source.</p>	<p>Non-animal sources baked beans blackcurrants black-eyed peas broad beans broccoli chickpeas dried apricots fortified breakfast cereals lentils raisins soya beans spinach and spring greens tofu weet bisks bread and flour</p>
<p>Iodine</p>	<p>Dairy sources butter cheese fromage frais and yoghurt milk ice cream</p>	<p>Non-dairy sources egg fish fish paste seaweed shellfish</p>
<p>Zinc</p>	<p>Animal sources canned sardines canned tuna or pilchards cheese cold cooked meats eggs ham kidney lean meat liver milk poultry shrimps and prawns</p>	<p>Non-dairy sources beans and lentils brown or wholemeal bread nuts plain popcorn sesame seeds tofu wholegrain breakfast cereals, such as puffed wheat, branflakes or weet bisks</p>

Packed lunch boxes and drinks containers

You can use any packed lunch containers, but below are details of the ones we bought for the photos in this resource.

We used lunch boxes and bottles from the Sistema range (<http://sistemaplastics.com>)

These boxes and bottles are widely available, reasonable in cost, hard-wearing, come in a bright range of colours and are BPA-free.



Small BPA-free containers are widely available in supermarkets on the baby aisle.



Cutlery came from RICE (<https://www.rice.dk>).

These products can also be bought widely across the UK.

The baby cups were sourced from www.babycup.co.uk



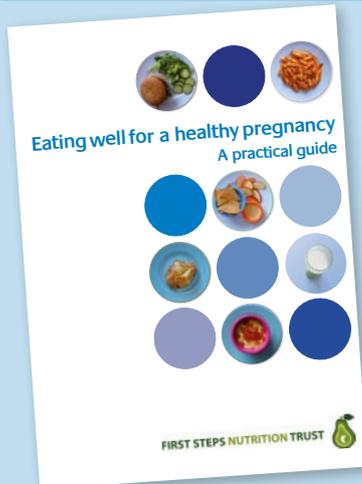
First Steps Nutrition Trust – Useful resources

The information in all our resources is in line with current policy and has been reviewed by experts in the field.

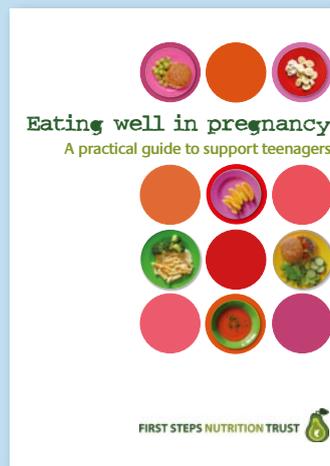
All our resources are available as free pdfs to download at www.firststepsnutrition.org

Hard copies are available at cost price from <https://firststepsnutrition.company.site/>

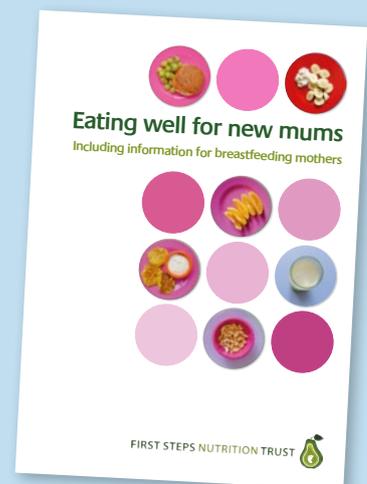
Supporting women in pregnancy and new mums



This guide enables health professionals to support pregnant women about food, nutrition and pregnancy. It includes recipes and meal ideas and can sit alongside other local public health guidance to provide a practical explanation of what 'eating well' looks like in practice.

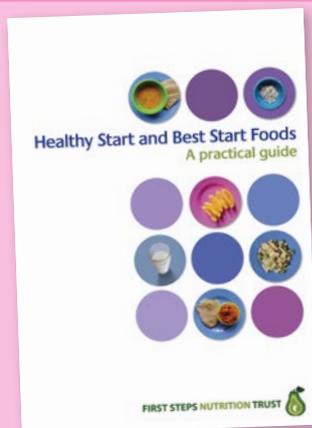


This practical guide illustrates what a good diet looks like for young women in pregnancy. The advice is tailored to women aged 15-19 years and provides practical ideas on how to eat well cost-effectively. It includes photos and recipes, all of which have been tested and costed.



This resource encourages all new mums to eat well and summarises current thinking on food, nutrition and breastfeeding. It provides photos and recipes for a range of simple, nutritious light meals and snacks perfect for busy mums on the go.

