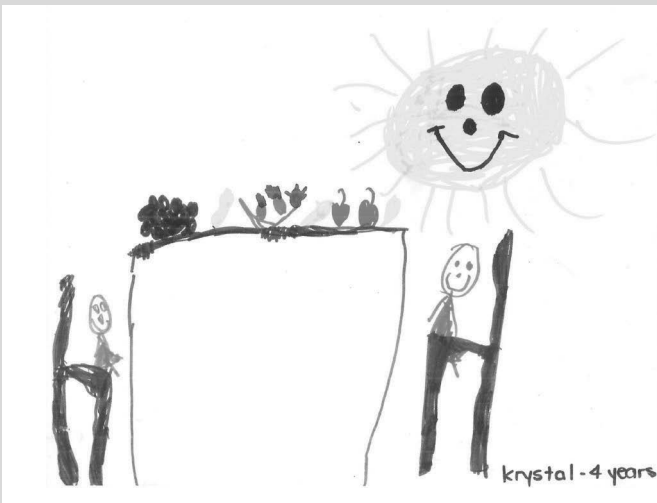


# Caring for Children

## Birth to 5 years

(Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)





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For further information on this resource please visit [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)

# Acknowledgements

*Caring for Children – Birth to 5 years (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)* is based on two resources, namely *Caring for Infants - A guide to feeding 0 to 12 month-old infants in long day care centres* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2008) and *Caring for Children - Food, Nutrition and Fun Activities* (4<sup>th</sup> edition 2005).

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- *Caring for Infants* was originally produced by Maine Norberg, Rosemary Young and Sue Amanatidis from the former Central Sydney Area Health Service.
- This revised edition was written by Kristine Lobley, Consultant Paediatric Dietitian.
- *Caring for Children* was originally written by Carolyn Bunney and Lauren Williams.
- This revised edition was written by Carolyn Bunney, Rudi Bartl and Lesley Marshall, Nutrition Services, Central Coast Local Health District.

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- *Caring for Infants* was originally produced by Maine Norberg, Rosemary Young and Sue Amanatidis from the former Central Sydney Area Health Service.
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- Services directors and cooks, early childhood nutrition experts and other representatives from the early childhood sector that contributed to the review that resulted in this edition.

The NSW Ministry of Health acknowledges the contribution of individuals in both original resources.

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## Why is Food Important in Early Childhood Education and Care Services?



Under the Education and Care Services National Regulations (76080) if a service provides food and drinks, the food and drinks must be nutritious and adequate in quantity, and take into account dietary requirements appropriate to each child's growth and development needs, and any specific cultural, religious or health requirements.

An accurate weekly menu must be displayed at the service. Policies and procedures about nutrition, food and beverages, and dietary requirements must also be in place.

Many young children are being cared for in early childhood education and care services (referred to hereafter as services).

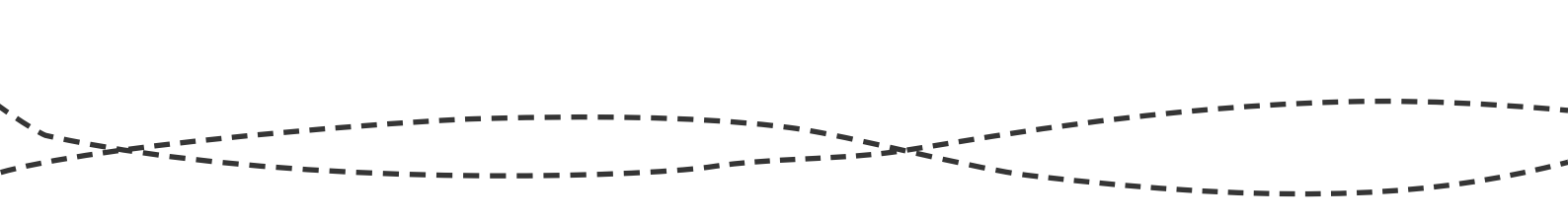
Whether food is brought from home or prepared on the premises, your service has a responsibility in regards to the food intake and nutrition of the children while they are in your care.

The early years are a time when food habits are being developed, many of which will be retained throughout life. Food should not only be nutritious, it should also help to meet the social, cultural and educational needs of the children. This learning environment can be enhanced by the inclusion of carefully chosen food awareness learning experiences.

This resource provides practical information and best practice guidelines on healthy eating and nutrition for the early childhood education and care setting (from birth to 5 years of age). It is based on three key national health documents that focus on children, namely:

- The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* (2013) which provide up-to-date advice about the amounts and kinds of foods that we need to eat for health and wellbeing. They are based on scientific evidence and research.
- The *Infant Feeding Guidelines* (2012) which provide advice about breastfeeding and infant feeding.
- *Get Up & Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood* (2009) which provides practical information and advice on early childhood healthy eating and physical activity, how to develop nutrition and physical activity policies and ways to support and encourage staff, educators and families.

This resource is designed to be used by anyone caring for children, the term early childhood education and care service includes long day care, family day care and preschool.



It is anticipated that service directors, cooks, educators, families and (especially) children will benefit from the contents of this resource.

The content of this resource is based on experience in the field and consultation with representatives from the early childhood sector. This resource covers many aspects of food and nutrition. It is organised into five sections.

### Section 1: Nutrition for Babies and Toddlers (Birth to 24 months)

This section outlines the nutrient needs of babies and toddlers from birth to 24 months. It provides practical assistance in applying the *Infant Feeding Guidelines* including issues around breastfeeding, preparing infant formula, introducing solid foods and choking precautions. Finally, this section covers planning menus for babies and toddlers providing sample menus for 6 to 12 month olds and 12 to 24 month olds.

### Section 2: Children's Nutrition (2 to 5 year olds)

This section outlines the nutrient needs of children 2 to 5 years, to provide for their growth and activity requirements. Nutrient needs are translated into food types and amounts according to the 'food groups' and the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. This section covers ideas for healthy morning and afternoon tea, drinks and desserts. Checklists are provided to assist services to develop or review policies related to food and beverage provision, the eating environment and nutrition education. This section also includes healthy lunchbox guidelines and ideas for families where food is brought from home. This section briefly covers food allergies, intolerances and how to deal with special diets. Finally, the important aspect of making mealtimes positive is discussed to help achieve a relaxed, happy, learning environment for all children.

### Section 3: Food Preparation and Menu Planning

This section covers issues such as safe food handling and hygiene, menu planning, food purchasing, storage and cooking hints. It also includes sample menus and a broad selection of recipes.

### Section 4: Making it Happen

This section describes each step of a continuous quality improvement process and how it can be used to improve your nutrition practices, consistent with *Caring for Children* recommendations.

### Section 5: Healthy Eating Learning Experiences

The need for children to be stimulated through learning experiences is addressed in this section. Awareness of the environment has been considered in the selection of learning experiences.



## Resources and Reference Sections and Appendix

These sections contain a list of materials that were used in the preparation of this resource as well as other useful resources.

## Alignment with the National Quality Framework

The National Quality Framework (NQF) is the result of an agreement between all Australian governments to work together to provide better educational and developmental outcomes for children using education and care services.

The NQF took effect on 1 January 2012 and introduces:

- National Law and Regulations
- National Quality Standard
- National quality assessment and rating process

*Caring for Children – Birth to 5 years (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)* is a best-practice resource for services that provides guidance and support for services to meet these new requirements.

## The *Munch & Move* Program

The *Munch & Move* program is a NSW Ministry of Health initiative which aims to promote and encourage healthy eating and physical activity habits in young children aged birth to 5 years.

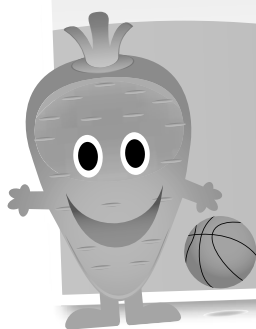
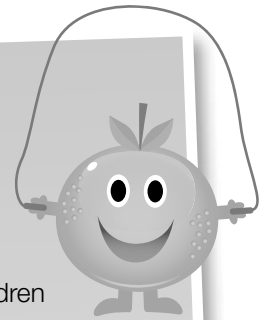
The *Munch & Move* program offers free professional development training, resources and support to early childhood educators working in NSW early childhood education and care services.

*Munch & Move* is based on six key messages:

- Encourage and support breastfeeding
- Choose water as a drink
- Choose healthier snacks
- Eat more fruit and vegetables
- Get active each day
- Turn off the TV or computer and get active.

This resource supports services, in particular cooks, to implement the four *Munch* key messages.

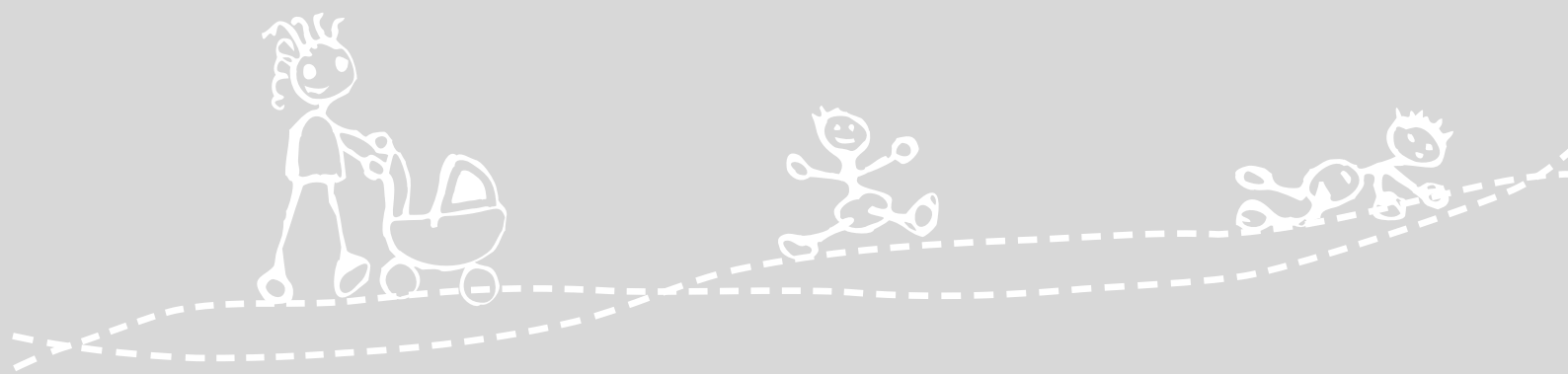
For further information, please visit the *Munch & Move* pages on the Healthy Kids website [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)





# Section 1

## Nutrition for Infants and Toddlers (Birth to 24 months)







## Introduction

This section replaces the resource *Caring for Infants – Food and Nutrition for 0 to 1-year-olds in Long Day Care Centres* (originally produced by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services in 1997; revised in 2008).

This section incorporates the *Infant Feeding Guidelines for health workers* endorsed by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC, 2013). It aims to provide services with practical assistance in applying these guidelines. The information is structured to follow the feeding transition that occurs as infants move from a milk only diet to a range of family foods by 12 months of age and then into their toddler years. The guidelines are relevant to healthy, term infants of normal birth weight. However, there may be individual reasons (e.g. medical, cultural) why infant feeding choices vary from one family to another. All children differ with regard to feeding within the context of their family and community, so services should work with families to ensure the child's needs are understood and appropriately met.

## The role of services in infant and toddler nutrition, including support for breastfeeding

Infants grow and develop more rapidly than at any other time of life. This means that they have particularly high nutritional needs. Appropriate infant feeding practices and food choices are needed to support normal growth and optimal nutrition. Unsound infant feeding practices can result in nutrition and growth problems that may have long-term effects.

As infant feeding transitions into toddler feeding after 1 year of age, the toddler years become a time of new food behaviours and expressions of independence around food choices. Feeding toddlers may be seen as more challenging because of these changes, or families and educators may describe toddlers as 'picky' or 'fussy' with food. This change is very normal and expected.

The toddler years remain an equally important time for young children to learn to eat well, a skill that will last them a lifetime. The way families and educators respond to toddlers and their eating is just as important as the food served to them. Toddlers should never be offered more snacks, milk or 'treats' because they are upset, bored, tired, being well behaved or have refused the meal that is served. The nutritional needs of toddlers remain high, while their appetite and food intake is less than that of an infant.

Both infants and toddlers should be offered a variety of food experiences in order to maximize their exposure to different tastes and learn to accept a wide range of foods.

Children who attend services can spend the majority of their day in care for up to five days a week. Many children will therefore receive a significant part of their total nutrition

from the service. Services can support the healthy development of all infants and toddlers in their care by adopting the recommended feeding practices and food choices.

Breastfeeding is very important for infant nutrition, with universal agreement that breastmilk is the best first food for babies. Australian and international health authorities recommend **exclusive breastfeeding until around 6 months**. 'Exclusive breastfeeding' means that nothing else (except medicine or prescribed vitamin drops) is given to the infant – they receive breastmilk ONLY. At around 6 months, solid food can then be offered while breastfeeding is continued until 12 months or longer if the mother and baby wish.

Services have an important role to play in supporting mothers to breastfeed. Returning to work is a common reason for stopping breastfeeding or for deciding not to start breastfeeding, however services can inform mothers that the provision of breastmilk can be supported in their service.

Services can:

- develop policies that encourage and support continued breastfeeding
- identify your service as 'breastfeeding friendly'
- ask about breastfeeding at the time of enrolment. Inform mothers that the service is supportive of receiving expressed breastmilk or alternatively, for mothers that work nearby, visits during the day for breastfeeds are encouraged
- provide a welcoming environment for mothers to comfortably breastfeed or express breastmilk
- assure mothers that expressed breastmilk will be stored and handled safely at the service
- play an important role in providing families with accurate nutrition and feeding information, and that this is reflected in the feeding practices of the service.



To request a free "Breastfeeding-friendly zone" sticker for your service's door or window, go to:  
[www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-stickers](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-gug-stickers)

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**Breastfeeding  
Welcome Here**



Australian Breastfeeding Association  
[www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au)

To request a free "Breastfeeding Welcome Here" sticker for your service's door or window, go to:  
[www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au/services/welcome)

## Breastmilk and Other Drinks for Infants and Toddlers

### Give Freely

It is universally agreed that breastmilk is the best first food for infants. Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended until the infant is around 6 months of age, followed by continued breastfeeding until 1 year of age and beyond. For any infant who is not receiving breastmilk, the only other safe and suitable alternative until 12 months of age is infant formula.

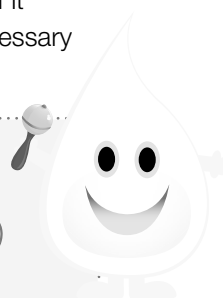


Breastmilk or infant formula is all that a baby needs for the first 6 months of life. No other drinks or foods are needed.

Once an infant is over 6 months of age, small amounts of boiled, cooled tap water can be given in addition to breastmilk or infant formula. Tap water is best, especially if it contains fluoride, which helps protect children's teeth against decay. It is not necessary to use bottled water.



All infants require breastmilk and/or infant formula for the first 12 months. Breastfeeding can continue into the second year if mother and child wish to do so. No children should receive cow's milk (or any other type of milk) as their main drink until after 12 months of age.



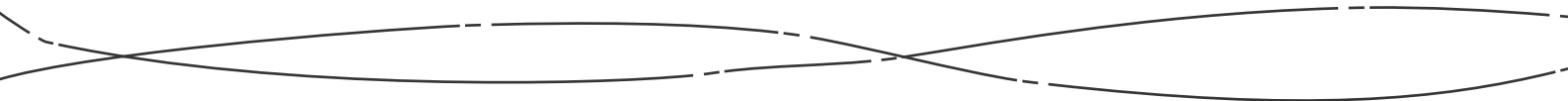
### Drinks Not Recommended

The following drinks are not recommended **before** the age of 12 months:

- Cow's milk (including fresh, UHT, powdered, evaporated or condensed)
- Goat's milk and sheep's milk
- Soy drinks (sometimes called 'soy milks')
- Rice drinks (sometimes called 'rice milks'), oat milk, almond milk, coconut milk and quinoa milk

Cow's milk and other milks listed above, are low in iron, with protein and sodium levels that are unsuitable for infants. In addition, children who are unable to tolerate cow's milk usually need to avoid goat, sheep and for some, soy milk too. Children with a diagnosed allergy may use a prescribed 'hypoallergenic' infant formula instead of regular infant formula.

Full cream, pasteurised, cow's milk may replace breastmilk or infant formula as the main drink **after the age of 12 months**. There is no need to boil cow's milk and it should never be diluted with water. Always use full cream (full fat/regular) cow's milk until the age of 2 years. After 2 years of age, reduced fat (often called "light" or "lite") milk can be used. Skim milk is not recommended for children until after 5 years of age.



Soy drinks are not the same as soy infant formula, and should not be given before the age of 12 months. Soy drinks may not have the vitamins, minerals or energy needed by infants.

Fortified soy drinks and calcium + protein enriched rice and oat milks can be used **after the age of 12 months** as long as they are full fat varieties and alternative forms of protein and vitamin B<sub>12</sub> are in the diet (such as meat, chicken, eggs, cheese).

Toddler milks (also called ‘toddler formula’) are not necessary for children after the age of 12 months. Toddlers can get their nutrition from healthy family foods and regular milk. Although toddler milk is formulated and advertised to supplement a toddler’s diet if their intake of energy and nutrients is suboptimal, it should never be used to replace meals.

In the toddler years, it is important to establish a habit of offering food before milk to protect small appetites and teach children to use food first to satisfy hunger. Too much milk (more than 500mls per day) can lead to poor nutrition and food refusal.

The following drinks **are not recommended** for infants or toddlers:

- Coffee, tea, herbal teas
- Fruit drinks and syrups promoted as vitamin C supplements (often blackcurrant, cranberry or rose hip flavours)
- Soft drinks, cordials, mineral waters, vitamin waters, energy drinks, sports drinks
- Flavoured milks
- Any milk that has had sugar or honey added to it.

Some drinks, like tea, contain natural chemicals that interfere with the absorption of nutrients. Herbal teas may contain naturally occurring chemicals that are not suitable for young children, despite being promoted as ‘natural’ or ‘healthy’. Other drinks may contain caffeine and should be avoided. There is no safe level of caffeine consumption identified for children.

