



# HEALTHY LUNCHBOXES

## 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:

- quality **carbohydrates** (wholegrain bread, pasta, rice, potatoes)
- **proteins** (lean meats, poultry, fish, seeds, Quorn)
- **fats and dairy** (cheese, milk, sunflower oil spread, nuts, avocado, yogurt)
- **fibre** (wholegrains such as oats, pulses, 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 consideration, due to the often high levels of sugar and preservatives found in squashes, juices and fizzy drinks.

## Example lunch boxes

On the next page are a few examples of well-balanced lunch boxes, however, I am not suggesting that you should stick to these rigidly.

- Every child is different, so you will of course need to apply your judgement to suit their likes and dislikes, the size of portions, as well as decide upon the speed of change.
- It can be a good incentive to give your child a slightly treatier version of the lunch box about once a week, for example, including a small packet of crisps, some sugar-free cola bottle sweets or a piece of cake.
- It is tempting to put lots of different items in your child's lunchbox, to entice them to eat, but this is not necessary and can result in them eating just the bits they like and leaving the bits they find less enticing!
- It's good to aim for around 4 items, and increasing the savoury items if your child says they were still hungry (e.g. extra half, or even whole, bagels/wraps/rolls, if your child needs it).