Supporting low-income families

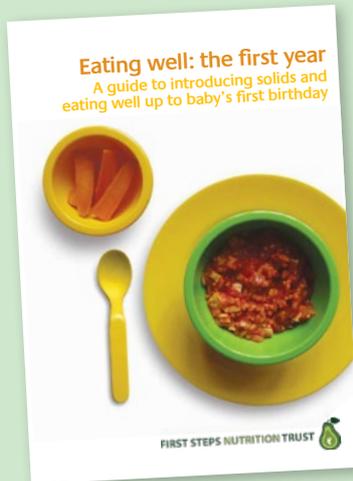


This resource explains the Healthy Start scheme (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) and Best Start Food scheme (in Scotland) and how families eligible for these schemes can be supported. This resource gives examples of how the monetary allowances can be spent, with recipes and advice for health professionals who support families in their areas.

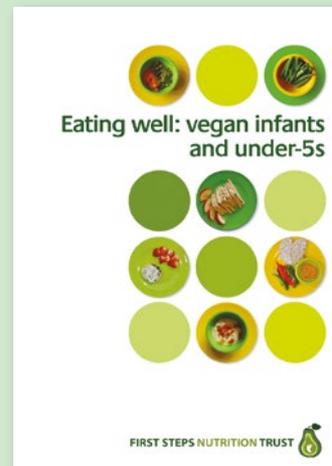


Simple cost-effective recipes for the whole family and tips on how to eat well on a budget and with limited equipment. Recipes show how adults, teenagers, school-aged children, under-5s and infants can all eat well from the same recipes.

Supporting new families

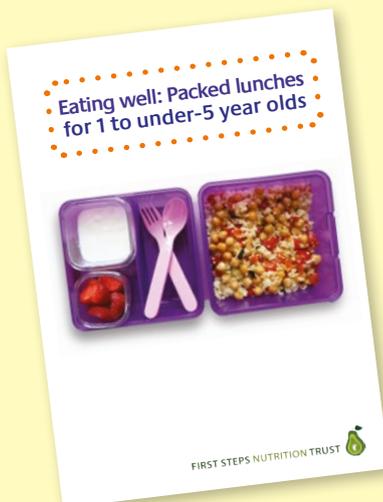


This resource explains how to safely introduce solids and how to encourage eating well in the second six months of life. The resource provides recipes, suggested portion sizes and lots of practical tips.



This resource summarises how vegan infants (and their mums) and children under 5 can be supported to eat well. It provides simple, cost-effective and tested recipes that can be used in early years settings or in the home, and clear information on how to support vegan dietary choices.

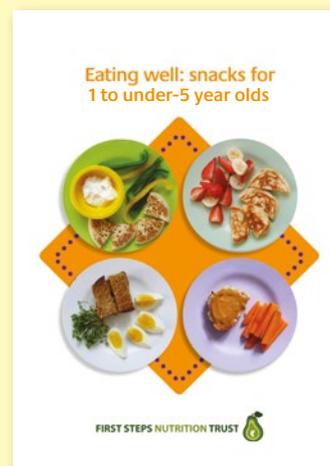
Supporting 1 to under-5 year olds and early years settings



This guide outlines how families and early years settings can prepare packed lunches which meet the energy and nutrient needs of young children, using cost-effective choices that meet a wide range of needs.



This pictorial guide shows the sorts of foods, and amounts of foods that can be offered to 1 to under-5 year olds to encourage eating well as part of a healthy meal plan.



This resource gives information on healthy snacks to give to 1 to under-5 year olds.

Plant-based milk alternatives compared with cows' milk

Per 100ml	Cows' milk		Plant-based milk alternatives				
	Whole ¹	Semi-skimmed ¹	Unsweetened fortified oat milk alternative ²	Unsweetened fortified soya milk alternative ³	Unsweetened fortified pea protein alternative ⁴	Unsweetened fortified coconut milk alternative ⁵	Unsweetened fortified almond milk alternative ⁶
Energy kcal	63	46	48	38	37	14	13
Protein g	3.4	3.4	1.1	3.4	1.3	0.1	0.4
Carbohydrate g	4.6	4.7	7	1.1	2.8	0	0
Fat g	3.6	1.7	1.1	2.1	2.2	1.2	1.1
Vitamin D micrograms	Trace	Trace	1.5	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75
Riboflavin mg	0.23	0.24	0.21	0.21	Not added	Not added	0.21
Vitamin B12 micrograms	0.9	0.9	0.38	0.38	0.9	Not added	0.38
Calcium mg	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Iodine⁷ micrograms	31	30	22.5	22.4	30	Not added	Not added
Salt g	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.15	0.07	0.14
Price per 100ml	11p	11p	21p	13p	19p	21p	21p

1. Based on cost of Tesco whole milk and semi-skimmed milk, 2 pints (1.136 litre) 2023.

2. Based on Oatly UHT Semi oat milk alternative, Tesco 2023.

3. Based on Tesco own-brand unsweetened UHT soya milk alternative 2023.

4. Based on Mighty M.Lkology Semi Uht Pea Protein Drink, Tesco 2023.

5. Based on Alpro unsweetened UHT coconut milk alternative, Tesco 2023.

6. Based on Alpro unroasted unsweetened UHT almond milk alternative, Tesco 2023.



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Eating well: Packed lunches for 1 to under-5 year olds

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