

HEALTH IS WEALTH

Packing a healthy lunch box for your child can support them in their healthy growth and development. Health Authority Abu Dhabi (HAAD) replied to Abu Dhabi Week's questions to make packed lunches for your kids as interesting and nutritious as possible.

RECOMMENDED TYPES OF FOOD CARRIED TO SCHOOL:

What to put in the lunch box?

A healthy lunch keeps active kids alert and focused and gives them the nutrition they need every day.

Here are the recommended foods to be placed inside the school lunch box:

1. VEGETABLES & FRUITS

A good helping of fruit and vegetables. Fresh fruit is really tasty and easy to pack. You could pack a banana, apple or chopped fresh strawberries, pineapple or melon. Raw vegies such as carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, cucumber or capsicum strips are popular as a snack or in a sandwich.

2. CARBOHYDRATES

Starchy food. Have a variety to choose from, such as wholegrain, whole-meal or high fibre breads, such as seeded rolls, Lebanese bread, pita, bagels; cereal (try to avoid the frosted cereal); brown and white rice; or tricolor pasta.

3. PROTEIN

Lean protein. Try to include a good source of lean protein such as boiled eggs; beans and lean meat. This will help keep your child full and help prevent snacking on unhealthy items later.

4. DAIRY

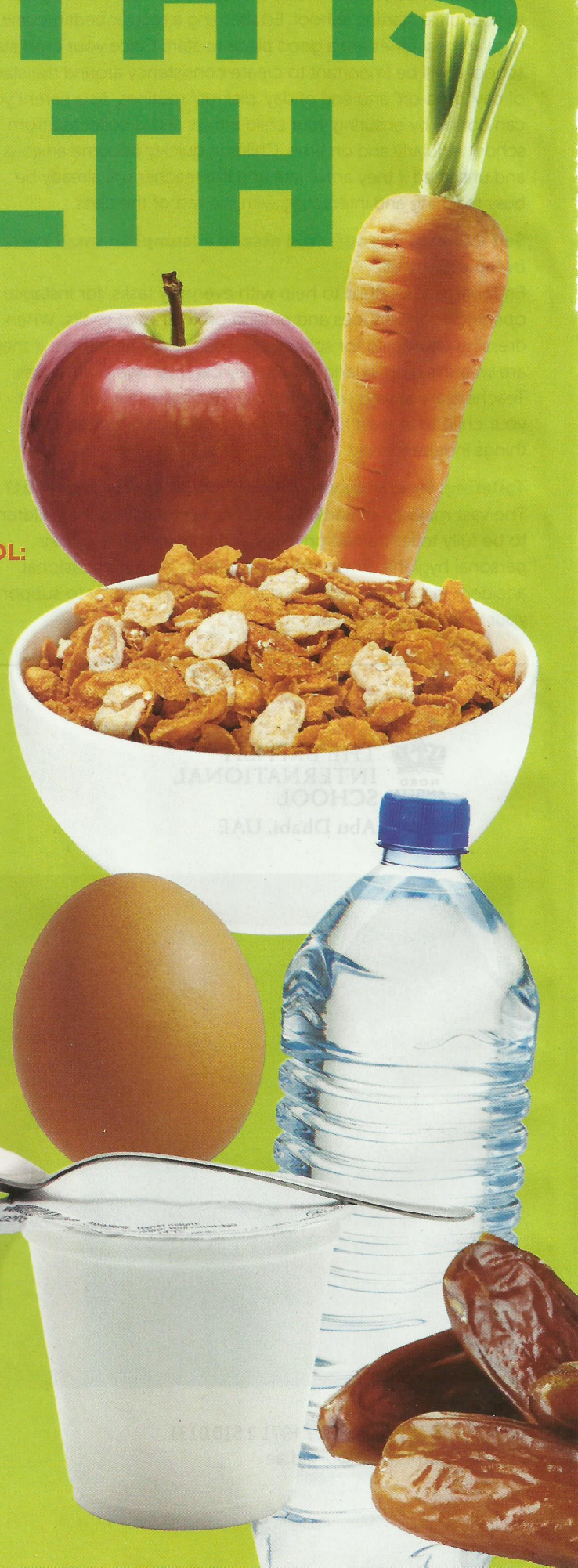
Reduced fat dairy food. Include a small drink of milk or reduced fat yoghurt or cheese.

