



## St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Healthier Packed Lunches for Children

At St Joseph's, we believe that our children need to eat well in order to grow, develop and be healthy and active. We know that a healthy, enjoyable lunch gives children the energy and nutrients they need to learn and play at school. This is why we have designed our very own 'Healthier Packed Lunches for Children' leaflet. It provides information on how to pack a healthier lunch and follows the government's packed lunch guidelines. In order to empower our pupils, representatives from our Health & Education department shall be visiting the dining halls on a weekly basis encouraging children to make healthy choices.

### 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, be healthy and active.

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



This leaflet provides information on how to pack a healthier lunch. The information in this leaflet follows the government's packed lunch guidelines.

## What is a healthy packed lunch?

A healthy packed lunch is a balanced meal providing a variety of nutrients to be found in our food group:

### 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 sliced bread, pitta bread, wraps, bread rolls, bagels or soda bread.
- ◆ Other starchy foods: such as pasta, potato, rice or noodles.
- ◆ 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 or pulses. Protein foods build muscles and provide minerals.

- ◆ Lean meats: such as chicken, turkey or ham. Include oily fish, such as sardines or mackerel at least once every three weeks.
- ◆ Egg: such as quiche or omelette.
- ◆ Meat alternatives: such as quorn or tofu.
- ◆ Dishes containing pulses, beans or meat, for example hummus or bean salad.
- ◆ Meat products such as sausage rolls, sausages and chipolatas, pies and pastries, fried foods should not be included more than once a fortnight.
- ◆ Use butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad dressings sparingly, because these can be high in fat, or use lower fat alternatives.



### Milk and Dairy Foods

Include a dairy product or dairy alternative, such as fromage frais or yoghurt drink. 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, cucumber or sweetcorn to a sandwich.
- ◆ A vegetable dish, such as salad.
- ◆ Fresh fruit, such as apple, banana, pear or Satsuma's.
- ◆ Dried fruit, such as raisins, apricots or dates.
- ◆ Fruit salad (fresh or tinned in juice) or vegetable salad.
- ◆ Finger foods, such as cucumber sticks, slices of pepper 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!
- ◆ All packed lunches should contain 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.

- ◆ Other healthy drinks such as milk, pure 100% juice, fruit smoothie or yoghurt or milk drink can also be included.



## Snacks and Confectionery

Snack foods may be included occasionally but aim to make healthier choices. Snack foods tend to be high in fat, sugar and salt. Foods high in fat can cause excessive weight and may lead to heart disease. High sugar foods are high in calories and bad for teeth. High salt foods may increase blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease and some cancers.

### 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, malt loaf or fruit bagel.
- ◆ Replace salted savoury snacks with rice cakes, breadsticks or plain popcorn.
- ◆ Packed lunches should not contain fizzy drinks.



## Practical Tips for a Healthy Lunchbox

- ◆ Involve your child in preparing their lunchbox. They are more likely to enjoy food they have made themselves.
- ◆ Wash your hands before handling food. Wash fruit and vegetables before use and put food in clean containers.
- ◆ 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 whole meal bread.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ 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
- ◆ The school has a no nuts policy as some children are allergic to these.

For more information and advice go to:

[www.eatwell.gov.uk/](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/)  
[www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/  
packedlunches/](http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/packedlunches/)

## Contact Information

office@st-josephs.islington.sch.uk

