

# Build a healthy LUNCHBOX

2 to 4 year olds

**A healthy lunch gives children energy to learn and play.**

Use the food groups below to choose a balanced lunch. Portion sizes are based on your child's hands to help estimate the right amount. Children's appetites differ, so these are only a guide.

## Starchy energy foods

Give the body energy to play, learn, and stay active.

- Bread, wraps, pitta
- Rice, couscous
- Pasta, noodles
- Potatoes
- Oatcakes or crackers.



1 portion = a child's full hand-size

## Dairy or non dairy alternatives

Helps keep bones and teeth strong.

- Cheese
- Milk
- Natural/Greek yoghurt



1 portion = 1 child's pointed finger (solid) or fist if liquid

## Fruit

Provides vitamins that help keep the body healthy.

- Satsumas
- Tomatoes
- Berries
- Melon slices
- Grapes (cut in half)
- Fruit kebabs.



1 portion of fruit/veg/salad = 1 child's cupped hand

FIND A GUIDE HERE:  
[nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/the-eatwell-guide)



## Vegetables or salad

Help the body fight illness and stay healthy.

- Carrot sticks
- Cucumber
- Peppers
- Salad in sandwiches
- Vegetable soup.



## Protein

Helps the body to grow and develop.

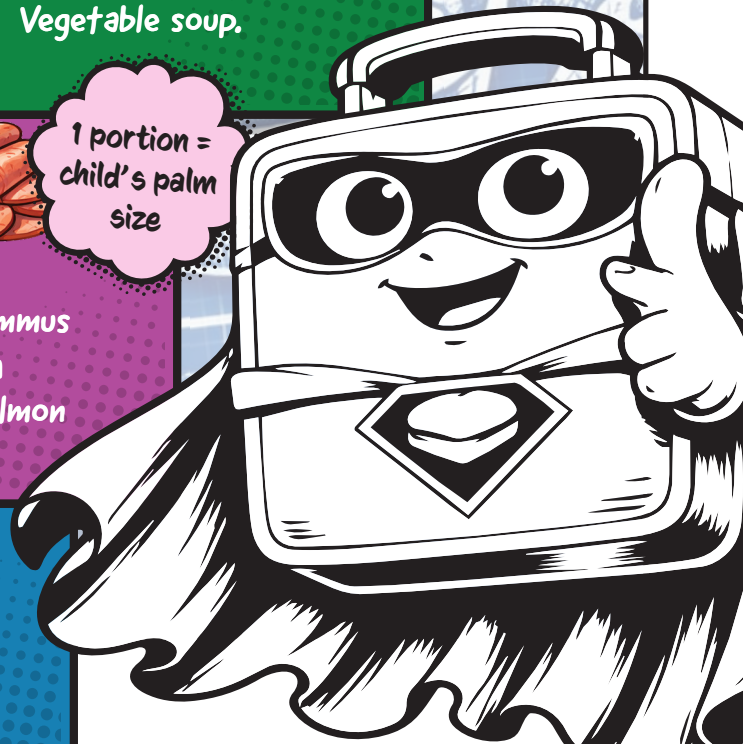
- Chicken
- Lean sliced meat
- Boiled egg
- Nuts/nut butter
- Beans, lentils, chickpeas or hummus
- Fish (tinned fish such as tuna, salmon or sardines).



1 portion = child's palm size

## Drinks

Helps keep the body hydrated and working properly.



## SMARTER SNACKS

Add natural fruit or veg where possible, as they provide natural sweetness, fibre, and vitamins that help keep children healthy and full. Natural fruit is a great everyday choice for snacks and lunchboxes. Aim for at least 5 portions across the day

## MUNCH CRUNCH MUNCH

### FIVE TOP LUNCH BOX TIPS

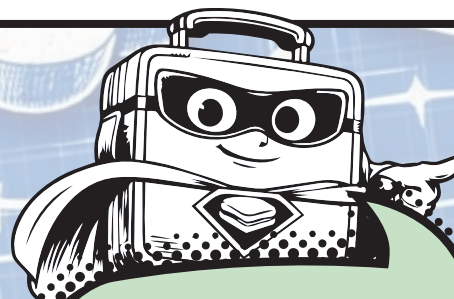
1 Swap in one new food to keep lunchtime exciting.

2 Add different textures - soft, crunchy, juicy!

3 Cut sandwiches into fun shapes.

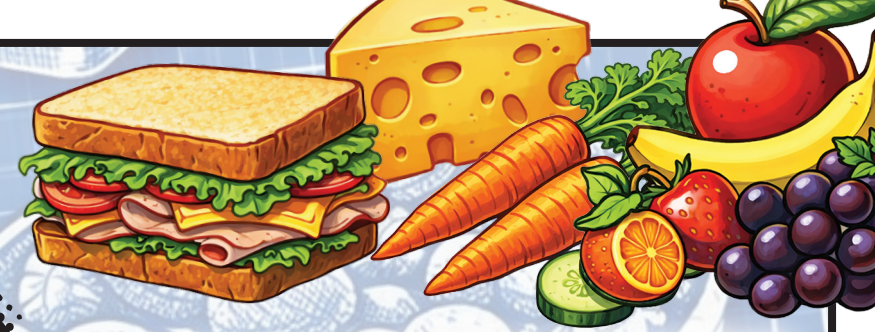
4 Add a mini dip pot.

5 Protect fruit in small tubs or fruit guards.



## BECOME A VEGGIE HERO!!

Find great ideas for adding more veg to lunches:  
[simplyveg.org.uk/lunchboxes](http://simplyveg.org.uk/lunchboxes)



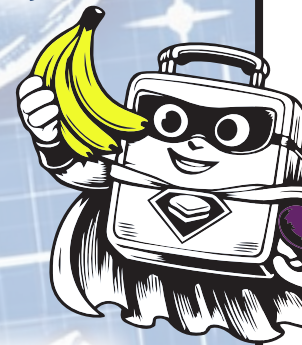
## HEALTHY START SCHEME

With the NHS Healthy Start scheme, you could be entitled to weekly support towards:

- Vegetables
- Fruit
- Milk
- Infant formula milk
- Pulses
- Healthy start vitamins

• **Could you be eligible?** If you or your partner receive benefits and are currently expecting, or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to a weekly allowance.

Find out and apply online today:  
[www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)



## ORAL HEALTH SCHEMES

Add a regular teeth cleaning routine to help protect children's teeth and keep them healthy and free from decay. For ideas on how to best do this, visit [www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/)

## STAY SUPER SAFE

Cut food into small pieces. Always slice grapes and tomatoes in half. Be allergy-aware and follow your childcare setting's guidance.