5. WATER

A bottle of water. It is important for your child to keep hydrated all day. Water and unflavoured milk are the best options, as Fruit juices, cordials, flavoured waters and full strength soft drinks contain a lot of sugar. You can freeze it to keep the lunch box (and your child) nice and cool on hot days.

6. SNACKS

Include a small snack in your child's lunchbox to encourage them not to swap their fruit for more appealing packaged options. Some nutritious snack choices are dried fruit, rice cakes, low fat popcorn, cheese sticks, yoghurt, low fat mini-muffins and low-fat cookies. Making your own low fat muffins can be a way to include fruit and vegetables inside it (e.g. banana, pumpkin, berries, and carrot).



EXAMPLES FOR THE LUNCH BOX DURING FIVE SCHOOL DAYS:

SUNDAY BREAKFAST

- Date (3 pieces).
- A cup of low fat milk.
- A sandwich of low fat cheese.
- Chopped carrots.

LUNCH

- Whole grain bread buttered with avocado and stuffed with cold meat and slices of lettuce and cucumbers.
- ½ cup of chopped grapes and apple.

MONDAY BREAKFAST

- ½ cup of cereal.
- A cup of low fat milk.
- ½ cup of chopped kiwi or cluster of seed-free grapes or chopped oranges.

LUNCH

- Mixed vegetable salad.
- A sandwich of tuna in whole wheat bread with slices of cucumber.
- Low fat yogurt and banana.

TUESDAY BREAKFAST

- Minced chickpeas (hummus) with chopped lengthwise vegetables such as carrots, celery, and sweet pepper and triangular pieces of Arabic toast.
- A cup of low fat milk.

LUNCH

- Plate of pasta with chicken and tomato sauce.
- ½ cup of pineapple slices.
- Low fat yogurt.

WEDNESDAY BREAKFAST

- ½ cup chopped peach or any other fruit.
- Low fat cheese and different types of vegetables such as tomatoes, capsicum, carrot and cucumber.
- A cup of low fat milk.

LUNCH

- Steamed baby corn.
- Seasoned grilled chicken breast.
- Carrot & raisin salad.
- Low fat yogurt.

THURSDAY BREAKFAST

- Low fat yogurt with chopped banana, strawberries and a tea spoon of honey and whole grain cereal.

LUNCH

- Egg sandwich in whole-wheat toast, avocado spread, lettuce and tomatoes.
- A cup of boiled carrots and broccoli flowers.
- A cup of low fat milk.

HOW MANY CALORIES DOES A CHILD IDEALLY NEED AT SCHOOL?

Students need approximately one-third of the energy needed during the entire day.

KINDERGARTEN

Breakfast	350
Lunch	550

PRIMARY

Breakfast	350-500
Lunch	550-600

ELEMENTARY

Breakfast	400-500
Lunch	600-700

HIGH SCHOOL

Breakfast	450-600
Lunch	750-850

ADDITIONAL TIPS FOR SCHOOL LUNCH BOXES:

Be sure that the school lunch box is safe and cool as much as possible by choosing an insulated bag that keeps food at a safe temperature and free from harmful bacteria.

- Don't forget a spoon when packing yoghurt or tubs of fruit.
- For busy families, prepare lunchboxes and sandwiches the night before and store them in the fridge. That way in the morning you are ready to go!
- Wash, rinse and thoroughly dry lunchboxes after every use to keep them safe and clean.
- Foods should be separated in the lunch box by using bags or papers intended for food packaging and should be used only once to avoid cross-contamination.
- The school lunch box must be washed with soap and warm water after each use.
- It is preferable to put ice packages between the contents of the lunch box. ❖