## Caution

**Fruit juice (including 100% juice, ‘no added sugar’ juice and freshly squeezed juice) is not needed by infants and should be used cautiously with toddlers.** It is important for infants and toddlers to learn to eat fruit as a food. Fresh, canned or frozen fruit and vegetables included in the menu each day provides adequate vitamin C and are a source of fibre. Fruit juice may result in the child not eating enough food, or drinking enough breastmilk or infant formula. Fruit juices given in feeding bottles, sippy cups or pop-top bottles also increase the risk of tooth decay. Fruit juices may cause diarrhoea in infants and toddlers.

## Safe Bottle Feeding

### **Guidelines for the safe feeding of expressed breastmilk or infant formula in early childhood education and care services**

#### Transporting and storing bottles

- Label all bottles taken to the service with the child's full name, the contents of the bottle, the date the breastmilk was expressed or the infant formula was prepared and the date to be used.
- Store expressed breastmilk/infant formula in sterilised bottles or containers. Use smaller (120mls) bottles for expressed breastmilk to reduce wastage.
- Cool all expressed breastmilk/infant formula in the refrigerator before transporting. Transport frozen breastmilk, and cooled breastmilk/infant formula, in an insulated container with frozen "cooler bricks" (e.g. an esky with a freezer brick).
- Put all breastmilk/infant formula bottles in the refrigerator (or freezer) immediately on arrival at the service.

#### Storage and use

- Expressed breastmilk may be frozen.
- Any frozen breastmilk that has thawed (wholly or partially) during transport to the service should be immediately stored in the refrigerator and used within 24 hours. Do not re-freeze it.
- Store all bottles in the back of the refrigerator where it is coldest. Do not store bottles inside the refrigerator door.
- Store the breastmilk/infant formula in the refrigerator for the day and throw out all leftovers at the end of the day.
- At home, frozen breastmilk can be stored for up to two weeks in a freezer compartment inside the refrigerator (-15°C), or for up to 3 months in a freezer section of the refrigerator that has a separate door for the freezer (-18°C).
- Once a bottle has been given to an infant, throw out any leftover breastmilk/infant formula after each feed. Do not put back in the refrigerator, and do not leave out at room temperature for later use.



Store bottles in the coldest part of the refrigerator (the back of the main refrigerator compartment). Do not store bottles inside the refrigerator door.

## Remember

1. Put a sign on the refrigerator instructing families and educators to put all bottles in the main part of the refrigerator, not inside the door.
2. Breastmilk and infant formula are foods that must be stored cold. All cold food should be stored at 4°C or lower, to limit the risk of food poisoning.
3. To ensure the refrigerator stays at 4°C or lower, place a probe thermometer in a glass of water in the middle of the main part of the fridge. Check the temperature regularly and adjust the fridge as needed.
4. Once a bottle has been given to an infant, discard any leftover breastmilk/infant formula after each feed.

### Thawing frozen breastmilk

- Thaw frozen breastmilk in the refrigerator or, if necessary, by placing the bottle in warm water (shake gently if the breastmilk has separated).
- All frozen breastmilk thawed in warm water should be used immediately. Discard any left-overs as soon as the feed has finished.
- Frozen breastmilk left to thaw in the refrigerator can be kept in the fridge for that day. Once it has been taken out of the fridge for a feed, it should be warmed and used immediately.

### Warming breastmilk and infant formula

Feeding an infant cold breastmilk or infant formula is not harmful, but drinks warmed to room temperature flow better from the bottle, and infants seem to prefer them.

- Warm breastmilk/infant formula bottles by standing the bottle upright in warm tap water for no more than 15 minutes just before use.
- Bottle warmers can be used, but they must have a thermostat control. Bottles should only be warmed using this equipment for less than 10 minutes. Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Never microwave breastmilk/infant formula.
- Before feeding the infant, shake the bottle and test some of the breastmilk/infant formula on the inside of your wrist to make sure it is not too hot. Only warm the milk once, and discard any warmed milk that has not been used.
- Never refreeze thawed breastmilk.



## Remember

1. Microwaving bottles of breastmilk/infant formula is not recommended for safety reasons – microwaves heat the milk unevenly and the milk may contain 'hot spots' that will burn an infant's mouth.
2. Breastmilk should not be warmed in the microwave because important immune properties are destroyed.



Breastmilk and infant formula do not have to be warmed before feeding. However, warmed breastmilk/infant formula may be preferred.

The safest way to warm bottles is by standing the bottle in warm water. It is not recommended to microwave bottles.

Some breastfed infants won't take feeding bottles – expressed breastmilk can be given from a small feeding cup or with a spoon.

### Protocols for the correct identification of expressed breastmilk

It is very important that the correct breastmilk be given to the correct infant. Giving an infant the breastmilk from a different mother is a major incident.

Educators should be aware of and follow the correct procedures for identifying and managing expressed breastmilk:

- If more than one infant is receiving breastmilk at the service, two educators need to check that the correct name is on the bottle for the infant about to be fed. This should also be noted on the infant's feeding record.
- If an infant is given the wrong breastmilk, the service's usual incident procedures should be followed. This may include reporting the incident to a local authority.
- Educators should also advise the infant's mother to contact their general practitioner or child health nurse for advice.

## Preparing Infant Formula

### STEP 1

Wash hands thoroughly with soap and running warm water.

Dry hands using a disposable paper towel.



### STEP 2

Always prepare infant formula in a clean, hygienic area. Ensure all bottles, teats and any other equipment used to make up infant formula have been cleaned and sterilised. Sterilisation can be done by boiling for 5 minutes, anti-bacterial sterilising agents, steam sterilisers or microwave steam sterilisers.

### STEP 3

Using freshly boiled tap water that has been allowed to cool to lukewarm, measure the required amount of water into the bottle. The water is always added before the powder.



### STEP 4

Measure the required number of scoops of infant formula powder into the bottle of water. Use only the scoop that comes with that tin, and read the instructions on the tin to find out how many scoops are needed for the amount of water being used. Tap each scoop lightly but do not pack down the powder. Use a clean knife to level off each scoop. Re-seal the opened can of infant formula powder and store in a cool, dry place.



### STEP 5

Place the teat and cap on the bottle, and shake vigorously till all of the powder dissolves.

Note: There will now be more infant formula than the original amount of water measured.



## STEP 6

Test the temperature of the milk with a few drops on the inside of your wrist – it should feel just warm, but cool is better than too hot. If it is too hot, cool the feed quickly by holding under a running tap or place in a container of cold or iced water.



## STEP 7

If the bottle of infant formula is not required immediately, store in the back of the refrigerator until it is needed. Do not allow prepared bottles of formula to sit at room temperature for more than 1 hour.

## STEP 8

Discard any unused, made-up infant formula at the end of the day.<sup>1</sup>

## Remember

1. It is best to prepare one bottle of infant formula at a time so it is freshly made for each feed.
2. Each brand of formula has its own size of measuring scoop and different instructions on how many scoops to use, so follow the instructions on the tin you are using.
3. Never add more or less scoops than the instructions state. It is unsafe to make up formula too weak or too concentrated. You should never need to use a half scoop.
4. Replace the correct scoop into the correct tin so it is there next time you need it. When the tin is finished, throw the scoop away with it and use the new scoop provided in the next tin.



Some services may prefer that families provide pre-sterilised bottles and teats, along with pre-measured serves of powdered formula, each day. This will require parents to clearly label all pre-measured serves of formula powder with the child's name, date and the amount of water to be mixed to the formula. This requirement should be clearly noted in the service's food and nutrition policy and communicated with families.

<sup>1</sup> Images supplied by Department of Health South Australia, 2010.

## The Feeding Environment and Safe Positioning

### Suitable feeding positions

(i) Infants should be in a semi-upright or upright position when being fed.

Example:

- on your lap facing to the side or in front
- in a semi-reclined seat if requiring trunk and head support
- in a stable baby chair if able to sit independently
- in a high chair (ensure good trunk support and safety strap used through legs to avoid slipping)

(ii) Where possible, feed infants in a quiet area with less distractions.



### Unsuitable feeding positions

- (i) It is unsafe to 'prop' feed an infant. 'Prop feeding' is when the bottle is propped up by a cushion, towel or other support in order to keep it in the infant's mouth. This means that a person is not holding the bottle and the child is left unsupervised whilst feeding. Prop feeding is an unsafe practice, as it increases the risk of choking and possible overfeeding.
- (ii) Avoid feeding in areas that have a lot of noise and distractions.
- (iii) Lying infants in a cot, on the floor or on cushions is not recommended for feeding.
- (iv) Sitting to the side of the infant requires them to turn their head to the side for food. The child's trunk is less stable and they are not feeding with head in the midline position.

Unsuitable feeding positions can increase the risk of problems such as:

- **Tooth decay**

Do not leave infants feeding from bottles while they are lying down or going off to sleep. This encourages them to continue to suckle on the bottle whilst sleeping. In this position, fluid stays in the mouth for too long and the baby may rapidly develop tooth decay (also called early childhood caries). It is important to avoid this habit, even if the baby does not appear to have cut any teeth yet – emerging tooth buds are still at risk of decay. The early loss of baby teeth can lead to ongoing dental, orthodontic and oral health problems in the future.

Any drinks containing natural and/or added sugars (e.g. all milks, fruit juices, soft drinks, cordials) can cause tooth decay and tooth erosion.

Pacifiers/dummies should always be sterilised prior to use and never be dipped in sweet foods such as sugar, honey or golden syrup.

- **Choking**

Infants who are fed while lying down or who are ‘prop fed’ are at a higher risk of choking.

Never add infant cereal or any other ‘food’ to an infant’s bottle of milk.

If you suspect or can see that any other food or flavouring has been added to a bottle of milk that has been provided for the child, discard it and prepare a fresh bottle. It is important to then inform the family that this is not in line with your service’s feeding policy.

- **Middle ear infections (Otitis media)**

Allowing infants to bottle feed while lying down may increase the risk of middle ear infections.

## Remember

1. Do not give food or bottles to infants while they are in a bouncinette, lying on the floor or in a cot as these are not safe feeding positions.
2. If an infant falls asleep while being bottlefed, always remove the bottle straight away.
3. Do not allow infants to take bottles to bed.
4. Never prop feed an infant.
5. All infants who are bottlefed will benefit emotionally from being held closely whilst feeding to provide important infant to carer contact.
6. Pacifiers or dummies should be sterilised and never be dipped in any sweet foods.



## Giving up the Bottle

Feeding bottles with teats are for use with breastmilk, infant formula or water during the infants first year. Infants can begin to use a feeding cup (e.g. a spouted cup or cup with a lid) from 6 months of age. Lightweight plastic trainer cups with a simple spout (not a teat or a no-spill valve-type spout) and two handles are an economical, practical and easy to clean choice. Cups with a straw, open lip or free flowing spout are also appropriate. Training cups should only be used for a short time, while infants continue to practice drinking from an open cup. Transitioning to an open cup or a free-flow cup without a valve, will help infants to learn cup drinking skills as it requires them to sip rather than suck, and this is also better for their teeth. Infants who suck on teats, pop-top style bottles and cups with valves in their spouts can easily end up spending longer periods of time throughout the day and night with teats in their mouths and milk around their teeth, increasing the risk of tooth decay.

Introducing a cup around 6 months of age is important as it helps to prepare for giving up the bottle at around 12 months.

At around 12 months of age, children's growth rate slows and their appetite naturally becomes smaller. Continued use of a bottle often results in toddlers drinking too much milk over the day so it is important to introduce a cup between 6 and 12 months. Milk is filling, so drinking too much may lead to the child eating less food than expected/needed and being described as a 'fussy' or 'picky' eater. However, the problem is not the child's eating ... it's the excess milk, that has taken the place of food in the child's diet. From 12 months of age onwards, milk should always be offered in a small cup after food. This also helps toddlers to learn a new habit of having milk from a cup after their dinner instead of expecting a bottle of milk at bedtime.

Too much milk, combined with not enough solid food, increases the chance of iron deficiency. Iron deficiency can have a negative effect on the normal development of young children.

Early childhood caries (tooth decay) is a serious problem for infants and toddlers and without treatment can lead to toothache, infection and early loss of teeth. Loosing these teeth too early, makes it hard for young children to progress to family foods and resist foods with lumps. Settling infants by giving them a bottle to suck on for long periods, or allowing them to fall asleep while continuing to feed from a bottle have been identified as a major cause of early childhood tooth decay.



The use of feeding bottles with teats is only recommended until the age of 12 months for developmentally able children. Between the ages of 6 and 12 months, infants need to transition from liquid food to solid family foods. Daily cup drinking practice from 6 months on helps infants to give up the bottle at 12 months of age. Less reliance on bottle feeds of milk makes it easier for toddlers to become good eaters.

## Suitable Cups



## Introducing Solid Foods

Advice about introducing solid foods to infants is more straightforward and less restrictive than in the past. There is enough evidence related to allergy prevention to now recommend infants be exposed to a range of foods at around 6 months of age, rather than restrict foods that were previously thought to cause allergy.



Healthy, full-term infants are physically and developmentally ready to start solid food around 6 months of age. It usually takes several attempts to successfully feed a new food to an infant. Food may be refused because infants are tired, distracted, or out of routine – not necessarily because the food is disliked. Learning to eat solid food is a skill that improves with practice and repetition.


From around 6 months of age infants are ready to start solid foods because:

- They have greater energy and nutritional needs that can no longer be met by breastmilk/infant formula alone.
- Stores of nutrients (e.g. iron) are low, so to ensure infants do not become iron deficient, additional iron now has to be provided by food.
- They can hold their head and neck up straight, which allows foods to be easily and safely swallowed.
- Their feeding development has moved from sucking to biting with the disappearance of the ‘tongue-thrust’ reflex. When this reflex is still strong, infants tend to push out anything that is in their mouths using the tongue, rather than using the tongue to move the food to the back of the mouth for swallowing.
- Their digestive system and kidneys have matured enough to cope with solid foods.
- They are showing greater awareness and interest in food.

Introducing new foods to infants:

- Several attempts are usually needed before a new food is eaten – persistence and patience is important.
- Allow infants to explore foods by touching, smelling and tasting food – this is an important part of learning to eat new foods.
- Always show the child the food you are offering them – do not try to trick them into opening their mouth so a spoonful can sneak in.



- 
- Make sure the texture is suitable and avoid foods that can be inhaled or cause choking (refer to '*Minimising the risk of choking on food*' section page 39). Gagging is common in infants – especially when new food textures are introduced. This is a protective mechanism and does not mean you need to avoid that food in the future. Baby will learn to eat a new texture as they practice more munching and biting.
  - Introduce food with a wide variety of colours and flavours before the age of 12 months. This will help the child accept a wider range of foods when they are older.
  - Always allow infants to eat to satisfy their appetites. Do not push them to take more mouthfuls if they have indicated they have had enough. It is important not to push a child to overeat or make them finish what is in the bowl.

Introducing solids too early can lead to:

- Decreased breastmilk production.
- A rejection of the spoon (as the 'tongue-thrust/reflex' is still present), which may be interpreted as rejection of food.
- Increased risk of food allergies.
- Increased exposure to pathogens (bacteria) in foods, which can cause foodborne illness.
- Increased load on the baby's kidneys.

Introducing solids too late can lead to:

- Slowed growth, as breastmilk/infant formula alone is insufficient to meet all energy needs after 6 months of age.
- Micronutrient deficiencies – especially iron and zinc, which can compromise a baby's immune protection and development.
- Delayed development of motor skills like chewing.
- Reduced willingness to accept new tastes and textures.
- Increased risk of food allergies.

## Remember

There are important reasons for starting solids at the recommended age. Starting solids around 6 months helps to safeguard against iron deficiency anaemia and assists in the development of age appropriate feeding skills and food acceptance.

The importance of early opportunities to sample a variety of tastes and flavours.

Food for infants does not need to be bland. Their food can contain herbs, spices, garlic, vanilla and include family foods made in traditional ways. Salt, salty flavourings (e.g. stock, soy sauce, gravy), honey and sugar should not be added to infant's food.

Early exposure to a wide variety of flavours is thought to be important for later food acceptance, with young children being more willing to eat new or different foods. In fact, early taste exposures have already happened for breastfed infants well before they ever have their first spoonful of food, via flavours from foods included in their mother's diet.

Surprised facial expressions are not a sign of disliking the taste of food, they are just part of the learning process as baby develops familiarity and understanding of this new and interesting flavour.

## Remember

A variety of solid foods are required for good nutrition and to help all infants and toddlers learn to accept a range of food flavours and textures.

## How much food is enough?

### Learning to feed to appetite and respond to infant cues

Every service's responsibility is to provide adequate and suitable food to meet a child's nutritional requirements whilst in care. However, pushing a child to eat all the food on their plate is not part of that responsibility, as each child will eat different amounts on different days, and this is entirely normal. Children will eat variable amounts at different ages and stages of their development. They may eat more or less than another child because of differences in growth, appetite, feeding experience, breastmilk/formula intake or wellness. Although nutrition guidelines outline minimum quantities that are needed to meet a child's needs, it is the child's responsibility to eat as much as they need from meal to meal and from day to day.

A handy phrase to remember that helps avoid the temptation to push or coerce a child to eat more is: *'Carer provides, child decides'*.

Recognising and responding to the child's cues of hunger and satiety (fullness) is the best way to feed to appetite. This helps a young child to avoid the learnt behaviour of overeating, which can contribute to overweight and obesity when they are older.





## Baby led weaning

Advice on introducing solids often focuses on when and what, rather than HOW to introduce a baby to solid food. Some families may choose to follow an alternative style of introducing solids called 'baby led weaning'. Based primarily on the idea of self-feeding and self-choice, this approach provides the opportunity for a baby to lead their own introduction of solids. In their own time, baby learns to self-select food and feed themselves using family foods. There is no puree and no spoon-feeding by another person. First solids are foods that the baby can hold for themselves, and with them, they begin early munching, chewing and learning to feed with their fingers and holding their own spoon.

Baby led weaning is often promoted as having benefits such as less mealtime battles, less work in the kitchen preparing baby food, encourages healthier food choices, reducing obesity risk and less fussy eating. None of these claims can be confirmed at this stage. For families who choose to use this method, many of the foods provided on the menu are suitable for baby led weaning.

## Food for toddlers – transitioning to 'family foods'

From 12 months of age onwards, solid foods should provide the highest proportion of energy to a toddler's diet. The diet should not be dominated by milk and after 12 months of age, milk should be given in a cup after meals.

Toddlers do not need special 'toddler milks' or 'toddler foods' – they can drink full cream cow's milk and eat family foods. Toddlers learn about eating by following the example of others, so good role modelling helps teach toddlers about food and mealtime routines. All toddler's eating habits will undergo a time of transition, which families may describe as fussy, picky and difficult – but this should not be seen as a problem – rather as a normal stage that all children experience and one that only becomes a problem when poorly managed. 'Fussy eating' in toddlerhood can prove to be a significant source of anxiety for some families. A 'no fuss approach' and mealtime routines can help children develop healthy food choices, positive feeding practices and a healthy feeding relationship with the people who care for them.

