

## Practical tips for a healthy lunchbox

Try to vary the contents of the lunchbox daily. That way you can ensure your child is getting the variety of nutrients their body needs to function and grow.

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.

To keep food fresh make sure it is stored properly; lunches packed the night before need to be stored in the fridge. If using rice, make sure it is cooked quickly and stored in the fridge overnight. To keep your lunch fresh during the day, use a cool bag or put in a reusable ice pack.

Keep different breads in the freezer so you can just take out and defrost what you need for one day. Using different breads will make the lunchbox more interesting and enjoyable.

If your child refuses to eat brown bread, try lighter varieties or make sandwiches using a slice of white and a slice of wholemeal bread.

For variety use pitta strips, crackers, bread sticks, or fruit and vegetable finger foods with a dip.

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 tub.

Make a lower fat salad dressing by mixing it with some low fat yoghurt or semi-skimmed milk.

You can use left overs.g. 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.



## Valence Primary School Healthy Packed Lunches

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.



Use the information in this leaflet to help make your child a healthier packed lunch.



## What is a Healthy Packed Lunch?

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

### Starchy Foods



Base each meal on a starchy food. Starchy foods give energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Bread: try different types such as pitta bread, wraps, chapattis or bread rolls.

Wholegrain varieties are best for fibre which is vital for a healthy digestive system.

Try other starchy foods such as pasta, couscous, potato or rice.

### Meat and Alternatives



Add some protein e.g. meat, fish, eggs, beans or pulses. Protein builds muscles and provides minerals.

Provide lean meats such as chicken, turkey or ham.

Include oily fish such as pilchards, sardines or mackerel at least once every three weeks.

Try cheese such as cottage cheese, Edam or soft cheeses.

Include egg dishes such as quiche or boiled eggs.

Experiment with meat alternatives such as tofu or tempeh

Add dishes containing pulses or beans e.g. dahl.

Meat products such as sausage rolls, sausages, fried foods, pies and pastries, should not be included more than once every two weeks.

Use butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad dressing sparingly because these spreads can be high in fat or use lower fat alternatives. The school does not allow nuts in packed lunches.

### Milk and Dairy



Include a dairy product or dairy alternative such as yoghurt. These foods provide protein and vitamins especially calcium which is necessary for strong bones and teeth. Low fat varieties are healthier.

### Fruit and Vegetables



Aim to include at least one portion of fruit and one portion of vegetable or salad, fresh, frozen, tinned or dried. Fruit and vegetables are full of vitamins, minerals and fibre necessary for the body to function and keep strong and healthy.

Add tomato, lettuce or beetroot to a sandwich.

Try a vegetable dish e.g. salad or roast vegetable sticks.

Fresh fruit such as apples, oranges or grapes are easy to nibble.

Dried fruit such as raisins or mango make lasting snacks.

Fruit and vegetable salads add variety.

Finger foods such as cherry tomatoes or carrot sticks are good with a dip such as guacamole or houmous.

### Drinks

Only water and milk are permitted at Valence. Both are freely served.

### Snacks and Confectionary

Aim to make healthier choices. Sweets can be replaced with fruits, cakes and pastries with fruit breads or malt loaf and salty savoury snacks with rice cakes or breadsticks. Snack foods high in salt, sugar and fat can contribute to a wide range of conditions leading to poor health. Valence aims to encourage every child to live a long active, healthy and happy life.