

# HEALTHY LUNCHBOXES

## ... a quick guide

### What children need

Children need great quality nutrients from their lunchboxes, to top up flagging energy levels and keep their brains and bodies fully charged for the rest of their busy day. So how do they get these nutrients? Well it's basically the same way as we do, from:

- good quality **carbohydrates** (wholegrain bread, pasta, rice, potatoes)
- **proteins** (lean meats, egg, cheese, fish, seeds, yogurt)
- **fats** (cheese, milk, sunflower oil spread, yogurt, meats, fish)
- **fibre** (wholegrain carbohydrates, vegetables, fresh fruit)
- **vitamins and minerals** (dairy, fish, meat, vegetables, fruits)

One area that is commonly misunderstood is fats. Fats are really important for children; they provide a concentrated source of energy, needed for both brain power and physical exertion.

Lunchbox drinks are another area that need a little thought, due to the often high levels of sugar & preservatives found in squashes, juices & fizzy drinks. Water is preferable to juice & will encourage good habits for later in life.

### Example lunch boxes

See overleaf for a few examples of well-balanced lunchboxes but I am not suggesting that you stick to these rigidly. Please remember:

- Every child is different, so you will need to apply your judgement to suit their likes, dislikes & the speed of change.
- It can be a good incentive to give your child a treatier lunchbox once a week, e.g. include a packet of crisps
- Water is preferable to juice cartons and squashes
- It's tempting to put lots of different items in your child's lunchbox, to entice them to eat, but this is not necessary & they may just eat the bits they like and leave the rest! Perhaps a smaller lunchbox would help?
- It's good to aim for around 4 items, increasing the savoury foods if your child says they were still hungry (e.g. an extra half, or whole, bagel/wrap/roll if your child needs it)