Toddlers need small nutritious meals and mid-meal snacks. Access to more frequent snacking or grazing does little to help the appetite of a 'picky' eater and makes it harder for young children to eat well at mealtimes. Learning to wait for the next meal or snack, even if feeling hungry, means the healthy food that is served will be more likely to be eaten.

Ensuring milk or juice is not consumed in excess or in lieu of food is important for protecting a young child's appetite for food.

Iron-rich foods remain an important part of the toddler diet.

Healthy snacks for toddlers should be based on fruit, vegetables, dairy and wholegrain cereal choices to ensure they contribute to the child's overall nutritional intake for the day.

## Food Allergies and Intolerances

Allergic reactions involve the body's immune system, producing mild, moderate or severe and sometimes sudden symptoms. Symptoms may include hives, swelling of the lips, face, eyes or tongue, vomiting, wheezing or a rash soon after the food allergen (usually a protein) is touched or ingested. These symptoms have the potential to be life threatening for some children (due to anaphylaxis) and require immediate emergency action to be taken.

With planning and communication, services can appropriately manage and prevent anaphylaxis. Training is essential in order for educators to recognise allergic symptoms (including anaphylaxis), respond appropriately and know how to minimise the risk of exposure to known allergens.

Slower onset and non-life threatening symptoms (such as headache, nausea, hives, mouth ulcers) are more likely to be from food intolerance.

Allergies are not food dislikes, digestion difficulties, food poisoning or a reaction to a food additive such as preservatives.

Children who do not have a known allergy, even those with siblings or parents with a food allergy, are still encouraged to follow the same guidelines for introducing solids. They do not need to avoid food allergens in an attempt to prevent the development of the allergy in the future. In fact, if all children, including those with a family history of food allergy, continue to receive breastmilk whilst they are introduced to a wide range of foods, their allergy risk is reduced. This means that the introduction of potential allergens such as egg, milk, wheat, soy, peanut, tree nuts, sesame and fish should occur from 6 months onwards, with continued breastfeeding to offer immune protection for the child.

If a child has a diagnosed food allergy (assessed by a medical doctor, Paediatrician or Allergy Specialist) that requires a special diet in order to avoid one or more allergens, speak with the families about their individual dietary needs. The child's doctor can provide an Action Plan to families and this can be used to communicate to service educators the recommended treatment should the child have a reaction whilst in care.



Education and Care Services National Regulations (Reg.130) require that at least one educator with approved anaphylaxis training is in attendance at a centre based service at all times children are in care in a centre based service. All family day care educators must have completed this training.

The regulation applies regardless of whether children with diagnosed allergies are enrolled!

Naturopathic style diets (often wheat, yeast, dairy and/or sugar free) do not necessarily mean the child has a diagnosed food allergy or intolerance.

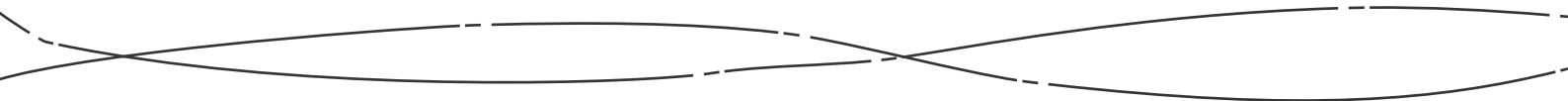
Contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian at the nearest children's hospital or allergy unit for more information about allergy prevention or if a child already has a diagnosed food allergy that requires a special diet.

Further information and allergy diet sheets are available from the following websites: [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au) and [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)

For more information on food allergies and intolerances see page 60.



<sup>1</sup> ACECQA, 2013.



## Foods and Drinks for Infants (6-12 month olds) and Toddlers (1-2 year olds)

How much food should be offered to infants and toddlers?

### (a) Infants

When infants start solids around 6 months of age, the amount eaten may be very small, such as a teaspoon or two. The amount an infant eats gradually increases over time as their feeding skills develop and they grow. The amount of milk they drink gradually reduces during this time, but milk still remains their main source of nutrition when learning to eat solids. First foods are about learning how to eat and discovering new tastes, textures and flavours, not about filling them up with solids. Never try to force or push infants to eat more than they want. Infants can usually tell you when they've had enough, by turning their head away, refusing to open their mouth, spitting food out or pushing the spoon away. By 12 months of age food is more important than milk.

### (b) Toddlers

Toddlers have a highly variable appetite and this is normal. This means that they may eat different amounts at different meals on different days. This is not a cause for concern, as toddlers have a remarkable ability to balance out their total intake of food over many days. They will eat what they need right now. It is important not to force or push a toddler to finish food if they have indicated they have had enough. Even if the toddler eats very little at one meal, they will make up for it at another.

The role of the service is to OFFER the recommended minimum amount of food from each food group. You do not need to ensure the child eats it all but instead, make it available for them to choose from.

### Sample daily food pattern for infants and toddlers




The tables below are from the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. They outline the daily requirements of an infant (Table 1) and toddler (Table 2).



**If a child is in care for eight hours or more they should receive at least one main meal and two midmeals that should provide at least 50% of the recommended dietary intakes (RDI) for all nutrients<sup>1</sup>.**

If a child is in care for more than eight hours, extra meals and/or midmeals (i.e. breakfast or late afternoon tea) should be provided.

**Table 1: Sample Daily food amounts for infants<sup>2</sup>**

Food	Serve size	Serves per day for infants	Serves to provide to infants while in care	In care, what does this Look Like?
<b>Vegetables and legumes/beans</b> 	20g	1½-2	1	2 tbs cooked vegetables
<b>Fruit</b> 	20g	½	¼	1 tbs fruit puree or ¼ small piece fruit
<b>Grain (cereal) foods</b> 	40g bread equivalent	1½	¾	¾ slice bread or ⅓ cup cooked rice or pasta or couscous or quinoa
<b>Infant cereal (dried)</b> 	20g	1	½	2-3 tbs dry cereal
<b>Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, legumes/beans</b> 	30g	1	½	2 tbs cooked mince, chicken or fish 1-2 tbs cooked legumes ¼ egg
<b>Breastmilk or formula</b> 	600ml	1	½ (300ml)	2 x 150 ml bottles/ cups milk
<b>Yoghurt/cheese or alternatives</b> 	20ml yoghurt or 10g cheese	½	¼	1 tsp yoghurt 1 tsp grated cheese






+ a small amount of unsaturated spreads (e.g. margarine) or oil (approx. ¼ - ½ tsp) is appropriate

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health, NSW, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> NHMRC, 2013

**Table 2: Sample Daily food amounts for toddlers**

(Note the difference in serve sizes between infants and toddlers)<sup>1</sup>

Food	Serve size	Serves per day for toddlers	Serves to provide to toddlers while in care	In care, what does this look like?
<b>Vegetables and legumes/beans</b> 	75g	2-3	1 – 1 ½	½ - ¾ cup cooked vegetables 1 small potato or ¼ cup sweet potato 1 cup salad ¼ cup legumes
<b>Fruit</b> 	150g	½	¼	¼ medium size piece fruit or ½ small piece fruit ¼ cup tinned fruit/diced fruit
<b>Grain (cereal) foods</b> 	40g bread equivalent	4	2	2 slices bread or 1 bread roll or 1 cup cooked rice, pasta or noodles
<b>Lean meats, poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, legumes/beans</b> 	65g	1	½	¼ cup mince 1 small chop 1 slice roast meat ½ small can tuna or salmon 1 egg ½ cup legumes or baked beans 85g tofu
<b>Milk, yoghurt, cheese or alternatives</b> 	250mL milk equivalent	1 – 1 ½	½ - ¾	125 – 180 mls milk 1 – 1 ½ slices cheese or ½ matchbox size piece cheddar ½ - ¾ cup yoghurt or custard

+ small amount of unsaturated spreads (e.g. margarine) or oil (approx. ½ - 1 tsp) is appropriate

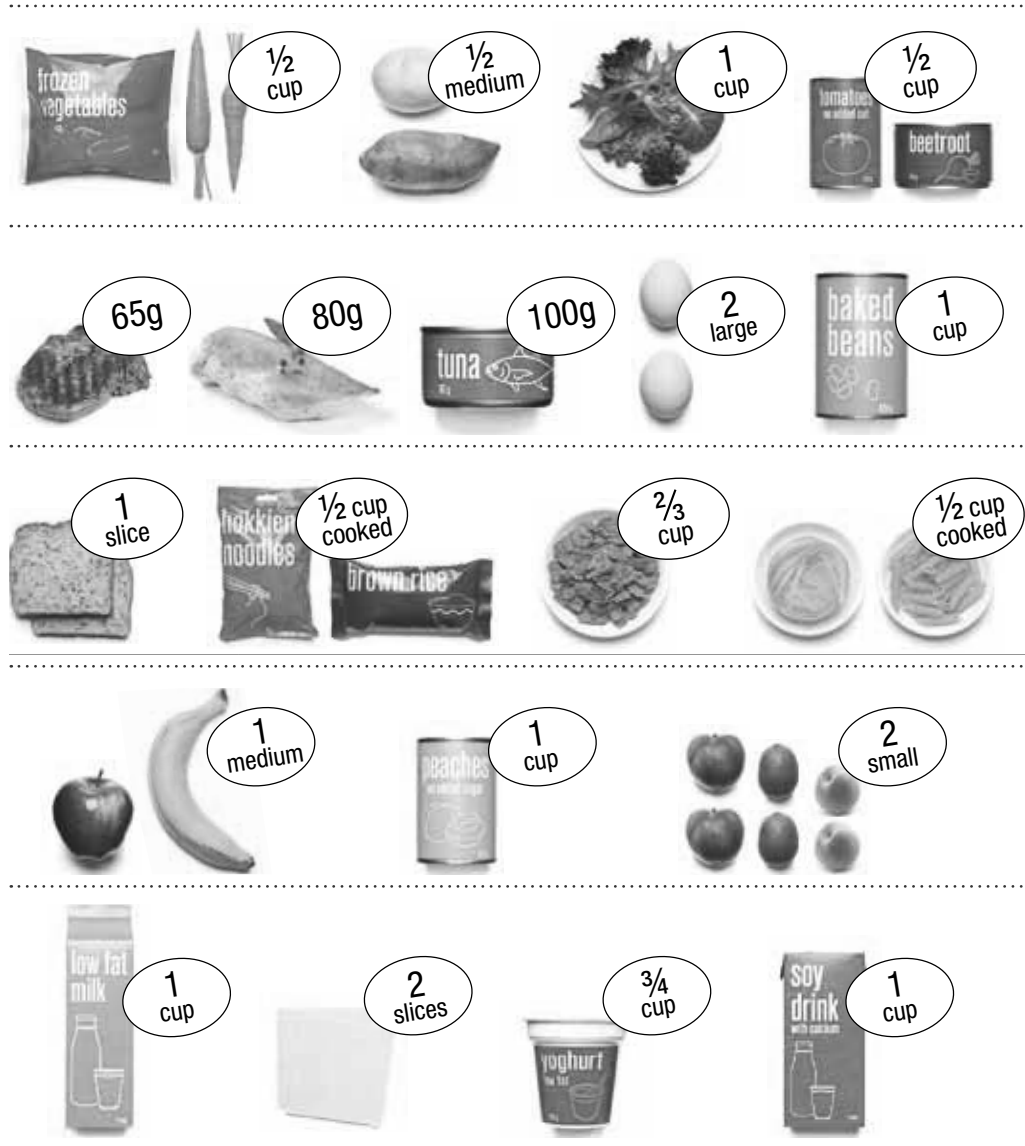
**Note:** By consuming half the number of serves in these tables a child should be consuming 50% of the RDI.

<sup>1</sup> NHMRC, 2013




What do these serve sizes look like<sup>2</sup>?

Use standard measuring cups, spoons and jug to help estimate portion sizes.

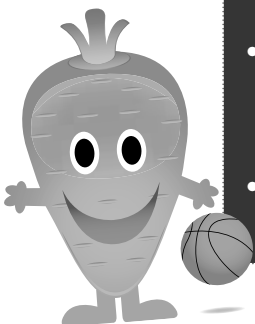


## Breastmilk and Other Drinks – Recommendations

Birth	From 6 months	12 months
<p>Infants under 6 months of age who are fed on demand do not usually need to be given extra fluids.</p> <p>Infants not receiving breastmilk must be provided with a standard infant formula.</p>	<p>As the amount of solids gradually increases, the volume of breastmilk or infant formula will gradually decrease.</p> <p>Around 8 months, give breastmilk/infant formula after food.</p> <p>Introduce a cup from around 6 months of age.</p> <p>Small amounts of cooled boiled tap water may be offered in a cup.</p>	<p>Change to full cream cow's milk.</p> <p>Use a cup, not bottle for all drinks.</p> <p>Toddler formula or follow-on milks are not necessary.</p> 
<p>Breastmilk/infant formula – continue until at least 12 months of age. Breastmilk can continue into the second year if the family choose to do so. Children not receiving breastmilk can change from infant formula to full cream cow's milk at 12 months of age.</p>		

### Remember

- Fruit juice and fruit drinks are not necessary or recommended for infants under 12 months.
- For toddlers, eating fruit and drinking water is preferable to drinking juice.
- Cow's milk should not be given as the **main drink** to infants under 12 months. Small amounts of cow's milk can be used in cooking or given as yoghurt, custard, cheese or white sauce.
- After 12 months, toddlers do not need toddler formula or toddler milk. They can drink full cream cow's milk as their main milk drink.



## Foods – Recommendations

As long as iron-rich foods are included in first foods, foods can be introduced at around 6 months, in any order and at a rate that suits the infant.

Other than recommending the use of iron-rich first foods, it does not matter which order foods are introduced or how many new foods are introduced at a time. Slow introduction of solid foods is not necessary so there is no need to wait days between introducing each new food.

**Food offered should be an appropriate texture and consistency for the infant's developmental stage:**

From around 6 months	6 - 12 Months	From 12 months
<p>For most infants, first foods are those which are soft and easy to eat. This includes blended, mashed and minced textures.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iron fortified cereals (e.g. rice or other mixed grains)</li> <li>• Vegetables and legumes (e.g. kidney beans, chickpeas, soy beans, lentils)</li> <li>• Meat (such as beef, lamb or pork), poultry, fish (canned, fresh or frozen with all bones removed), liver</li> <li>• Cooked plain tofu, tempeh</li> </ul>	<p>Infants become better at eating with practice. Most infants can now manage an increased variety of foods. The texture of food should continue to transition to thick mash, soft lumps, small/chopped bite-size pieces and finger foods.</p> <p>Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cooked or raw vegetables (e.g. steamed or grated carrot, mashed or boiled potato/ sweet potato, chopped tomato, cucumber sticks, small florets of broccoli and cauliflower)</li> <li>• Fruit (any type of fresh fruit and tinned fruit canned in natural juice)</li> <li>• Whole cooked egg (boiled, scrambled, omelette)</li> <li>• Cereals and grain foods (e.g. wheat, oats, rice, burghul, couscous, pearl barley), noodles, bread, pasta (preferably wholegrain)</li> <li>• Nut pastes</li> <li>• Toast fingers and rusks</li> <li>• Dairy foods such as full-fat cheese, custard and yoghurt</li> </ul>	<p>Toddlers should be consuming a wide variety of foods. This allows them to experience many tastes and textures. Foods can be cut into small pieces that require some biting and include foods that need munching and chewing.</p> <p>Toddlers should be attempting to feed themselves with a spoon and child sized fork with supervision and encouragement.</p> <p>Small, hard, round and/ or sticky pieces of food should be avoided as they can cause choking.</p> <p>Toddlers can have regular service meals.</p>



**Remember**

- The texture of foods should be suitable to the infant's stage of development, progressing from blended to lumpy to normal textures during the 6 to 12 months of age period.
- Solid foods do not need to be bland. They should be tasty but without added salt, salty flavourings (e.g. gravy, stock cube or soy sauce) or sugar.
- Honey can contain botulism so should not be given to any infants under 12 months of age. This includes honey used as an ingredient in a recipe as cooking honey does not destroy any botulism present.

## Iron-containing Foods for Infants and Toddlers

Iron requirements in the first year of life are greater than at any other stage of a child's life.



Feeding infants' cow's milk as the main drink before 12 months of age is associated with an increased incidence of iron deficiency.

All of the iron an infant and toddler requires must be supplied from the food they eat. Although many foods contain iron, some sources are better absorbed than others.

### Best sources of iron

Iron absorption is best from foods that provide haem-iron such as:

- Breastmilk
- Beef
- Veal
- Lamb
- Pork
- Liver and kidneys
- Fish and seafood
- Chicken

### Other sources of iron

Iron is also provided by a variety of non-haem foods. This type of iron is less easily absorbed. The absorption of non-haem iron can be improved by serving this food with a haem iron source (e.g. kidney beans with mince) or serving alongside a vitamin C rich food (such as salad or fresh fruit).

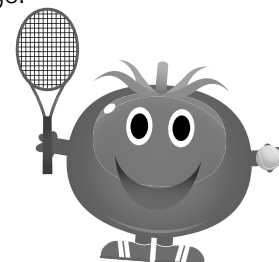
- Iron fortified infant cereal
- Iron fortified breakfast cereal
- Dried peas, beans and legumes (e.g. baked beans, kidney beans, soybeans, lentils)
- Tofu
- Egg
- Green leafy vegetables
- Wholemeal and wholegrain bread
- Wholemeal and wholegrain pasta
- Dried fruit
- Nut spreads and nut pastes
- Tahini and hommous

For more information on the importance of iron, see page 51.

## Should Low Fat Foods Be Offered?

Low fat, reduced fat or fat free variations of foods are not recommended on the menu for infants and toddlers. Low fat diets are not suitable for children under 2 years of age.

The fat contained in full fat milk, regular cheese and yoghurt, full fat custard, eggs, avocado, nut products, meat and oily fish provides energy for growth and essential fats for healthy brain development.



