



Buxton Nursery - Packed Lunches

Healthy eating for children under five years old is crucial for their growth and physical development; these early years can also influence their habits and attitudes for later in adult life. As a setting we aim to promote healthy eating and support children to develop positive healthy habits and attitudes from the very beginning.

At Buxton Nursery we offer the option of children bringing a packed lunch to eat at lunchtime as an alternative to school meals. Reflecting on our aim stated above to promote health eating, we ask you kindly to read the information below regarding packed lunches.

What to include in a packed lunch...

- A portion of starchy food - examples of this include, bread, wraps, pitta bread, cooked pasta, naan bread, couscous. Wholemeal (or wholegrain) versions often contain more nutrients and fibre, making them an even healthier option, white bread is known to be a choking hazard for children under 5.
- A portion of meat, fish, eggs, beans, or other meat substitutes - such as cooked sliced meats, fish, boiled eggs, tofu, chickpeas or other pulses (safe to be consumed cold).
- At least one portion of fruit and/or vegetables. This can be fresh, dried, canned - they all count towards five-a-day! Examples include vegetable sticks - carrot, cucumber, pepper, celery, sweetcorn, pulses and beans (safe to be consumed cold), apples, berries, melon, grapes, oranges, the list is endless.
- A portion of milk or dairy foods (or dairy alternatives) Yoghurts, fromage frais, cheese, or similar dairy alternatives.

We provide water to drink at mealtimes and politely request that if you wish to send in a drink from home that you only send water.

This decision is based upon the recommendation from the following guidance.

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-and-welfare/food-safety#why-is-food-safety-so-important-for-young-children>

Within the guidance it states,

Provide only fresh tap water and plain milk for children to drink. Fruit juice, smoothies, squash, fizzy drinks and flavoured milk, even when diluted, contain lots of sugar and can cause tooth decay. Diet or reduced-sugar drinks are not recommended for babies and toddlers either.

We aim to promote 'enjoying' all foods and of course we all enjoy a sweet treat or a savoury snack from time to time; these just need to be in moderation as often they can contain a high level of unhealthy saturated fats, salts and sugars.

The good food groups suggested earlier don't need to be provided in isolation, get creative - a cheese and cucumber wholemeal bread sandwich helps to provide 3 of the groups. Or some yoghurt and strawberries will provide another two and can also be that sweet treat for afterwards.

Other important packed lunch information...

- Please do not send in juice, fizzy or any carbonated drink.
- Please do not send in sweets, chocolate, or confectionary.
- Please do not send nuts or popcorn.
- Please ensure any grapes, cherry tomatoes and berries are all sliced length ways to reduce choking hazards. We also recommend slicing sausages length ways.
- Please do-not send children with protein-based products. Children aged between 1-3 years only need 14.5g of protein per

day, children aged 4-6 years only need 19.7g of protein per day. Many protein-based or enhanced products which are very readily available these days could contain more than is needed in one day in one portion alone.

- Please note raisins and dried fruits are not recommended for babies under the age of 1.
- Please provide an appropriate lunch box/bag; **preferably insulated, with an ice pack to keep your child's lunch cold.** Don't forget to clearly name it. There's also an image included with top tips for keeping lunchboxes/bags clean and safe.

Portion size is also a very important factor when promoting healthy eating. As we know children are always on the go! To keep up with this they have a high energy requirement for their size. However also due to their size they often will not consume big meals, they have smaller tummies and packed lunches need to be considerate towards this. Large portion sizes, and/or excessive options or choices of what to eat can overwhelm children at mealtimes, and this can lead to unhealthy attitudes towards eating and food.

At nursery we provide two snacks, mid-morning, and mid-afternoon for all children, it is optional, but they are encouraged to try and have some, or to at the very least have a drink. This is alongside meals such as breakfast, lunch, and a snack tea. During which children have the opportunity to refuel the energy level they require.

The guides opposite and below are from a poster provided to nursery by Derbyshire Community Health Services, speaking to your Health Visitor may also provide further advice. We also have a poster in nursery from Henry with information on portion sizes. You might want to visit <https://www.henry.org.uk/> to find out more information it's a really useful website.

