

No pressure lunchboxes

**A guide to easing lunchbox pressure
for both you and your child.**

This guide considers the ups and downs of children's appetite, fussiness and learning to eat. It will help you pack a lunchbox that works for you.



Healthy Eating
Active Living

Top tips

1

Pack enough food so your child can eat until they are satisfied.

2

Include mostly foods your child knows and has eaten before.

3

Provide a 'good enough' lunchbox – it doesn't need to be perfect.

How much do I pack?



Packing the right amount of food can be tricky; you won't always get it right.



Children's hunger can change from day to day, or even during the day.



The goal is to pack enough food so your child can eat until they are satisfied but not so much that you are always wasting food. Packing too much food can overwhelm young children.



Some days the lunchbox will come home full. Don't worry, your child will make up for it at other meals. If this happens often, pack a bit less next time.

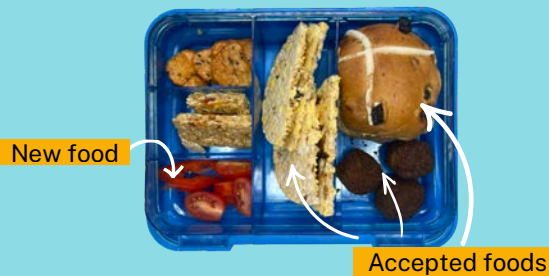


Some days the lunchbox will come home empty, and your child might say they didn't have enough to eat. They'll make up for it at afternoon tea or dinner. If this happens, pack more food or include more filling options next time.



What do I pack?

- ✓ Pack mostly foods your child knows and you are confident they will eat (these are called **accepted or familiar foods**). This helps to make sure your child has enough food to keep them full over the day.
- ✓ Try including a **new food** or one your child hasn't accepted yet. Children's diets become more varied as they get used to new foods. This usually happens after they have been offered the food a number of times (sometimes lots!).



Including new foods

- Childcare or school can be a good place to include some 'new' foods. A different environment and eating with other children can help foods become accepted.
- Don't worry if the new foods come home. Some foods can be added to your dinner or offered for afternoon tea. Sometimes children need to see new foods lots of times before they try them.
- If your child is starting at a new centre or school, it may be best to pack only familiar foods until your child has settled in.
- Be aware of high allergen foods. If your child hasn't eaten these before, it's best they are introduced at home.



Uneaten tomatoes
from the lunchbox



Add them to a
salad for dinner

Save their favourites for home

- Children don't always need a 'treat' in their lunchbox; these can be saved to eat at home.
- You may need to check the service or school nutrition policy.



Should I include all 5 food groups?

- The lunchbox is a good opportunity to provide a variety of foods; but you don't have to include all five food groups every day.
- There are other opportunities at breakfast, dinner and on weekends to offer more variety.
- *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* has more detail on the five food groups.
- Use this as a guide to help you decide what to pack.
- Don't stress about how much your child eats, this is up to them.



Scan for more information.

The five food groups

Vegetables



Fruit



Meat/protein



Cereals



Dairy



No meat or protein?
You can offer these
for dinner.

Doesn't include all
food groups, but is
enough to feel full.



No veggies? Offer
for afternoon tea.



You choose what to pack...

...they choose what to eat

> Your role is to decide what is packed in your child's lunchbox.

Offering your child options can help them feel in control (for example, 'would you like an apple or an orange?'). However, the final decision on what to pack is up to you.

> Your child's role is to choose what they eat from what you have provided.

Children will eat to their appetite. It's ok if children choose to eat their lunch for morning tea and their other foods at lunch. Allowing children to do this helps them to build a healthy relationship with food.

I ate my sandwiches at morning tea because I was hungrier then



The 'good enough' lunchbox

...has enough food in it for your child to feel full.



No veg? You can offer this at afternoon tea.



Left over from breakfast



Lacks variety, but other food groups can be offered at dinner



Couldn't get to the shops but still includes enough filling foods

Every child and every lunchbox is different. Don't compare.

Lunchbox savers

Frozen or canned fruit & veg can be cheaper



Buy fruit & veg in season

If brought home, use as a snack or add to dinner



Use leftovers

Pack water



Pack an ice brick



Prepare yourself rather than snack packs

What else?

There are some other things to consider or ask your child:

- How many opportunities are there to eat? Morning tea, lunch, afternoon tea?
- Is there a fridge? Or do they need an ice pack?
- Can your child open their lunchbox, containers and packets? Have they got someone to help them? Do they need a fork/spoon?
- Allowing your child to be involved in packing their lunchbox can help. Let them choose from options you decide.

When are you most hungry?

Would you like an apple or orange in your lunchbox?

Did you have enough food?

Keep in mind...

Some children:

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Have big appetites, some have small. | ✓ Eat a small breakfast and lots at school. |
| ✓ Have a wide variety of foods in their diet. | ✓ Prefer to eat lots for breakfast and dinner and less at childcare or school. |
| ✓ Eat less variety and take longer to accept new foods. | ✓ Run around or play more at childcare or school and eat more when they get home. |

Need help?



Are you having challenges with feeding your child?

- If your child eats a very limited diet, their accepted foods may not fit within your childcare or school's nutrition policy. Speak with educators or teachers about working together to support your child's feeding.
- Your GP or Child & Family Health nurse can help you support your child's feeding.

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Free 2-hour workshop and online parent support to guide you through the unpredictable and often stressful journey of feeding infants and children.

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