## Infants and Toddlers on a Vegetarian Diet

<b>VEGETARIAN</b> (may include some animal products e.g. eggs, yoghurt, cheese)	<b>VEGAN</b> (avoid all animal products)
<p><b>To drink:</b> Breastmilk/infant formula until at least 12 months.</p> <p><b>To eat:</b> Introduce foods as per non-vegetarian children, but substitute all animal flesh foods with vegetarian protein foods (e.g. legumes like soy beans, baked beans and lentils; tofu; nut pastes).</p> <p>Eggs may be an acceptable protein for some vegetarian children (check with the family).</p> <p>Ensure that a plant-based cooking oil e.g. olive oil, canola oil is used for preparing foods.</p> <p>Dairy foods (such as cheese, custard and yoghurt) are usually acceptable and can be introduced from six months onwards but check with the family first.</p>	<p><b>To drink:</b> Breastmilk or soy infant formula until at least 12 months.</p> <p><b>To eat:</b> Acceptable foods usually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Iron-fortified cereal</li><li>• Fruits, vegetables and legumes</li><li>• Tofu</li><li>• Other cereal and grain foods (such as couscous, quinoa, rice, pasta, pearl barley)</li><li>• Custards made on soy formula</li><li>• Soy yoghurt</li><li>• Nut pastes</li></ul> <p>Ensure that a plant-based cooking oil e.g. sunflower, soybean, olive, canola oil is used for preparing foods.</p> <p>It is recommended that all children on a vegan diet take a vitamin B<sup>12</sup> supplement – consult with the child's family and/or an Accredited Practising Dietitian.</p>



Families follow vegetarian diets for a variety of reasons. A well-planned vegetarian diet (including vegan diet) can meet the nutritional needs of a growing child. However, vegetarian diets can easily become high in fibre, low in fat and low in iron, so care must be taken to ensure that the child's diet has enough fat, iron and other important nutrients.

**Note:** Children from families who follow a vegetarian diet may need additional attention to be paid to the way solids are introduced to ensure the child's nutritional requirements are met. Contact an Accredited Practising Dietitian for more information.

## Food Textures



To help infants develop their feeding and eating skills, it is important to change the texture of foods between 6 and 12 months of age.

6 to 7 months

### **Blended or finely mashed texture.**

Suitable texture achieved by:

- pushing the food through a wire mesh strainer with a spoon
- putting food through a baby food grinder (e.g. Mouli)
- processing in a blender or food processor
- mashing well with a fork or potato masher
- grating cooked meats such as chicken or roasted meat



Examples of suitable foods include:

- infant cereal mixed with breastmilk, infant formula or boiled water
- finely mashed ripe banana or avocado
- peeled, cooked and blended or finely mashed apple or pear
- blended or finely mashed cooked vegetables (e.g. potato, pumpkin, sweet potato)
- blended meat, chicken, liver or fish
- mashed silken tofu
- blended or finely mashed legumes, beans
- soft scrambled egg



7 to 9 months

**Mashed and grated foods, soft lumps and soft finger foods.**

Suitable texture achieved by:

- mashing foods with a fork or potato masher
- cutting up soft foods into small bite-size pieces
- grating

Food examples include:

- mashed cooked vegetables
- chopped cucumber, tomato, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli or grated carrot
- minced meats
- mashed fruits
- soft pieces of tinned fruit mashed or chopped into bite-size pieces
- hardboiled egg cut into small pieces
- porridge
- couscous



9 to 12 months

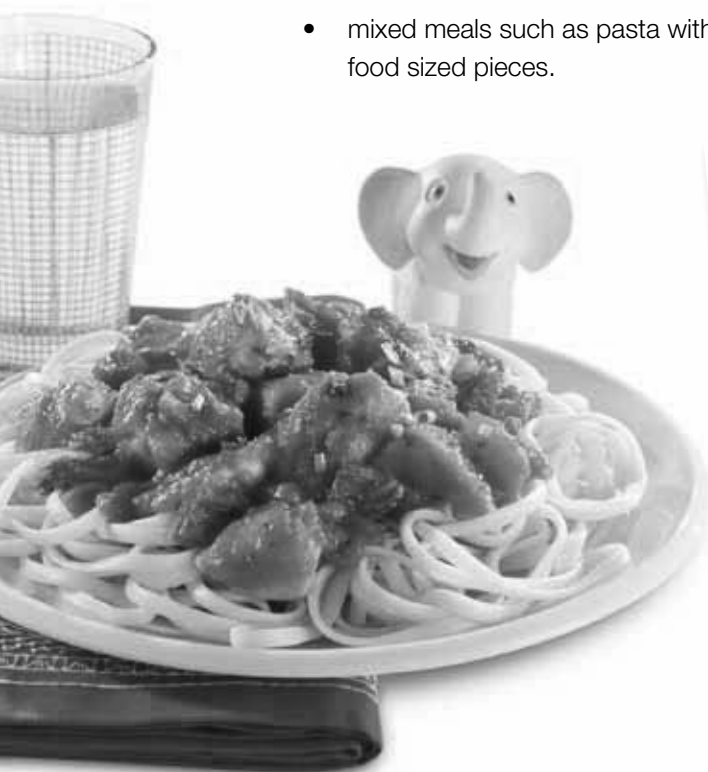
**Food with lumps that need munching, chopped foods, finger foods, mixed textures.**

Suitable texture achieved by:

- coarsely mashed
- cutting up food in finger food or bite-sized pieces
- mixed dishes (all-in-one meals)

Food examples include:

- bread crusts (using thick/dense bread such as sourdough or wholemeal as white bread can become 'gluey' and difficult to swallow)
- toast fingers
- cheese sticks
- small pieces of cooked pasta e.g. penne, spirals, macaroni
- cooked rice or quinoa
- slices/pieces of lightly steamed vegetables
- pieces/wedges of soft peeled fruits
- small tender pieces of fish/meat/chicken
- meatballs made from minced meat that can be broken into small pieces
- all-in-one meals such as casserole or mornay (small pieces in a thick sauce)
- mixed meals such as pasta with bolognese sauce or stir fry made with small finger food sized pieces.





## Minimising the Risk of Choking on Food

All infants and young children differ in their feeding abilities. The skills they have developed by a certain age are based on the food and eating experiences they have been previously given along with the developmental progress they are making. Some children may be able to safely chew, bite and swallow different textures much earlier than others. However, regardless of the age, there is always the potential for a child to choke on food.

All educators must be mindful of this when supervising the children in their care. A good place to start is for educators to talk with families about the foods their child is able to manage.

Gagging is not the same as choking. Gagging is a protective mechanism that tells the child the food was not ready to be safely swallowed and it may need more chewing or be broken down into smaller pieces.

Safe mealtime practices that help to reduce choking risk include:

- Children are seated whilst eating.
- Mealtimes must be actively supervised by educators.
- If food is brought from home, check lunchboxes and remove any foods that pose a choking risk. Inform the family that these foods are unsuitable and the reason why.
- At least one member of staff who has a current first aid certificate should be present in the service at all times.
- Eating should happen while children are calm, not upset or crying.
- Remind and encourage children to chew their food and not overfill their mouth.
- Give children plenty of time to eat, do not hurry them.
- Food should be small bite-size pieces or small enough for finger feeding (can be easily held in the child's hand). Do not provide large chunks of food.
- When mealtimes are over, all food is removed. Do not allow children to return to play activities with food still in their hand or mouth.
- No prop-feeding with feeding bottles.
- Plan menus to ensure food can be mashed, minced, cut up, broken up or provided in small finger food sized pieces so it meets the needs of all ages and abilities.

Foods to avoid to reduce choking risk:

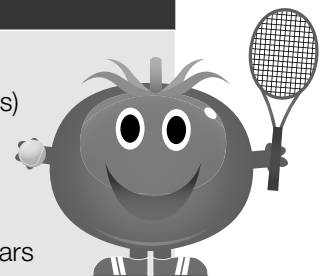


The size, hardness and shape of some foods make them more likely than other foods to be inhaled or to cause choking.

Problem Foods	How to make the foods safer
<p>Hard foods: e.g. whole nuts, seeds, raw carrot sticks, celery sticks, chunks of raw apple, whole dried fruit pieces</p>	<p>Use smooth nut pastes (from around 6 months of age) or ground nuts such as almond meal Steam vegetables until soft Slice hard fruits into tissue-thin slices Grate or very thinly sliced raw vegetables and hard fruits Use ground seeds such as LSA mix (ground linseed/sunflower/almond) Cut larger pieces of dried fruit (e.g. apricots, apple rings) into very small pieces</p>
<p>Foods with skins, strings or bones: e.g. peas, beans, corn e.g. sausages, chicken, fish with bones</p>	<p>Finely mash or squash cooked peas or corn kernels Remove bean strings and dice steamed beans Remove the skin and gristle on meat (such as on a chicken drumstick or chicken wing) Remove sharp or small bones (such as on a lamb chop, fresh fish or chicken wing) Cut or tear the edible portion of meat into small pieces Mash the soft edible bones in tinned fish</p>
<p>Round foods: e.g. grapes, cherry tomatoes, olives</p>	<p>Cut into small pieces (e.g. into quarters)</p>

## Avoid completely

- Popcorn
- Whole seeds (e.g. watermelon, pumpkin, sunflower, pumpkin kernels)
- Raisins
- Dry, hard biscuits
- All hard, jelly and chocolate button shaped lollies/sweets
- Very chewy, sticky, 'gluey' textured foods such as fruit straps, fruit bars



Fear of a child gagging or choking on food while they are learning to eat is not a reason to hold them back from having lumpy or chewy textures offered to them. Anxiety around choking can lead to a child remaining on blended foods for too long, delaying the development of their feeding skills. It may be more difficult for a toddler to learn to eat family foods if they have not experienced a transition of textures in the first year of life.

## Service Food and Menu – meeting the needs of infants and toddlers

How can services provide for the nutritional needs of the infants and toddlers in their care?

- Have a planned written menu, and note on the menu when other foods are needed for 6-12 month olds. Plan the alternative infant food/meals as part of the main menu.
- When preparing foods from the service menu that are suitable for infants, save time and effort by cooking extra food. This works well for all vegetables, cooked meats, stewed fruit and mixed meals such as a bolognaise sauce and casserole. Blend, mash or finely chop some of this extra food and freeze it for later use. To reduce wastage, freeze the food in ice-cube trays or snaplock bags. Once the food is frozen, remove it from the trays and put into plastic bags, or sealed containers, label, date and store in the freezer.
- Divide large quantities of cooked foods into separate small, flat, sealed containers (to ensure cold air can circulate around each container) and refrigerate to cool. Once cooled, freeze in the sealed container and ensure the food has been labelled and dated.
- The safe storage time for frozen foods depends on the type of food. The freezer information booklet should contain recommendations for safe food storage times.
- Always thaw frozen food in the refrigerator or defrost in the microwave with a microwave safe container before use. Do not leave food out on the bench top or in the sink to defrost, as it may be left in the *danger zone* for too long and become a food poisoning risk. All food defrosted or warmed in the microwave must be checked for 'hot spots' before being served, as microwaves do not heat evenly. Stir the food thoroughly, let it rest for a few minutes, and test its temperature by spooning a small amount onto the back of a washed hand. If too hot, leave it for a few more minutes to cool down and recheck before feeding.
- Warming bottles of infant formula in the microwave is not recommended as this can lead to 'hot spots' which can burn the infant's mouth. Warming in a jug of warm water is safer.
- Never microwave bottles of expressed breastmilk, as this may destroy the special bioactive components of the milk. Warming in a jug of warm water is the preferred method for expressed breastmilk.

### Remember

Be familiar with the service menu and plan alternative infant food/meals in advance for the times when the regular meal is not suitable for infants.



Infants may be in care for most of their waking daytime hours. They therefore need to be provided with the full range of nutrients from breastmilk/infant formula and a variety of solid foods from around 6 months of age and onwards. If infants are given only vegetables +/- fruit at their meals because the service meal is unsuitable, then they will not receive all the nutrients they need from food. In particular, their iron intake will be too low.

Toddlers may also consume most of their food intake for the day whilst in care, especially those dropped off early and picked up late. They may often be too tired to eat once they get home. Providing a nutritious lunch and healthy mid meal snacks helps them to achieve a better intake of the essential nutrients and energy they require for growth, health and development.

## Changing Service Menus to Suit 6 to 24 month olds

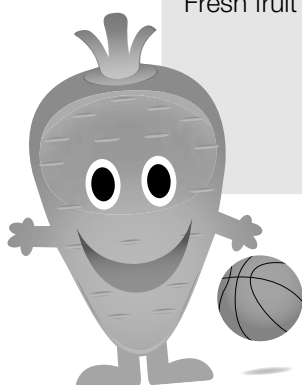
The menus below are from the 'Children's Nutrition – 2 to 5 year olds' section and have been adapted for 6 to 12 month olds and 1-2 yr olds.

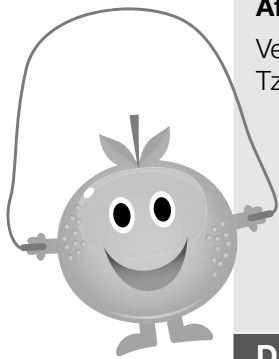
Drinks are not specified as infants should be given breastmilk/infant formula as needed and toddler drinks should be full cream cow's milk and water.

Menu 1	MODIFIED menu for 6 to 12 month olds	MODIFIED menu for 12 to 24 month olds
<b>Day 1</b>		
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Crumpets with margarine Dried fruit</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Tuscan beef casserole Boiled potato Custard and fruit</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Chicken and vegetable soup 1 slice wholemeal bread</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Plain toast fingers with thin spread of margarine Fruit – blend/mash/cut up</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Beef mince Mashed potato Blended/mashed vegetables Finely mashed stewed apple Custard</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Wholemeal toast fingers with avocado</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Plain toast fingers with thin spread of margarine Fruit – blend/mash/cut up</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Tuscan beef casserole (ensure bite-size pieces) Boiled potato, cut into small bite-size pieces Stewed apple Custard</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Chicken and vegetable soup Wholemeal toast fingers</p>



Menu 1	MODIFIED menu for 6 to 12 month olds	MODIFIED menu for 12 to 24 month olds
<b>Day 2</b>		
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Wholemeal crispbreads and Vegemite™ Fruit platter</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Tuna and sweet corn bake 1 slice wholemeal bread and margarine Watermelon</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Carrots/celery/capsicum with hommus</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Infant cereal or wholemeal toast fingers with thin spread of margarine Fruit – blend/mash/cut up</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Scrambled eggs Blended/Mashed vegetables Wholemeal bread fingers with thin spread of margarine Fruit (blend/mash/cut up)</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Grated raw carrot or steamed carrot sticks with hommus</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Wholemeal crispbreads with thin spread of margarine Fruit pieces</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Tuna and sweet corn bake (ensure bite-size pieces) Plain toast fingers with thin spread of margarine Fruit pieces</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Steamed Carrot sticks with hommus</p>
<b>Day 3</b>		
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> ½ Toasted muffin with tomato and cheese</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Bobotie Side salad 1 slice wholemeal bread and margarine Fruit yoghurt</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Pineapple and ricotta dip with vegetable sticks Fresh fruit</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Toasted muffin fingers with thin spread margarine and grated cheese</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Beef mince Salad Vegetables (e.g. tomato, cucumber, carrot) – grate/cut up Wholemeal bread fingers with thin spread of margarine Plain full fat yoghurt</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Vegetables – grated/ mashed with plain ricotta Fruit – mash/cut up</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Toasted muffin fingers/ quarters with thin spread of margarine, grated cheese and diced tomato</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Bobotie Salad – cut into bite-size pieces Wholemeal bread fingers with thin spread of margarine Fruit yoghurt</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Vegetable platter (steam hard vegetables such as carrot) with ricotta dip Fruit pieces</p>



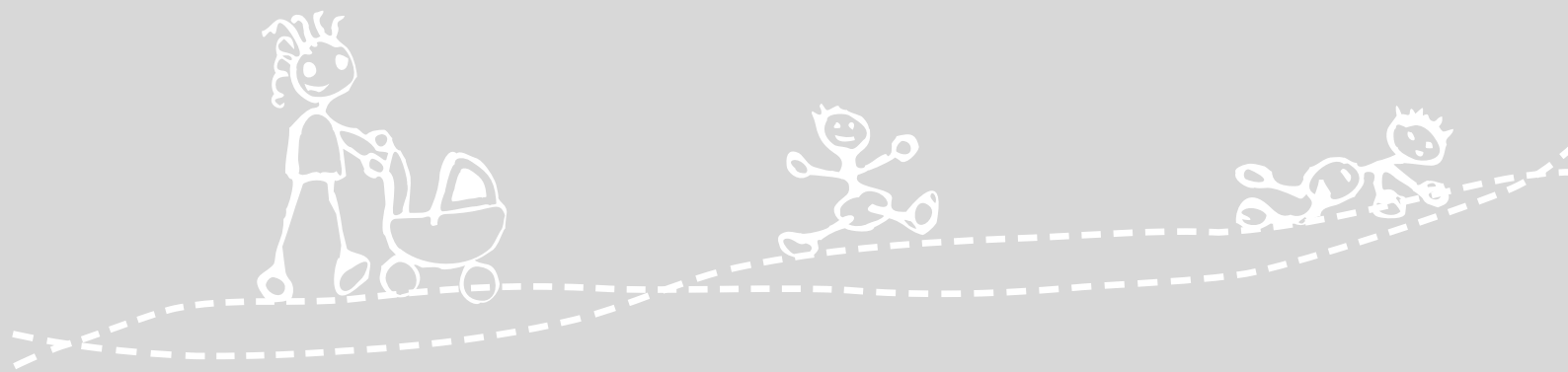


Menu 1	MODIFIED menu for 6 to 12 month olds	MODIFIED menu for 12 to 24 month olds
<b>Day 4</b>		
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Date loaf</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Minestrone Soup 1 slice wholemeal bread and margarine Canned two fruits and vanilla yoghurt</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Vegetable sticks with Tzaziki and salsa dips</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Infant cereal or plain toast fingers spread with cream cheese or avocado Fruit – mash/cut up</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Minced beef Mashed potato Vegetables – blend/mash/cut up Plain full fat yoghurt Mashed or blended two fruits (no syrup)</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Rusk with hommous Steamed vegetable sticks</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Plain toast fingers spread with cream cheese or avocado Fruit pieces</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Minestrone Soup Wholemeal bread fingers with thin spread of margarine Canned two fruits and vanilla yoghurt</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Vegetable platter (steam hard vegetables such as carrot) with Tzaziki dip</p>
<b>Day 5</b>		
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Avocado and cottage cheese dip and vegetable sticks Oven toasted Lebanese bread</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Lamb and noodle hot pot Wholemeal pasta ½ banana and custard</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Wholegrain crispbreads with Vegemite™ and cheese Orange segments</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Wholemeal toast fingers with avocado and cottage cheese dip Vegetables – grated/mash</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Minced lamb Mashed potato Vegetables – blend/mash/cut up Custard with mashed banana</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Rusk Grated cheese Chopped tomato Fruit – blend/mash/cut up</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> Wholemeal toast fingers with avocado and cottage cheese dip Vegetable platter (steam hard vegetables such as carrot)</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> Lamb and noodle hot pot (ensure bite-size pieces) Wholemeal pasta, cut up Custard with cut up banana</p> <p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Wholemeal crispbread with cheese &amp; tomato Orange, cut into bite-size pieces</p>

For more tips and ideas on modifying recipes refer to the 'About The Recipes in this Resource' on page 107.

