

School lunches

Ngā kai hauora o te wā tina ki te kura

A healthy, balanced lunch gives children everything they need to play and learn well.

Involve your child in choosing and making lunches. This will make them more likely to eat and enjoy their lunch.

Lunch box checklist

Include items from the following food groups.

Something filling – Go foods (carbohydrates)

- Grain foods – they give children energy and brain power. Choose high-fibre and wholegrain bread. Try mixing it up by using wraps, flatbread, pita bread, grainy rolls and crackers.

Something lasting – Grow foods (protein)

- Milk and milk products – they provide calcium, which helps to build strong bones and teeth. Cheese slices and yoghurt are great snacks in lunch boxes. Include a small ice brick or a frozen water bottle to keep them cool and at a safe temperature.
- Lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs, nuts and beans – they provide protein to help build strong muscles and key nutrients such as iron and magnesium for growth. Peanut butter, chicken, tuna, eggs or hummus make great high-protein sandwich fillings.

Some colour – Glow foods (vegetables and fruit)

- Vegetables and fruit – they provide fibre and important minerals and vitamins. Cut vegetables into manageable pieces such as carrot, cucumber or celery sticks. You can also add vegetables to sandwich fillings. Use fruit that fits easily in a lunch box such as mandarins, small apples, grapes or a pottle of diced fruit. To keep the cost down, buy vegetables and fruit that are in season. Eat fruit instead of drinking fruit juice.
- Bottle of water – try adding fruit or vegetables like lemon, cucumber, oranges or berries to make flavoured water. See *Make your own flavoured water* from *Healthy Kids* (www.healthykids.org.nz).



Written by HealthInfo clinical advisers. Last reviewed September 2021.