SECAT
THORPEDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL & NURSERY

Healthier Packed Lunches for Children

What You Need To Know:



Eating well is important: Children need to eat well as it will give them energy and nutrients to grow and develop and to be healthy and active.

A healthy, enjoyable lunch gives children the energy they need to learn and play at school.

Use the information in this leaflet to help make your child a healthier packed lunch. Please support the school by following these food guidelines.

What Is A Healthy Packed Lunch?

Starchy Foods:

Base each meal on a starchy food, such as bread, potato, rice, pasta, yam. Starchy foods give energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

- Bread, try different types, such as pitta bread, wraps chapattis or bread rolls.
- Other starchy foods, such as pasta, couscous or rice.
- Whole grain varieties are best for fibre, which is vital for a healthy digestive system.

Meat and Alternatives:

Add some protein, for example meat, fish, eggs, beans and pulses. Protein foods build muscles and provide minerals.

- Lean meats, such as chicken, turkey or ham.
- Include oily fish at least once every three weeks.
- Cheese, such as edam or soft cheese.
- Eggs, such as quiche or omelette.
- Meat alternatives, such as tofu or tempeh.
- Dishes containing pulses, beans or meat, for example dahl, stew or bean salad.

Use butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad dressings sparingly, because these can be high in fat, or use lower fat alternatives.

Thorpedene is a nut free school. Please ensure that children do not bring any nuts, nut products or spreads that may contain nuts, e.g. Nutella and peanut butter, into school.

Milk and Dairy Foods:

Include a dairy product or dairy alternative, such as fromage frais or yoghurts. These foods provide calcium necessary for strong bones and teeth, as well as providing protein and vitamins. Lower fat varieties are healthier.

Fruit and Vegetables:

Don't forget to include fruit and vegetables. You can use fresh, frozen, tinned or dried. Fruit and

vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre necessary for the body to function properly and to keep you strong and healthy.

- Add tomato, lettuce or beetroot to a sandwich.
- A vegetable dish, such as salad or roast vegetables.
- Fresh fruit, such as apple, banana or pear.
- Fruit salad (fresh or tinned in juice) or vegetable salad.
- Finger foods, such as cherry tomatoes, cucumber sticks or celery - good with a dip, such as houmous or guacamole.
- Use fresh fruit and vegetables, which are in season, to help the environment and enjoy variety!
- Aim to include at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad.

Drinks:

Drinks, especially water, help children to concentrate and feel well. Water is freely available in school. Only water, milk or pure fruit juice should be included in the lunchbox.

Healthy Snacks:

All children in Reception and KS1 receive a free piece of fruit or vegetable everyday as part of the Government's School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme.

As children move up into KS2, if they wish to have a breaktime snack, they may bring in something from home.

Healthy snacks can include:-

- Fruit
- Vegetables
- Cereal bars (without chocolate or nuts)
- Crackers/bread roll/breadsticks
- Rice Cakes

Some cereal bars and breakfast biscuits have very high sugar levels, so please try and choose healthier options where possible.

PLEASE DO NOT SEND YOUR CHILD WITH CRISPS, CHOCOLATE BARS OR SWEETS

For a healthier snack:

- Replace sweets and chocolate with dried fruit, a small bunch of grapes or fruit salad.
- Replace cakes and pastries with fruit bread or malt loaf.
- Replace salted savoury snacks with rice cakes or breadsticks.
- Packed lunches should not contain chocolate, biscuits, sweets, salted savoury snacks or fizzy drinks.
- Please do not include chocolate spread filling for sandwiches.

Practical Tips for a Healthy Lunchbox:

- Try to vary the contents of the lunchbox daily. That way you can ensure your child is getting the variety of nutrients their bodies need to function and grow.
- Involve your child in preparing their lunchbox. They are more likely to enjoy food they have made themselves.
- Even though you wash your hands before handling food, don't forget to wash fruit and vegetables before use and put food in clean containers.
- To keep food, make sure it is stored properly; lunches packed the night before need to be stored in the fridge. If using rice, make sure it is cooled quickly and stored in the fridge overnight. To

keep your child's lunch fresh during the day, use a cool bag and put in a frozen drink or reusable ice pack.

- Keep different breads in the freezer so you can just take out and defrost what you need for one day's lunchbox. Using different breads will make the lunchbox more interesting and enjoyable.
- If your child refuses to eat brown bread, try a lighter variety or make sandwiches using a slice of white and a slice of wholemeal bread.
- For variety, use pitta strips, crackers, bread sticks, or fruit and vegetable finger foods.
- Always try to add a little salad to a sandwich. To avoid soggy sandwiches, dry the salad before adding it to the sandwich or put it in a separate sandwich bag or tub.
- Make a lower fat salad dressing by mixing it with some low fat yoghurt or semi skimmed milk.
- You can use leftovers, for example, rice and curry, vegetable pizza or pasta and sauce.
- Make a salad using rice, potato or pasta from the night before, mixed with vegetables, beans and so on.

For more information and advice please click on the link below:

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide

https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/