## Section 2

### Children's Nutrition (2 to 5 year olds)







## Forming Good Eating Habits

Good nutrition is the balanced eating of a variety of foods. The foods we eat should provide our bodies with the nutrients needed to stay healthy. Good nutrition is especially important for children because they need extra nutrients for growth and development.

Along with these high requirements, children have small stomachs and can't eat much food in one sitting. This means children need to be provided with healthy meals and nutritious morning and afternoon teas (midmeals).

Most children have well established eating habits by school age. This makes it important to support healthy eating habits as early as possible. The 2013 *Australian Dietary Guidelines* focus on developing healthy eating habits throughout life. A list of the guidelines relevant to children in your care is given over the page.

These guidelines provide up-to-date advice about the amount and kinds of foods that children need to eat for health and wellbeing. They are based on the latest scientific evidence and research.



**Guideline 1: To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious foods and drinks to meet your energy needs.**

- Children and adolescents should eat sufficient nutritious foods and drinks to grow and develop normally. They should be physically active every day and their growth should be checked regularly.

**Guideline 2: Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.**

- Plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- Fruit
- Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
- Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
- Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat (reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under 2 years)

And drink plenty of water.

**Guideline 3: Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt and added sugars.**

a. Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat such as many biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps and other savoury snacks.

- Replace high fat foods which contain predominately saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain predominately polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads and avocado.
- Low fat diets are not suitable for children under the age of 2 years.

b. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt.

- Read labels to choose lower sodium options among similar foods.
- Do not add salt to foods in cooking or at the table.

c. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionary, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.

**Guideline 4: Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.**

**Guideline 5: Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> NHMRC, 2013

## Food in Care – types and quantities

The amount of food needed each day varies with the age, size and activity level of the child. Recommended Dietary Intakes (RDIs) are the amounts of nutrients which will meet the daily nutritional needs of most children.

Children in care should be provided with nutritious meals based on the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.



**If a child is in care for eight hours or more they should receive at least one main meal and two midmeals that should provide at least 50% of the RDIs for all nutrients<sup>1</sup>.**

If a child is in care for more than eight hours, extra meals and/or midmeals (i.e. breakfast or late afternoon tea) should be provided.

What does this mean in terms of food?

The minimum number of serves which will meet at least 50% of the RDIs for children up to six years of age can be clearly described in terms of food groups. Food can be divided into groups according to the major nutrients they provide.

- The wholegrain cereal foods and breads group provides energy, carbohydrate, protein, B group vitamins and dietary fibre.
- The milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives group provides energy, protein, calcium and the fat soluble vitamins.
- The lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, seeds and legumes/beans group provides energy, protein, iron and zinc.
- The fruit group provides carbohydrate, dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals.
- The vegetables and legumes/beans group provides dietary fibre, vitamins, minerals, antioxidants and phytochemicals.

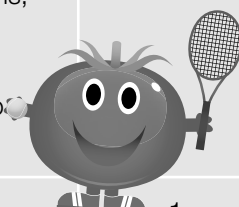
The minimum number of serves from each food group to provide a child with 50% of the RDIs have been calculated and are listed in Table 3.

<sup>1</sup> Department of Health, NSW, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> The calculations were made using the FoodWorks 2007 (version 5) software package based on Australian Food Composition Tables.

**Table 3 – Daily food amounts for children (2 to 5 years)<sup>1</sup>.**

Food Group and Serve Sizes	Minimum number of serves while in care for 8 hours	Comments
<p><b>Vegetables and legumes/beans</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is one serve:</b></p> <p>½ cup cooked vegetables            ½ cup cooked dried, canned beans, peas or lentils            1 cup salad vegetables            ½ medium potato or sweet potato            1 medium tomato</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include different types and colours.</li> <li>• Fresh, frozen and canned varieties can be used.</li> <li>• Choose canned varieties with no added salt.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Fruit</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is one serve:</b></p> <p>1 medium (150g) piece of fruit e.g. apple, banana, orange or pear            2 small apricots, kiwi fruits or plums            1 cup diced or canned fruit (no added sugar)            30g dried fruit e.g. 4 dried apricot halves</p>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serve fresh fruit rather than juice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Wholegrain cereal foods and breads</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is one serve:</b></p> <p>1 slice of bread            ½ a bread roll            ⅔ cup wheat cereal flakes            ½ cup cooked rice            ½ cup cooked pasta            3 crispbread biscuits            1 crumpet            1 English muffin            1 scone</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include a variety – breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley.</li> <li>• Choose wholegrain or wholemeal varieties and when available varieties with added iron.</li> </ul>



<p><b>Lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, seeds and legumes</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is one serve:</b></p> <p>65g cooked lean meats - beef, lamb, veal, pork, goat, kangaroo (90-100g raw)</p> <p>80g cooked lean poultry or turkey (100g raw)</p> <p>100g cooked fish (115g raw)</p> <p>1 small can fish</p> <p>2 large eggs</p> <p>1 cup cooked or canned legumes/beans</p> <p>170g tofu</p>	<p><math>\frac{3}{4}</math></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trim fat from meat where possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Milk, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives</b></p> <p><b>Each of the following foods is one serve:</b></p> <p>1 cup milk</p> <p>2 slices of cheese (40g)</p> <p>200g yoghurt</p> <p>120g ricotta cheese</p> <p>1 cup soy milk with at least 100mg of added calcium per 100ml</p>	<p>1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serving milk at morning and afternoon tea may be an easy and reliable way to meet this requirement.</li> <li>• Choose mostly reduced fat varieties.</li> </ul>

**Note:** If a child is in care for more than eight hours extra meals and/or midmeals (i.e. breakfast or late afternoon tea) should be provided.

<sup>1</sup> NHMRC, 2013

What about other foods?

Unsaturated spreads (margarines) and oils do not fit into these groups. These foods provide energy and fat soluble vitamins and are appropriate to include in the diet in small amounts e.g. oil in cooking and margarine on bread. Further information about 'Healthy Fats' can be found on page 53.

Other foods that do not fit into the Five Food Groups are 'discretionary choices' because they are not an essential or necessary part of our dietary patterns. These foods are high in kilojoules, saturated fat, added sugars, and added salt. They include cakes and pastries, sweet biscuits, health food bars, muesli bars, ice cream, confectionery, chocolates, lollies, processed meats and sausages, meat pies and other pastries, commercial burgers, hot chips and fried foods, crisps and other fatty and/or salty snacks, cream and butter, soft drinks, sugar sweetened cordials, fruit drinks and sport drinks.

This is not to say that a child may never eat these foods. However, they should be eaten less frequently and not as a substitute for more nutritious foods.



It is recommended 'discretionary choices' are not included on service menus or recommended for lunchboxes.

Australian Government  
National Health and Medical Research Council  
Department of Health and Ageing

www.eatforhealth.gov.au

# Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five food groups every day.  
Drink plenty of water.

Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties

Vegetables and legumes/beans

Fruit

Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat

Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans

Use small amounts

Only sometimes and in small amounts

## The Importance of Iron

The mineral iron is important in the diet of children because:

- iron is required to make red blood cells that carry oxygen around the body. This oxygen is necessary for the body to produce energy
- iron deficiency can affect a child's cognitive development, i.e. it is needed for brain development and normal brain function
- deficiency can lead to tiredness, poor sleep and headaches
- iron can strengthen resistance to infection.

Children who are iron deficient may lack energy, be pale, tired and not interested in playing.

There are two types of iron in food:

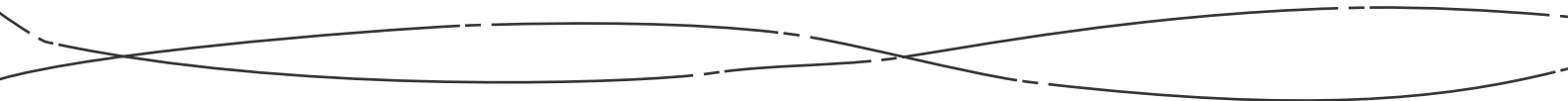
1. Haem-iron is found in animal foods such as red meat (beef, lamb, kangaroo) pork, veal, poultry, fish and shell fish. Haem-iron is well absorbed by the body. Red meat is a far better source of iron than light coloured meats.
2. Non haem-iron is found in plant foods such as wholemeal and wholegrain bread, wholemeal pasta, legumes (especially chick peas and soy beans) and breakfast cereal with added iron. Non haem-iron is not absorbed as well as haem-iron.

Vitamin C improves the absorption of non haem-iron. With non-meat meals serve foods which contain significant amounts of vitamin C. These include citrus fruits, strawberries, rockmelon, tomatoes, capsicum, kiwi fruit, raw broccoli and raw cauliflower.

Note that eggs are a nourishing food but very little of the iron they contain is absorbed.

As children have high iron requirements, both main meals and morning and afternoon tea will need to include iron rich foods. This can be challenging. The following information will help:

- Serve red meat at least six times a fortnight.
- Provide high fibre wholemeal or wholegrain bread or bread with added iron.
- Use wholemeal pasta especially with white meat or non-meat meals.
- Use at least half wholemeal flour in baked products.
- Provide breakfast cereals with added iron. Iron fortified baby cereal can be added to some baked products (see Iron Rich Muffin recipe, page 158).
- Include legumes to provide iron (e.g. chick peas, baked beans, soy beans, butter bean, brown and red lentils).
- Provide vitamin C rich raw vegetables or fruit with non-meat meals (heat destroys vitamin C).
- Some dried fruits provide iron (e.g. apricots, dates, sultanas and currants).

- 
- Milo™ is a good source of iron however, it should not be served every day. Milo™ could be provided on some days when a white meat or a non-meat dish is served. Other flavourings or powders do not contain sufficient iron and should not be used instead of Milo™.

Plan menus that provide iron containing foods at both main meals and morning and afternoon tea. Providing iron containing food at morning and afternoon tea is particularly important when the main meal is a non-meat dish, light or white meat, or sandwich meal.

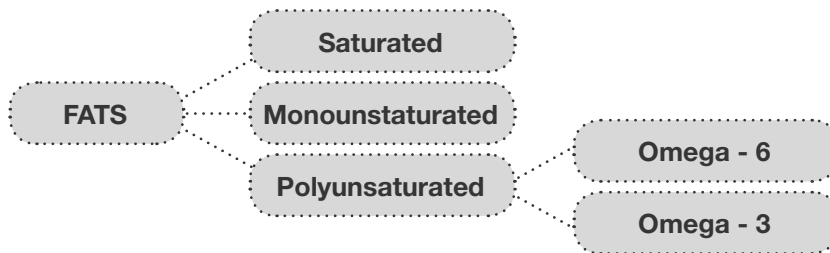


## Healthy Fats

Fats are an essential part of our diet. They provide energy and have many important functions in our body. They:

- Form cell membranes in our bodies.
- Help to absorb and transport fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E and K).
- Form hormones and hormone-like compounds in our bodies.
- Provide kilojoules for growth. Especially important in under two year olds when growth is the fastest.

There are three main groups of fats; saturated fats, monounsaturated fats and polyunsaturated fats. Polyunsaturated fats can be further divided into omega-6 and omega-3 polyunsaturated fats.



It is recommended that we cut down on saturated fats found in foods because they are harmful to our health. Foods that are high in saturated fat include fatty meats, full fat cheese, cream, and processed foods including meat pies, sausage rolls, cakes and pastries. However, it is essential that we replace saturated fats with polyunsaturated fats and monounsaturated fats. Polyunsaturated fats are found in plant foods such as sunflower oil, safflower oil and some nuts as well as lean meat and seafood. Monounsaturated fats are found in olive and canola oil, avocado and some nuts.

Ensure the margarines and oils used for cooking at your service are rich in polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fats. Use the table below to help you choose a better margarine or oil. Avoid using the fats and oils listed under saturated fat.

Saturated Fat	Monounsaturated Fat	Polyunsaturated Fat
butter cream lard dripping beef fat/tallow vegetable oil (unspecified) copha/ coconut oil palm oil	canola oil olive oil canola margarine and spreads olive oil based margarines and spreads	sunflower oil safflower oil soy bean oil sunflower based margarines corn oil cottonseed oil margarines based on these oils

**Note:** Consider trans fats to be similar to saturated fats and should be avoided.

## Choking Precautions

Babies, toddlers and pre-schoolers differ in their ability to safely chew and swallow various food textures, shapes and sizes. No matter what their age, there is always the potential for children to choke on food or drink. Staff will need to be mindful of this when providing food for children in their care. Asking families for guidance regarding the chewing and swallowing ability of their child is a good starting point.

It is impossible to completely remove the danger of choking simply by removing certain foods however, there are foods that carry a high choking risk and these should be avoided. These high choking risk foods include round, hard, small and slippery foods as well as thick sticky food that is hard to swallow.

For all children in care, especially those under four years:

- Avoid small hard foods like nuts, seeds and raw peas.
- Avoid food that can break up into small hard or sharp pieces e.g. hard pretzels.
- Popcorn may be a choking problem because of its dry, hard nature and because some of the corn may not have 'popped'.
- Slippery round foods such as grapes, cooked peas and small cherry tomatoes may need to be squashed or cut to make them safer.
- Seeds and tough skin may need to be removed from fruit.
- Skin, gristle and bone should be removed from meat and fish. Chicken skin can pose a choking problem especially if cooked by moist heat.
- Although not recommended to be served in services, if sausages or frankfurts are ever served, the skin may need to be removed if tough and chewy. Cocktail frankfurts carry a high choking risk and should never be served whole.
- Meat should be served in piece sizes that are small enough to swallow whole (just in case it slips down before it has been chewed).

To help prevent choking follow safe eating practices

- All children should be seated when eating.
- Children should be calm when eating. Children should be encouraged to chew food well and not over fill their mouth.
- Children should understand that there is no need to hurry; there is plenty of eating time.
- Menus should be planned taking into account the age and chewing ability of the children.

### Remember

1. No food is guaranteed not to choke.
2. Children should be actively supervised when eating or drinking.
3. At least one educator who has a current first aid certificate should always be present<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ACECQA, 2013.



## Morning and Afternoon Tea

Children have small stomachs, which limits the amount of food they can eat at one time. Well planned morning and afternoon tea is essential for children to meet their nutritional requirements.

The *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* (page 92) provides guidelines for planning food at morning and afternoon tea that will complement the main meal and ensure adequate nutrition is provided.

The best foods to include at morning and afternoon tea are those consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. Examples include plain milk, yoghurt and cheese, fresh fruit, vegetable sticks with healthy dips, vegetable pikelets, vegetable and fruit based muffins and slices, iron enriched breakfast cereals, different types of bread including fruit bread, fruit buns, bagels, sandwiches, wraps and crispbreads (include wholegrain varieties). These are foods without a lot of added saturated fat, sugar or salt.

Dried fruit is nutritious but may also add to the risk of tooth decay because of its sticky nature. Ideally teeth should be cleaned after eating dried fruit. If this is not possible provide children with water to rinse out their mouth.

Plain milk and water are the best drinks to offer at morning and afternoon tea. Providing  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125ml) of milk at both morning and afternoon tea can be an easy and reliable way to meet the one serve of dairy foods required during eight hours of care. However, if enough milk, yoghurt or cheese is included somewhere else on the daily menu (e.g. main meal or dessert), then providing milk at morning and afternoon tea is not essential.

## Ideas for Morning and Afternoon Tea

Choose foods from the following groups to plan morning and afternoon tea. Choices should nutritionally complement the main meal of the day.

*Dairy foods: Choose mostly reduced fat products for children over 2 years old.*

- milk
- cheese
- smoothies
- yoghurt
- custard
- frozen yoghurt
- rice pudding

*Wholegrain cereal foods and bread: Choose high fibre varieties or varieties with added iron where possible.*

- toast
- English muffins
- breakfast cereals
- sandwiches
- scones
- rice crackers/cake
- bread sticks
- pikelets
- wholegrain crispbreads
- crumpets
- fruit buns

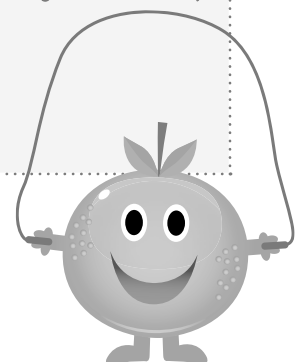
*Fruit and vegetables: Choose different colours and varieties in season.*

- cut up fresh fruit, e.g. apple, banana, mandarin, pear, watermelon, strawberries, grapes, kiwi fruit, oranges, pineapple, mango
- canned or stewed fruit in natural juice
- frozen fruit
- vegetable sticks e.g. carrots, celery, cucumber, snow peas, capsicum, served with healthy dips
- salad vegetables and vegetable pieces e.g. halved cherry tomatoes, cauliflower and broccoli florets, mushrooms
- baked beans
- corn on the cob



### Ideas for healthy dips

- > hommus (blend chick pea, tahini, lemon juice, garlic, paprika)
- > corn relish dip (mix cottage cheese or ricotta with corn relish)
- > avocado salsa (mix mashed avocado, lemon juice, refined beans and mild salsa)
- > pineapple and ricotta (mix drained, crushed pineapple and ricotta cheese)
- > creamy avocado yoghurt (mix Greek yoghurt, avocado, garlic and ground cumin)
- > tuna and ricotta with lemon juice and parsley
- > carrot dip (cook carrot until soft and mash with ricotta or creamed cheese. Add cumin for flavour)



## What to Drink

### Water

- Water is the best drink to quench thirst. Tap water is recommended.
- Children need to be well hydrated. Remind and encourage children to drink water regularly throughout the day. Children don't always feel thirsty even though they need to drink.
- Make sure that water is always available in both summer and winter, inside and outside.
- Most children will enjoy water if they get into the habit of drinking it at an early age.



### Milk

- Encourage children to drink plain milk.
- Milk provides calcium, protein and energy. Cow's milk is a good source of vitamins and minerals including vitamin A, zinc and riboflavin and may be fortified with vitamin D.
- **Children aged two years and under should have full cream milk (around 4g fat per 100ml) to help meet their energy needs. Reduced fat milk (not skim) contains 1-2 g fat per 100ml, and can be given to children over two years as long as their appetite is good and they are growing normally.**
- Powdered milk, evaporated milk and U.H.T. (long life) milks are all suitable. Follow directions when making up powdered or evaporated milk.
- Milk contains a protein called casein. Casein helps prevent tooth decay by forming a protective coating on tooth crowns. Serving milk (or other dairy food) with meals will help promote good dental hygiene.

### Soy Milk

- Children with lactose intolerance may drink soy milk instead of cow's milk. Soy milk needs to be fortified with calcium. Check the nutrition information panel to make sure that there is at least 100mg calcium per 100ml.
- Calcium fortified soy milk can be used to make custards and other milk-based desserts. Reduced fat soy milk is available.

## Non-dairy Drinks

- These include oat, rice, almond, coconut and quinoa. They are drinks, not milks and are not nutritionally equal to cow's milk. The foods these drinks are made from do not contain calcium. If these drinks are to be a source of calcium, they must be fortified with at least 100mg calcium per 100ml. If the calcium level is not indicated on the nutrition information panel, assume there is very little or no calcium.
- Growing children require protein. Cow's milk is a good source of protein, non-dairy drinks are not. Children who are having these drinks instead of cow's milk would need to have extra protein rich foods in their diet to meet their protein requirements.
- Non-dairy drinks do not provide the vitamins and minerals found in cow's milk and therefore, are not suitable alternatives to cow's milk unless medically advised.

## Juice

- Fruit juice is not recommended.
- Fruit juice lacks the fibre that is found in whole fruit. A piece of fruit is better value than a serve of juice. Drinking juice regularly, even 100% juice, can reduce appetite, encourage tooth decay and contribute to excess kilojoule intake.
- Juice should not replace water to quench thirst.
- Fruit juice should not be served instead of milk. Fruit juices with added calcium do not provide the range of nutrients obtained from cow's milk.

## Dessert

Although desserts have traditionally been part of a main meal menu, they are not essential. Dessert is however a pleasant way of completing a meal. Desserts should not be seen as a sweet treat. If served, they should make a positive contribution to a child's daily nutrition. Desserts do provide an opportunity to provide dairy foods or fruit. If a milk drink is not given at morning or afternoon tea, a milk-based dessert will help ensure children are offered the recommended amount of dairy food while they are in care. Desserts such as creamed rice or fruit crumble can contribute to the recommended number of cereal, fruit and dairy serves.

Milk-based dessert ideas include:

- Yoghurt - fruit yoghurt or plain yoghurt with fruit added are both suitable. Yoghurt may be reduced fat for children two years and older.
- Custard - both home-made and commercial (fresh and long-life). Egg or custard powder custards are both excellent ways of including milk on the menu. Custard ideas include bread and butter custard, baked rice custard and creamed rice, tapioca, sago and couscous. Banana custard is easy to prepare. For those children who are having lactose free milk, calcium enriched soy milk can be used to make milk-based desserts.

Fruit based dessert ideas include:

- Fruit salad – fresh or canned (in natural juice)
- Fruit kebabs – paddle pop sticks can be used instead of skewers
- Fruit platter
- Fruity couscous



Desserts that require a lot of time and effort are not necessary. Simple desserts that are easy to eat and nutritious, are good options. Light desserts are suitable for both summer and winter menus. Light desserts that are based on fruit and yoghurt or custard are often easily adapted for younger children.

Some cooks may like to prepare a 'special' dessert from time to time. Nutritious desserts can be 'special'. Examples include fruit pies or parcels made using filo pastry (no need to oil or 'butter' the pastry sheets), fruit crumble with plenty of fruit, fruit upside down cake with lots of fruit and not too much cake, and trifle with lots of fruit and custard.

It is acceptable to provide second helpings of nutritious desserts based on fruit and/or milk. It may be appropriate to allow a child to have a nutritious dessert even if they have refused to eat the main meal. This can depend on the circumstances and policy of the service.

## Food Allergies and Intolerances

Food allergies are **immune** reactions to the protein components of individual foods. The most common foods capable of causing allergies are peanut and tree nuts, egg, milk, fish, shellfish, sesame, wheat and soy.

Symptoms range from mild to potentially life threatening. Some children can develop acute, severe reactions unexpectedly, sometimes on the very first time they eat the food.

Food allergies must always be taken seriously, even in children who have only experienced mild reactions in the past. Eating the offending food can lead to anaphylaxis, which can quickly become life-threatening, requiring emergency first aid treatment.

Because food allergies are more common in small children, all educators need to know how to recognise and treat an acute allergic reaction. Typical symptoms include rapidly spreading welts, swelling, breathing difficulties and in extreme cases, allergic shock and collapse.



Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations: *'At all times and at any place that an approved service is operating, the following person/s must be in attendance and available in case of emergency – At least one educator who has undertaken anaphylaxis management training<sup>1</sup>.*

### Caring for a child with food allergies


Management involves **complete avoidance** of the offending food(s). Listen carefully to the family concerns, and make sure they bring a doctor's letter or certificate documenting which food(s) the child is allergic to. Educators should meet with the family of each child at risk of anaphylaxis to discuss the action plan and risk minimisation strategies.

*Download the ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis: [www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/ascia-action-plan-for-anaphylaxis](http://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/ascia-action-plan-for-anaphylaxis)*

The Action Plan should include the child's photograph, documented confirmed allergens, family and medical practitioner contact details as well as first aid response including any prescribed medications. These need to be kept updated and should be displayed appropriately for staff as well as the families of other children. Where appropriate other children at the service, should be made aware of the serious consequences of accidental exposure.

Educators should be trained on how to recognise and respond to mild, moderate or severe allergic reactions, including training in the use of adrenaline auto injector devices (EpiPen/Anapen). Where access to face-to-face anaphylaxis training is unavailable or if educators require interim or refresher training, ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training for schools and childcare services is available from the ASCIA website [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)





Art and craft materials should be carefully checked to make sure they do not include milk cartons, egg crates or nut shells. No peanut butter or other food allergens (i.e., other nuts, egg, milk, and sesame) should be used in cooking activities, food learning experiences or games. Note however anaphylaxis is very unlikely to occur from skin contact to foods or exposure to food odours<sup>2</sup>.

### For services that prepare food

When meals are provided, the meal prepared for that child should not contain the offending ingredients (allergens).

Policies should be put in place to ensure that the care environment is safe for the child. Educators and cooks should know how to read food labels, how to provide substitutes to maintain good nutrition, and should be aware of the possibility of cross-contamination in the kitchen and eating areas.

Cooks and educators need to be aware that if a child has a food allergy all ingredients used in recipes need to be checked to ensure they do not contain traces of the relevant food allergen. For severely allergic children families may want to provide meals prepared from home.

Meals prepared at the service which contain ingredients with 'May contain traces of nuts' on a label should not be given to nut allergic children but can be served to other children.<sup>1</sup>

Cooks should discuss appropriate recipes and menus with the family. The child should be supervised during meal times and should only be given food that has been checked and does not contain the offending allergen(s). Special treats for birthdays and other celebrations should be supplied by the family.

### For services where food is brought from home

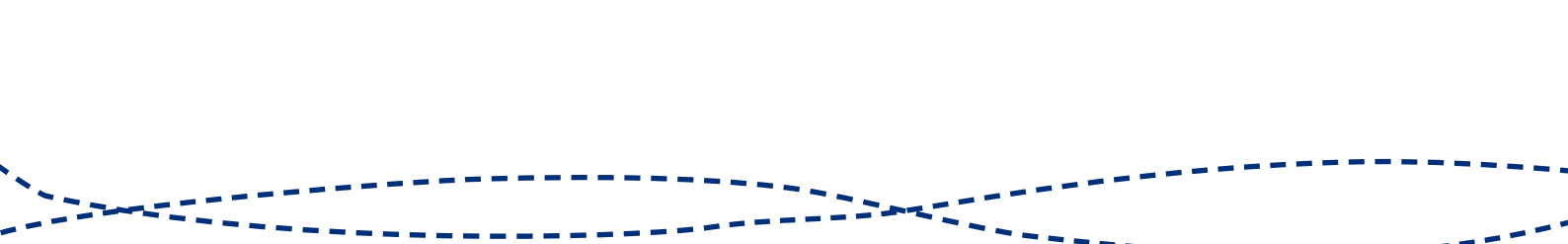
While egg, peanut and milk are the most common food allergies, peanuts and tree nuts are the most likely foods to cause fatal anaphylaxis. As a result, services may implement specific risk-minimisation strategies for nut products, but not other allergens (e.g. removal of nut products)<sup>2</sup>.

At a service's discretion, families may be asked not to send foods containing highly allergenic foods such as egg and nut products to services if there is a child at risk of anaphylaxis to these foods. Cow's milk and other dairy products are important foods in helping children to meet their dietary requirements and should not be removed from the food service; however, careful supervision is required for milk allergic children at times when other children are consuming cow's milk and other dairy products.

In some circumstances it may be appropriate that a child with a severe allergy does not sit at tables where the food to which they are allergic is being served, preferably without isolating the child.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> ACECQA, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Vale S, Smith J, Said M, Dunne G, Mullins R, Loh R, et al., 2013.



If old enough, children should be educated about allergies and anaphylaxis and strategies to minimise accidental exposure. This includes hand washing before and after meals, and not sharing or swapping foods.

A number of classroom resources on anaphylaxis and food allergy are available from *Anaphylaxis Australia*. Anaphylaxis awareness week is an ideal opportunity to provide children with related activities to make them more 'allergy aware'.

### Special diets for children with food intolerances

Food intolerances are caused by the **irritant** effects of certain food substances. These can be natural food chemicals such as salicylates, amines or glutamates (natural MSG), or they can be additives such as added MSG preservatives, colourings or flavourings. In sensitive children, reactions to these substances can develop over time from the cumulative effects of many foods in the child's daily diet.

Unlike allergies, food intolerances are rarely life-threatening, though they can be very distressing for the child as well as the family. In young children, common symptoms include irritable, hyperactive or erratic behaviour, sleep disturbance, upset stomach, loose motions, feeling sick, skin rashes and blocked nose.

Because food intolerances act by chemical irritation of nerve endings, rather than through the immune system, regular allergy tests are of no value in identifying them. In the most obvious cases, families usually know which foods make their child sick, and will be able to let educators know what the child should be fed. Often, however, systematic dietary testing under the supervision of a specialist and an experienced dietitian is required.

### Caring for a child with food intolerances

There is no single 'right' diet for children with food intolerances. Once a child's intolerances are correctly identified, management involves a reduction in daily intake of the offending chemicals from all relevant food sources. Unlike allergies, complete avoidance of specific foods is rarely necessary.

The specific dietary changes required may be simple. For example, cutting out fruit juices or processed foods. More extensive modification of the child's entire diet may be needed, depending on the degree of sensitivity. Educators should take note of the family's concerns and find out what kind of reaction might occur if the child consumes too much of the offending food substances.

Certain foods like milk (and other dairy products), soy or wheat can cause either allergies or intolerances in susceptible children. In these circumstances educators should ask families to provide a medical certificate specifying the exact nature of the problem and the degree of care that needs to be taken with the relevant foods.

If a child's diet is significantly restricted, or if there is a complex problem with food allergies as well as intolerances, the advice of a dietitian experienced in children's nutrition should be sought to make sure the child's nutritional needs are being met.



## Dealing with Special Diets

In addition to food allergies and intolerances, there are medical conditions where a special diet needs to be followed. These conditions include but are not limited to coeliac disease, cystic fibrosis, failure to thrive and diabetes.

In all cases the requirements for a special diet need to be supported and documented by a health professional such as a general practitioner or dietitian.

### Summary of what to do if a child in your care requires a special diet

- Ask about dietary needs at enrolment.
- Obtain detailed written information from the family on the diet to be followed while in care, and certification for the special diet from a health professional.
- Check how long the child will be on the special diet.
- Ensure written instructions on a child's special dietary needs are easily accessible to all staff.
- Every six to twelve months ask the family whether the diet has been reviewed and obtain details of any changes.
- For information on specific special diets refer to the 'Resource' section at the back of this book.

## Developing a Nutrition, Food and Beverage Policy

A good nutrition, food and beverage policy:

- ensures quality and consistency of staff practices around food and nutrition
- makes sure that all educators, cooks and families understand the service's philosophy and practices around food, nutrition and eating issues for children in care
- develops standards and procedures in food provision and nutrition practice
- provides guidelines for new educators, cooks and new families
- enables your service to assess its performance and identify areas which need improvement
- develops and sustains changes you may want to put in place at your service.

Involve educators, cooks and families in the development and review of a nutrition, food and beverage policy. Consultation in the development and review process will help to ensure educators, cooks and families understand and support the policy.

Social, cultural factors and the age of the children who attend your service will influence the content of your policy. This will be the case whether food is prepared on site or brought from home.

The nutrition, food and beverage policy should be accessible to all staff and families.

Families should be made aware of the nutrition, food and beverage policy at the time of enrolling their children. It may even be appropriate to have a family member sign that they have read the policy and are prepared to follow the guidelines.

To guide the development or review of a nutrition, food and beverage policy use one of the following checklists that is relevant to the type of food provision at your service.



*National Regulation 168(2) (a) states policies and procedures are required in relation to health and safety, including matters relating to: (i) nutrition, food and beverages, dietary requirements.<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> ACECQA, 2013.

## Food and beverages

### Services preparing food

- The menu will provide at least 50% of the RDI for all nutrients when children are in care for eight hours or more. Food and drink provided should be consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.
- A minimum two week cyclic menu is planned (using the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* page 92). The menu should be on display for families and staff. Families will be informed of menu changes.
- Morning and afternoon tea (including healthy beverages) is part of the menu and planned to contribute to the daily food and nutrition requirements of children while in care.
- A variety of fruit and vegetables are offered in recommended amounts according to the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* (i.e. two serves of vegetables and one serve of fruit).
- Special dietary needs will be accommodated.
- Food is served in a form that older children can eat without assistance.

### Services where food is brought from home

- Families will be advised on the type and amount of food to pack in order to provide at least 50% of the RDI for all nutrients if their child is in care for eight hours or more. (Refer to the *Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home* page 78).
- Families will be given specific advice on suitable and unsuitable lunchtime, morning tea and afternoon tea foods to pack for their child (refer to *Ideas for Lunchbox Food Ideas for Food Brought from Home* page 79).
- Families will be advised to pack milk or water as suitable beverages. Juice, cordial, soft drinks or sports drinks are unsuitable.
- Families will be encouraged to pack both fruit and vegetables in their child's lunchbox.
- An appropriate process is in place to deal with situations where unsuitable food is provided by families.

### All services

- Tap water is provided to quench thirst and is always available.
- Families will be informed of the eating habits and food consumption, of their children.
- Nutritious extra and/or emergency food is always available at the service.

## The eating environment

- Mealtime will reflect a positive eating environment, be stress free, allow for adequate eating time, provide an opportunity for learning, encourage social and educator/child interaction and recognise, respect and accommodate multicultural mealtime values.
- Staff will talk positively about food and role model healthy eating habits to children.



## Nutrition education

- Cultural diversity will be recognised through recipes included on the menu and food learning experiences.
- Children will have the opportunity to participate in food preparation.
- All staff will have the opportunity to attend professional development related to the food and nutrition of children in care.
- Families will be given a copy of the nutrition, food and beverage policy when they enrol their child.
- All staff should be familiar with, and supportive of, the service nutrition, food and beverage policy.
- Families will receive regular and relevant nutrition information via newsletters and other forms of communication used by the service (Refer to *Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home* and *Lunchbox Food Ideas for Food Brought from Home* page 78-79).
- The service will have a safe food handling and hygiene policy that deals with the safe storage and reheating of food brought from home.
- The service will have a breastfeeding policy that both encourages and supports breastfeeding. This could be incorporated into the nutrition, food and beverage policy or, could be a policy in its own right.

A policy template can be found on the NSW Health, Healthy Kids website  
[www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx)

## Reading Food Labels

Unsuitable foods that are brought to, or served at services generally fall into three categories:

- foods high in fat that contain few other nutrients
- foods that are high in sugar or those that are likely to contribute to tooth decay
- foods high in salt.

New pre-packaged food items for children seem to appear every day. It is often difficult to decide whether a food should be recommended or not. Some foods will fall into a grey area. You may find the following guidelines useful for deciding if a food falls into the above categories.

### Reading ingredient lists

Most packaged food must have an ingredient list. The ingredients are listed in order of weight, from most to least.

Looking at the ingredient list can be helpful. If a type of fat, sugar or salt appears as one or more of the first three ingredients, it's probably high in those ingredients. You need to know the other names fat, sugar and salt can be listed as.

### Other names for fat

Examples of high fat ingredients include:

Saturated Fat		Monounsaturated/Polyunsaturated Fats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• beef fat/tallow</li><li>• butter</li><li>• dripping/lard</li><li>• ghee</li><li>• milk solids</li><li>• palm oil</li><li>• sour cream</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• cream</li><li>• vegetable oil</li><li>• coconut oil</li><li>• shortening</li><li>• chocolate</li><li>• carob</li><li>• copha</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sunflower oil</li><li>• safflower oil</li><li>• polyunsaturated vegetable oil</li><li>• soybean oil</li><li>• canola oil</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• olive oil</li><li>• peanut oil</li><li>• mustard oil</li><li>• sesame oil</li><li>• rice bran oil</li></ul>
These fats should be avoided.		These fats are a healthier choice and can be used in small amounts.	

### Other names for sugar

Examples of high sugar ingredients include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• molasses</li><li>• castor, brown, raw or cane sugar</li><li>• honey</li><li>• sucrose</li><li>• maltos</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• caramel</li><li>• syrup</li><li>• glucose</li><li>• lactose</li><li>• treacle</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sweetened condensed milk</li><li>• mannitol and sorbitol</li><li>• fructose</li><li>• malt extract</li></ul>
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### Other names for salt

Examples of high salt ingredients include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sodium</li><li>• Na</li><li>• monosodium glutamate</li><li>• sodium bicarbonate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• baking powder</li><li>• garlic salt</li><li>• MSG</li><li>• sea salt</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• baking soda</li><li>• vegetable salt</li><li>• celery salt</li><li>• sodium ascorbate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• sodium nitrate</li><li>• sodium lactate</li><li>• Celtic' salt</li><li>• rock salt</li></ul>
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*An ingredient list for an apricot fruit bar might look like this:*

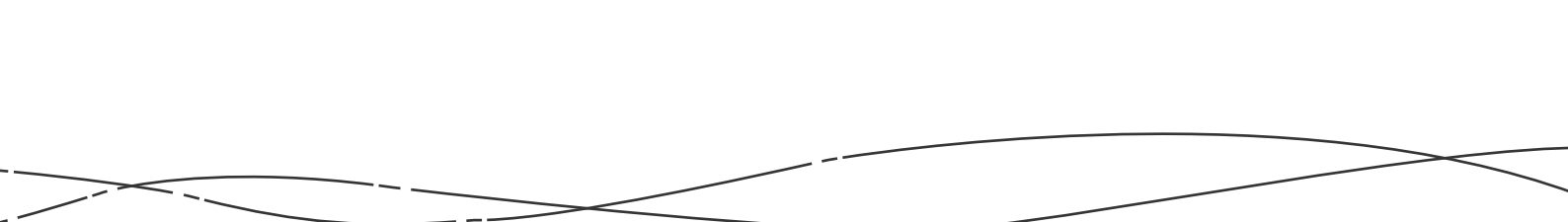
**INGREDIENTS:** *Apricots (26% minimum), glucose syrup, cane sugar, coconut, wheat starch, vegetable oil.*

Apricots are the ingredient which is present in the largest quantity, followed by glucose syrup and cane sugar.

Under the labelling laws, the percentage of apricots must be included in the list of ingredients also. This allows you to compare similar products. While the added sugar is actually the main ingredient in the product, it does not appear first on the list because it has been divided into two separate ingredients i.e. glucose syrup and cane sugar. This can occur with high fat ingredients as well.

Take care when interpreting ingredient lists, especially if there is more than one high fat or high sugar ingredient listed.





*An ingredient list for oven baked savoury snacks might look like this:*

INGREDIENTS: *wheat flour, vegetable oil, tomato powder, cheese milk solids, salt, herbs and spices, sugar, yeast, vegetable extract (corn, soy), raising extract (E341), flavouring, food acid (E30), natural colour (E100, E160c), may contain traces of nut, egg or seeds.*

Labelling laws allow people who may be sensitive to food additives or allergic to common allergens to avoid them. The main foods or ingredients in food that can cause some individuals severe adverse reactions – such as peanuts and other nuts, seafood, fish, milk, gluten, eggs and soy beans, must be declared on the label however small the amount. There must also be an advisory statement on the label where people may be unaware of a possible health risk posed by some foods – such as pasteurised milk, unpasteurised egg, aspartame, quinine, caffeine and guarana contained in foods.

Food additives must be identified, usually by a number e.g. food acid (E30) and included in the ingredient list.

A full list of numbers and additives is available on the Food Standards Australia New Zealand website ([www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)).

### Reading nutrition information panels

Most packaged foods are required to have a nutrition information panel so you can compare different products. These panels allow you to work out the fat, sugar, salt or fibre content of foods and make comparisons between different foods. All nutrition information panels have a 'per serve' column and a 'per 100g' column. Use the 'per 100g' column to make comparisons between products.

**Oven baked savoury snacks:**

<b>NUTRITION INFORMATION</b>		
Serving size 35g		
	Quantity per serving	Quantity per 100g
<b>Energy</b>	700kJ	2000kJ
<b>Protein</b>	4.2g	11.8g
<b>Fat – total – saturated</b>	7.8g 3.6g	22.3g 10.3g
<b>Carbohydrate – total – sugars</b>	21.8g 0.9g	62.3g 2.5g
<b>Dietary fibre</b>	1.3g	3.6g
<b>Sodium (salt)</b>	228mg	650mg
<p>Ingredients: wheat flour, vegetable oil, tomato powder, cheese, milk solids, salt, herbs and spices, sugar, yeast, vegetable extract (corn, soy), raising extract (E341), flavouring, food acid (E30), natural colour (E100, E160c), may contain traces of nut, egg or seeds.</p>		

To work out the **SUGAR CONTENT** in the above product:

- Look in the 'per 100g' column
- Go to the row labelled 'carbohydrate' and to the section labelled 'sugars'
- The sugar content is 2.5g per 100g or 2.5 percent sugar

To work out the **FAT CONTENT** in the above product:

- Look in the 'per 100g' column
- Go to the row labelled 'fat'
- The fat content is 22.3g per 100g or 22.3 percent fat
- The saturated fat content is 10.3g or 10.3 percent saturated fat

To work out the **FIBRE CONTENT** in the above product:

- Look in the 'per serve' column.
- Go to the row labelled 'fibre'
- The fibre content is 1.3g per serve.

To work out the **SALT CONTENT** in the above product:

- Look in the 'per 100g' column
- Go to the row labelled 'sodium'
- The salt (sodium) content is 650mg per 100g

## Making a healthy choice

Food labels contribute to the information used to decide if a packaged food item is a healthy choice. In addition to the fat, sugar and salt content of foods, it is important to consider whether the food contains other nutrients essential for growth. Snacks that are high in fat, sugar and/or salt and low in other nutrients tend to take away children's appetites for the more nutritious foods they need.

As a general rule, food that is greater than 10 percent fat is high in fat. In some cases however, a high fat food will contain other nutrients essential for growth. These foods should still be included in children's diets, e.g. cheese and avocados.

It is not only the amount of sugar in foods that should be looked at when considering children's teeth. Foods that are sticky or that will cling to children's teeth are likely to contribute to tooth decay. These foods should be served at meal times with other foods and drinks (e.g. water or milk) or just prior to brushing teeth so that food does not cling to teeth for long periods of time and contribute to tooth decay. These practices should be included in the service's food and nutrition or dental health policy.

'No added sugar' does not indicate that a food is low in sugar. It just means no extra sugar is added to the product. For example 100% fruit juice has no added sugar but has a naturally high sugar content.

Don't rely only on front-of-pack nutrition claims (e.g. lite, low fat) to make a healthy choice. Always refer to the nutrition information panel to make sure you know what is really in the product.

There are mobile phone applications that allow you to scan the barcodes of packaged food and provide a list of similar foods that are a healthier choice.

### Compare products and aim to choose:

- non-sticky foods
- products with the least amount of added sugar
- products that have less than 3g per 100g of saturated fat
- products labelled 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt'
- dairy products and dairy substitutes with at least 100mg of calcium per 100g
- products with the highest fibre content. Choose products that contain more than 4g of fibre per serve. *Note: fibre is not in every product and therefore may not be listed on the food label.*



Some of the healthiest foods are those which may be unlabelled like fresh fruit and vegetables. Encourage children to eat fruit and vegetables.



## Managing Fussy Eating - for toddlers and young children without developmental disabilities

Normally developing toddlers often have their eating behaviours labelled as ‘fussy’ or ‘picky’. However, this ‘fussiness’ around food is to be expected and is often the result of normal changes in growth, appetite, development and nutritional needs experienced in early childhood.

Between 1 to 3 years of age, most children will display some food refusal, and an unwillingness to try new or unfamiliar foods. They may also be less willing to drink from a cup or to drink water. Remember though, that children behaving this way around food are often otherwise well, growing as expected and still meeting their developmental milestones.

For toddlers, a reduced appetite and more variable food intake is normal. This is because they are now growing more slowly than they were in the first year of life. They require less energy intake (from food and drinks) for their body weight. Developmentally, they are also becoming more independent with food and can display a degree of food neophobia (fear of new food, which peaks at around 2 years of age).

Children aged 3 to 5 years may also express disgust over some foods, labelling them as ‘yucky’ or start to reject all food on a plate if it is served with a disliked food. Most families express concern over the amounts of food their child eats, thinking it is not enough. However, food needs vary with age, size and activity. Variations also occur between children, including siblings. All of these changes should be expected and when managed with a ‘no fuss approach’, they gradually resolve by school age.

Other factors contributing to food refusal may include physical factors (tiredness, lack of hunger, teething, illness), personal/behavioural factors (independence / control, attention seeking), the feeding environment (too many distractions, influence of role models) and experiential factors (opportunities to learn to eat new foods, learned response to previous experiences).

Repeated exposure to foods is an essential part of supporting children’s healthy eating behaviours. This involves serving, looking at, smelling, touching and tasting new foods. Studies report that up to 15 exposures may be needed to increase a child’s acceptance of a new food. In practice, this means that children require daily exposure to a new food over a period of 1-2 weeks before you can expect them to eat it for themselves. Repeated exposure provides the opportunity for children to learn about and become familiar with new foods.

Rigid control over food quantities (including force-feeding and bribing a child to eat) has been shown to be counter-productive. It may result in children losing their ability to regulate their own intake according to their appetite. This can set up for long-term problems, such as overeating and can affect their growth.

## Information for services

The service can help to manage fussy eating behaviours by:

- Establishing routines around when and where food is eaten.
- Offering realistic amounts of food.
- Limiting the length of mealtimes (about 30 minutes maximum).
- Establishing a positive eating environment by encouraging children to touch, smell and taste new foods and textures (without any expectation of them swallowing it).
- Giving children praise for tasting food.
- Acknowledging children's independence and recognising children have genuine likes and dislikes.
- Having a consistent approach amongst carers.
- Leading by example through carers eating the same food at the same time with children, being enthusiastic and initiating positive discussions around healthy food.

Children can be supported by giving them the opportunity to decide whether to eat at all, how much to eat, and what foods to eat from the selection made available to them. Seeing other children eating new or different foods may encourage 'fussy eaters' to try these foods. Including children in food preparation also provides opportunity for exposure to new foods.

## Role of cooks

Cooks can help to manage fussy eating behaviours by ensuring the menu provides a variety of nutritious foods and textures. Plan menus for children to have portions that are child sized and realistic. Through the menus, new food can be introduced regularly, by providing a small amount of a new food alongside a familiar food to increase children's exposure to unfamiliar foods.

A factsheet on fussy eating can be found on the NSW Health, Healthy Kids website [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx)

## Remember

- "Fussy eating" is not unusual..... "good eaters" are the exception rather than the rule!
- Children's appetites vary with growth, size and activity. Variation in food intake between children is normal. Variation in the amount eaten from meal to meal and day to day is normal.
- Force-feeding or bribing is considered counter-productive. These practices do nothing to help the child learn to enjoy and eat the food for themselves. Ultimately, the amount of food eaten is the child's decision.
- Persistence pays off ...multiple (repeated) exposures to food will increase the likelihood of acceptance over time.
- Children provided with appropriate food choices will naturally self-regulate (eat as much as they need right now) according to their needs.

# Ideas for Packing Healthy Lunchboxes

## A Guide for Families

Choosing a variety of foods is important and even if children have their favourites it is wise to encourage new and different food experiences.

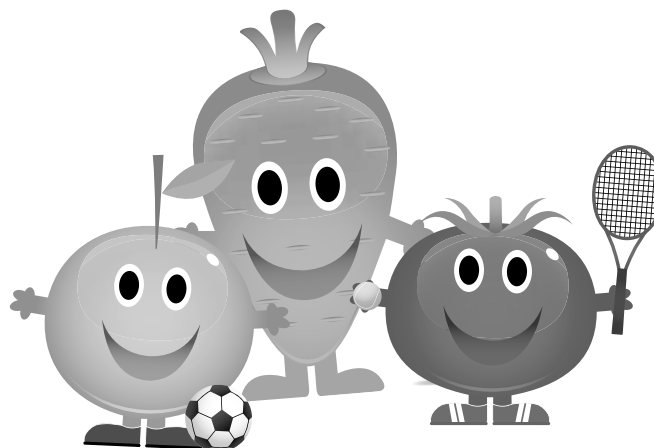
Don't forget eye appeal. Food that looks attractive is more likely to be eaten. Choose food that will carry without spoiling. Pack foods in a form that your child can manage.

### Morning and afternoon tea

Children have small stomachs limiting the amount of food they can eat at any one time. Therefore foods packed for these mid-meals need to be nutritious and complement the value of the lunch foods so that adequate nutrition is provided for your child, while in care.

Good food choices for morning or afternoon tea include:

- **Vegetables** – such as celery and carrot sticks, cooked jacket potatoes. Vegetables can be incorporated in pikelets, pancakes, muffins and slices.
- **Fruit** – whole fresh fruit or pieces. Commercial snack pack fruit (in natural juice) is suitable. Dried fruit provides energy and nutrients however it is sticky and can promote tooth decay. It is best eaten with other foods or when teeth can be brushed. Sticky fruit strap type snacks are not suitable.
- **Grain (bread and cereal) foods** – fruit bread or buns, English muffins, bagels, wholemeal scones and pikelets, breakfast biscuits or other high fibre breakfast cereals, plain cracker biscuits, crispbreads, sandwiches and bread rolls. Breads include wraps, bagels, rice or corn cakes, grissini, lavash, naan, rye bread, Turkish pide, focaccia, matzo, chapattis, Lebanese bread, tortillas and sourdough. Purchase breads with added iron if available otherwise, use high fibre varieties.
- **Dairy foods** – cheese, yoghurt, custard, long life milk drinks and calcium fortified soy milk. Children over the age of 2 years can have reduced fat varieties.





## Lunchtime foods

- **Sandwiches or rolls** – there are many varieties of bread, all are suitable. Choose high fibre varieties and bread with added iron when available.

*Suitable fillings or spreads include:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• baked beans</li><li>• avocado</li><li>• banana</li><li>• salad</li><li>• Vegemite™</li><li>• spaghetti</li><li>• pineapple</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• canned salmon, tuna or sardines</li><li>• cheese</li><li>• dates</li><li>• meat rissole</li><li>• roast chicken</li><li>• roast lamb</li><li>• roast pork</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lean ham</li><li>• lean bacon</li><li>• corned beef or roast beef</li><li>• turkey</li><li>• lentil burger</li></ul>
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Filling combinations could include:

- shaved chicken and mashed avocado
- lean roast beef, lamb or pork with tomato and lettuce
- tuna or salmon with low fat mayonnaise
- homemade rissoles (made with lean mince) with tomato or tomato sauce
- chopped skinless chicken, low fat mayonnaise and lettuce
- pastrami with salad
- avocado, bean sprouts and tomato
- lean ham and fruit chutney
- mashed sardines and tomato sauce
- lean ham and tomato, or lean ham and pineapple.

- **Baked beans or spaghetti**

- **Salads** – cut into sizes that are easy and safe for your child to eat.

- **Vegetables** – e.g. baked vegetable slice (choose ones that pack well, for example zucchini slice), left over vegetables in pocket bread, vegetable pikelets, and vegetable quiche.

- **Yoghurt** – plain or fruit.

- **Custard, creamed rice.**

- **Other ideas** – soup, falafel, lentils, beans, rice and pasta dishes. Some of these foods will need to be kept cold. You will need to find out whether your service would warm any of these foods.





## **Drinks**

Tap water and plain milk are recommended.

Children should be encouraged to drink water when they are thirsty.

If the service your child is attending doesn't provide milk, it is a good idea to send milk for morning and afternoon tea. Plain milk is the best choice. Long life milk drinks are suitable and easy to pack. For children who won't drink milk include yoghurt, custard or cheese as an alternate calcium source.

Calcium fortified soy milk is a suitable alternative to cow's milk.

Rice, oat, quinoa and coconut drinks are not suitable alternatives to cow's milk or fortified soy milk. These drinks should be used under medical supervision.

Juice is not a suitable substitute for milk. It is important to realise that fresh fruit is preferable to fruit juice. Do not send juice, sports drinks, cordial, soft drinks or flavoured mineral waters.

## **Foods for special occasions**

Food is often used to celebrate. Festivals and religious occasions provide children with the opportunity to share food experiences from different cultures. Ask about your service's policy in relation to food for special occasions such as birthdays.

## **Food safety and hygiene**

Food and drink sent from home needs to be safe for children to consume. Foods that are normally stored in the refrigerator must be kept cold if they are packed in a lunchbox. So:

- Use good food safety practices when preparing food at home.
- Make sure food is cold before packing into lunchbox.
- Use insulated lunchboxes or bags.
- Place small freezer bricks or frozen bottles (plastic) of water.
- Freeze tetra (long life) milk drinks before placing into lunchbox.
- Find out if your service will refrigerate foods sent from home.

Each day wash lunchboxes thoroughly with warm, soapy water and then rinse in hot water. Turn insulated lunchboxes and bags inside out to clean in corners and seams. Some may even be suitable to put in the washing machine.

Drink bottles should be washed using a bottle brush, rinsed in hot water and allowed to air dry.

# Lunchbox Checklist for Food Brought from Home for 2 to 5 year olds

## A Guide for Families

Use this checklist to help provide nutritious food each day your child is in care for eight hours or more. This usually includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea. The recommended number of serves from each food group, while in care, is provided below.

Wholegrain cereal foods and breads	Fruit	Salad vegetables or legumes	Dairy foods or high calcium alternatives	Lean meats, chicken, fish, eggs or alternatives
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 serves	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 serve	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 serves	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 serve	<input type="checkbox"/> ¾ serve
<p><b>Each of the following is 1 serve:</b></p> <p>1 slice of bread            ⅔ cup breakfast cereal            ½ cup cooked rice            ½ cup cooked pasta</p>	<p><b>Each of the following is 1 serve:</b></p> <p>1 cup of chopped fruit            2 small pieces of fruit            1 medium size piece of fruit            30g dried fruit (occasionally)</p>	<p><b>Each of the following is 1 serve:</b></p> <p>½ cup cooked or raw vegetables            1 cup salad</p>	<p><b>Each of the following is 1 serve:</b></p> <p>250ml milk            40g cheese            2 slices cheese            ¾ cup yoghurt            250ml calcium fortified soy milk</p>	<p><b>Each of the following is ¾ of a serve:</b></p> <p>50g cooked red meat            60g cooked chicken            75g fish            1 cup cooked legumes            2 medium eggs</p>
<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 wholegrain crispbreads</li> <li>• ½ bread roll</li> <li>• ½ pita pocket bread</li> <li>• ½ fruit muffin</li> <li>• 2 thick rice cakes</li> <li>• 3 corn thins</li> <li>• 1 slice fruit loaf</li> <li>• 5 water crackers</li> <li>• 2 pikelets</li> <li>• 1 small fruit scone</li> <li>• 10 rice crackers</li> <li>• ½ cup cooked pasta spirals</li> </ul> <p><i>*Choose wholegrain or high cereal fibre varieties.</i></p>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 medium banana</li> <li>• 1 medium bunch of grapes</li> <li>• 2 mandarins</li> <li>• 2 kiwi fruit</li> <li>• 1 medium orange</li> <li>• 1½ tablespoons sultanas</li> <li>• 1 medium pear</li> <li>• 2 small apricots</li> <li>• 2 small plums</li> <li>• 4 dried apricot halves</li> <li>• 6 large strawberries</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ corn cob</li> <li>• ½ cup green beans</li> <li>• ½ medium potato</li> <li>• 1 cup cucumber sticks</li> <li>• 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• 1 cup carrot sticks</li> <li>• ½ cup broccoli florets</li> <li>• ½ cup 4 bean mix</li> <li>• ¼ cup hommus</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 250ml plain milk</li> <li>• 200g fruit yoghurt</li> <li>• ¾ cup custard</li> <li>• 1 cheese triangle/wedge</li> <li>• 2 slices of cheese</li> </ul> <p><i>* Choose mostly reduced fat milk and dairy products for children over 2 years of age.</i></p>	<p><b>Example:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¾ cup baked beans</li> <li>• 50g lean ham</li> <li>• ¼ chicken breast in strips</li> <li>• 2 small meatballs</li> <li>• 2 medium boiled eggs</li> <li>• 1 chicken drumstick</li> <li>• 1 small 75g tin tuna or salmon</li> <li>• 1 slice of cold roast meat</li> <li>• 130g tofu</li> </ul>

# Lunchbox Food Ideas for Food Brought from Home for 2 to 5 year olds

## A Guide for Families

The following sample lunchbox menus provide the recommended number of serves from each of the food groups.

<b>Morning Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• 1 banana</li> </ul>	<b>Morning Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• 2 wheatmeal biscuits with margarine</li> </ul>	<b>Morning Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Small apple</li> </ul>	<b>Morning Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Cheese triangle/ cubes</li> </ul>	<b>Morning Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• ½ fruit muffin with margarine</li> </ul>
<b>Lunch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ wholemeal pita bread with ham and salad</li> <li>• ½ cup raw green beans or cucumber chunks</li> <li>• ¼ cup hommus dip</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<b>Lunch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roast beef and salad sandwich</li> <li>• 1 small mandarin and kiwi fruit</li> <li>• Cheese stick</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<b>Lunch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuna, avocado and lettuce in a wholemeal dinner roll</li> <li>• Small tub yoghurt</li> <li>• ½ cup cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<b>Lunch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chicken leg</li> <li>• Dinner roll and margarine</li> <li>• 1½ tablespoons sultanas</li> <li>• Corn cob</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>	<b>Lunch</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ cup pasta salad, ham and boiled egg</li> <li>• 2 broccoli florets</li> <li>• Bunch of grapes</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>
<b>Afternoon Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• 2 pikelets</li> </ul>	<b>Afternoon Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carrot sticks</li> <li>• ¼ cup hommus dip</li> </ul>	<b>Afternoon Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 fruit scone</li> <li>• Vegetable sticks with tomato salsa dip</li> </ul>	<b>Afternoon Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celery, capsicum and cucumber sticks with cream cheese</li> </ul>	<b>Afternoon Tea</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Celery sticks with cream cheese spread</li> </ul>

**Note:** While variety can make lunchtime interesting, sending a sandwich each day is OK. Variety can come from bread types, sandwich fillings and other foods in the lunchbox. Just make sure the choices are healthy and the bread is wholemeal, high fibre or has added iron.

### Please don't send these foods:

- Sticky snacks like some health food bars, muesli bars, lollies and fruit straps as these may cause tooth decay.
- Foods high in fat and sugar like sweet, cream-filled and chocolate-coated biscuits, chocolate and chocolate or yoghurt coated health food bars.
- Foods high in fat and salt like chips and savoury snack biscuits.



## Making Mealtimes Positive

Mealtimes provide an opportunity for children to practice social, language and self-help skills. Allowing children adequate time to enjoy their food, to make choices and interact with others helps to make mealtimes pleasant, relaxed experiences for both children and educators.

### Setting up the environment

The way in which the area used for meals is arranged can influence how pleasant and relaxed mealtimes will be for both children and their educators.

To support children's sense of belonging and encourage relaxed mealtime conversations, arrange the area so that a small group of children and an adult can be seated comfortably at each table, in much the same way that a family might eat together at home.

Lowering high chairs and moving them close to the table also helps younger children to feel part of the group and makes it easier for the adult or an older child at the table to help them with feeding. Tablecloths or placemats made by the children, and flowers picked from the garden, can make the eating area appealing.

### Mealtimes provide opportunities for learning

Children enjoy being involved in the preparation of food, setting and clearing the table and serving their own meals. These activities also provide opportunities for learning.

Setting the table involves counting out the number of bowls, plates or utensils needed, while scraping food scraps and emptying cups of water into containers for recycling can lead to discussions about being environmentally responsible.

Mealtimes also provide opportunities to practice self-help skills. Decanting milk or water into small jugs makes it easier for children to pour their own drinks. Similarly, placing large bowls and platters on each table with serving spoons or small tongs not only allows children to serve themselves but also supports them in making choices and decisions about what and how much they will eat.

### Mealtimes should be flexible

Mealtimes may need to be adapted to meet the needs of all children within the group. It is important that educators talk with families about their expectations and mealtime practices and then consider how these can be accommodated within the service so that all children feel comfortable.

Young children will often not eat in the same way from day to day or meal to meal. Growth spurts and changes in activity or interests can affect children's appetites. These changes in eating patterns are best treated in a matter-of-fact way. Healthy children will eat what they need and should not be made to eat specific foods or clean their plates.

Flexible mealtimes not only support different eating patterns but also recognise children's increasing ability to contribute to decisions about when and how much they should eat.

When children arrive early in the morning, for example, they may not be able to eat right away, particularly if they have difficulty separating from their family. Providing a breakfast table for a period of time each morning can allow children time to settle in, and then enjoy breakfast when they are ready.

In the same way, setting aside an area for morning and afternoon tea and allowing children to go to this area when they are hungry ensures children's deep engagement in play experiences is not interrupted by set mealtimes.

### The role of the educator at mealtimes

Educators are role models for children. It is important that they set aside other tasks and join children at mealtimes. As well as providing an opportunity to discuss different foods and healthy eating, relaxed mealtimes are great opportunities for educators to build their relationships with children and to 'catch up' with what is happening in children's lives.

Too much emphasis on table manners and rules about behaviour can create an unpleasant atmosphere. If some children become restless when they have finished eating they can be offered quiet activities away from the table, while the remaining children finish their meal. Food should never be used as a reward or punishment for mealtime behaviour.

There are also likely to be mishaps and spills as children learn to eat independently and serve themselves. A little mess is to be expected. Educators might keep a supply of cloths and soapy water nearby and encourage children to help clean up their spills.



## Mealtime Equipment

Confidence and independence can be nurtured and developed if children are encouraged to actively contribute to mealtime and to do what they can for themselves.

Careful choice of suitable equipment will help children develop independence at mealtimes.

Plates, bowls and cutlery should be a size and shape that will make it easier for children to independently get the food into their mouth.

Plastic utensils or cups should not have sharp edges. Avoid very thin plastic utensils, dishes and cups. With light weight plastic there is a possibility that small pieces could break off.

For young and small children choose:

- cutlery with handles about 14 centimetres long
- spoons that have a shallow, round bowl
- child sized forks with short blunt prongs
- utensils that are unbreakable.

Consider the size, shape and stability of cups and tumblers. Handles need to be a size and shape for easy and safe 'holding'. Some children may need a cup with two handles.

Chairs should give proper support with the seat a height that allows feet to rest comfortably on the floor. They should be light enough for children to move.

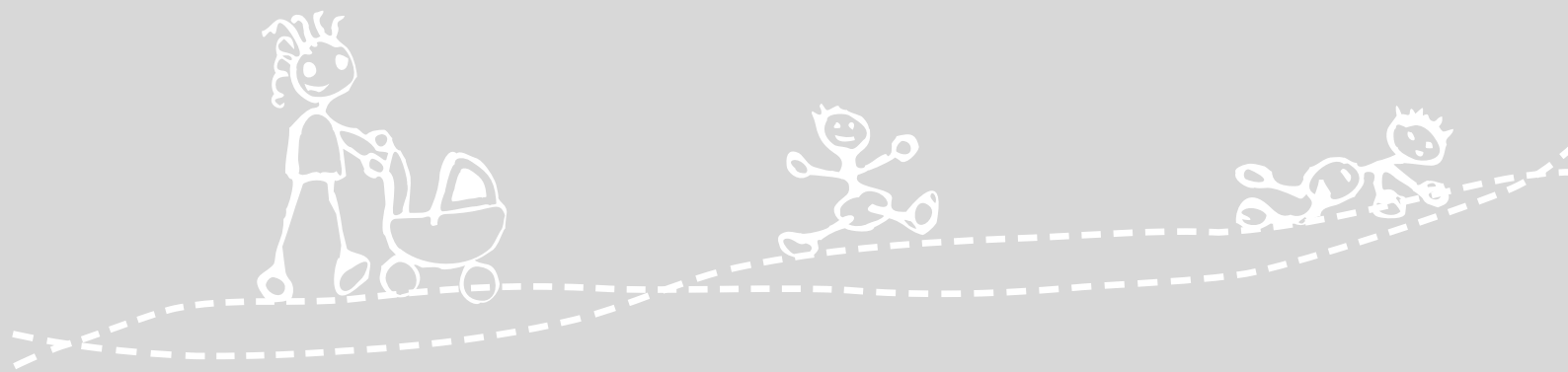
Furniture, cutlery and serving dishes that encourage independence are available for children with special needs. Talk to families for guidance. An occupational therapist is able to evaluate children's ability and suggest suitable equipment.

Ease of cleaning should be considered when choosing utensils and equipment.

- If purchasing plastic dishes, choose quality that does not scratch easily. Scratched plastic does not clean properly.
- All surfaces that will be in contact with food need to be easy to clean and sanitise.
- Choose plates and bowls that are light to carry and easy to stack.
- Avoid cups and plates with shapes that make them difficult to clean.
- Choose dishwasher and microwave safe equipment.
- Sipper cups for infants need special attention when it comes to cleaning.
- Tables and chairs should have a surface that is easy to clean and sanitise.

# Section 3

## Food Preparation and Menu Planning







## Safe Food Handling and Hygiene

Try the following quiz and see how you rate with hygiene and safe food handling.

I wash my hands with liquid soap and warm running water before handling food.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
After washing, I dry my hands completely with disposable paper towel.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I prevent my hair from falling into food.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I change my cloth aprons daily and when soiled.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I do not handle or prepare food if I am sick.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I make sure I wear disposable gloves as well as adhesive bandages to cover cuts and sores on my hands.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I wear disposable gloves or use tongs when handling cooked or 'ready to eat' food.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Using a probe thermometer, I regularly check that the food in the refrigerator is being held at a temperature less than 5°C.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I thaw meat, fish and poultry in the refrigerator or microwave.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I cook food straight away when it has been defrosted in the microwave.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I know that thawed food should not be refrozen.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I prevent raw meat and raw meat juices coming in contact with cooked meat and other ready to eat food.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I reheat leftover food once only.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
I divide large amounts of food into shallow containers (for quick cooling) before refrigerating or freezing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
After they are cleaned with hot soapy water, all work areas and chopping boards are sanitised.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Sandwiches with high risk fillings, and other high risk foods, brought from home are kept below 5°C until eaten.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Food delivered to the service is checked on arrival to ensure that it is not damaged, is within the 'best before' or 'use by' date and is at a safe temperature (at or below 5°C or, at or above 60°C).	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

*If you did not answer 'yes' to all 17 points, it would be wise to read this chapter.  
Washing hands before preparing food is only the beginning.*

## Food poisoning

Food poisoning can usually be prevented if care is taken when selecting, handling, storing and preparing food.

Small numbers of bacteria in foods are usually not a problem. However if present in sufficient numbers, bacteria can cause food poisoning.

The bacteria that cause food poisoning can be found everywhere including:

- Skin, saliva, nostril, hair, faeces, urine, sweat
- Rubbish bins, dirt
- Animals and insects
- Food, especially raw foods e.g. raw meat, fish, and chicken
- Clothing
- Dish cloths and tea towels

There are four things that bacteria need to multiply:

**1. Food** – bacteria grow fastest in high risk foods. These foods include raw and cooked meat, chicken, fish and other seafood, milk, cheese, yoghurt and other milk based products, eggs, sauces, salad dressing, cooked pasta and rice, cut fruit and vegetables, processed food containing eggs, beans or other protein rich foods.

**2. Moisture** – all living things need moisture to grow. Low moisture foods like crackers, bread, cake, uncooked pasta and uncooked rice are not considered high risk.

**3. Temperature** – most bacteria like warmth and grow best between 5°C and 60°C. This is known as the *danger zone*. Room temperature is usually in the *danger zone*.

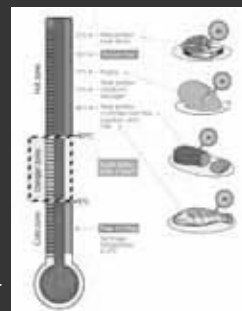
**4. Time** – bacteria double in number every 20 – 30 minutes. Leaving high risk food in the *danger zone* for more than two hours is risky as bacteria will have enough time to increase in numbers to a dangerous level.

### Keep high risk foods out of the *Danger Zone*.

- The temperature *danger zone* is between 5°C and 60°C. Bacteria that cause food poisoning grow rapidly in the *danger zone*.
- Cold food needs to be stored at 5°C or below.
- Hot food needs to be kept at 60°C or above.

### Remember

- High risk food left in the temperature *danger zone* for longer than 2 hours is dangerous and should be thrown out.



<sup>1</sup> Image supplied by the NSW Food Authority.



## Steps for safe food handling and hygiene

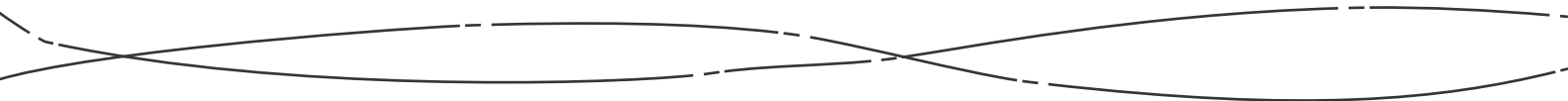
Bacteria are everywhere. The following practices can help prevent bacteria related food poisoning.

### Food delivered to your service

- Check that all food delivered to your service is covered or packaged, not damaged and well within the 'best before' or 'use by' date.
- Make sure that someone is at the service to inspect the food when it arrives and to place it directly in the freezer or refrigerator or other appropriate storage area.
- Check that high risk food is at or below 5°C or, at or above 60°C.
- Check that frozen foods are completely frozen.
- If foods delivered to your service do not meet the above requirements you must reject them.

### Safe practices to prevent cross contamination or the spread of bacteria

- Before anyone handles food or equipment that comes in contact with food, they must wash their hands with liquid soap and warm running water.
- Hands should be completely dried with disposable paper towel.
- Use utensils or disposable gloves when handling cooked or ready to eat food.
- Finger foods or dips should be served to children on individual plates or served using tongs.
- Work benches or surfaces and all food preparation equipment should be washed with hot soapy water and then sanitised. Sanitising destroys most bacteria. Use an approved chemical sanitiser, safe for food preparation.
- All equipment should lend itself to proper cleaning. Dispose of equipment that has cracks, chips or crevices.
- If not using a dishwasher it is necessary to wash up in water 45°C and rinse in water at least 77°C. Air dry if possible.
- Separate equipment should be used to prepare raw and cooked food i.e. have a chopping board for raw meats and one for cooked meats. Using colour coded chopping boards is an easy system. Ensure all staff know which colour board should be used by displaying signs in the kitchen.
- Even when separate equipment is used for raw and cooked food, it must be washed and sanitised after each use.

- 
- Store raw meats on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to ensure raw meat juices do not drip onto other foods. Alternatively, raw meat could be placed in covered containers that prevent escape of juices.
  - Fruit that is to be eaten raw should be washed in running water before cutting.
  - If used, dish cloths, dish mops, scourers etc. should be cleaned and sanitised after each use.
  - When suffering from a food borne illness (including a virus), staff should not prepare or handle food for children.

### Safe reheating, serving and storage

- If food is to be eaten warm, reheat quickly to a safe eating temperature just before serving. If food needs to be kept warm for an extended period, reheat to 60°C. Reheating is best done as rapidly as possible but should not take longer than 2 hours. Keep at or above 60°C until ready to serve.
- Reheat food once only.
- The temperature in the door of most refrigerators will usually not be as cold as in the 'body' of the refrigerator. For this reason it is wise not to store milk in the door compartments for longer than 24 hours. If you know milk will be kept longer than 24 hours, store in the refrigerator body initially.
- When storing food for later use, it is important to cool food quickly. Divide food into shallow containers (5 cm deep) for quick cooling. Hot food in shallow containers can be placed straight into the refrigerator. Modern refrigerators can cope with the load. Leaving food to cool before placing in the refrigerator is not a safe food practice.
- Proper cooling relies on cold air coming in contact with the food. There should be airflow space around food containers both in the refrigerator and the freezer.
- Food to be frozen should be fresh or freshly cooked and good quality. Always clearly label to indicate date of freezing.

### Storage life of refrigerated food

- Bacteria will eventually grow in the cold and food will spoil even in the refrigerator. Label and date all food before storing it in the refrigerator. Have a weekly refrigerator cleaning procedure. Check refrigerator is holding food at a temperature of 5°C or less. This can be done by using a probe thermometer to test the temperature of a food in the refrigerator or a small container of water permanently kept in the refrigerator.
- Label the container of water for this purpose. It is recommended that daily food temperatures are recorded.

## A guide to refrigerator life of food

<i>RAW FOOD</i>	<i>STORAGE LIFE IN REFRIGERATOR<sup>1</sup></i>
<i>Chicken</i> .....	<i>3 days</i>
<i>Meat</i> .....	<i>3 days</i>
<i>Fish</i> .....	<i>3 days</i>
<i>Minced meat</i> .....	<i>2 days</i>
<i>Milk</i> .....	<i>5 days</i>
<i>Cooked rice</i> .....	<i>2 days</i>

## Thawing frozen food

Some frozen food may be cooked without thawing first e.g. frozen meals, frozen fish. Follow instructions on packaging. Thin cuts of meat and fish fillets may be cooked straight from the freezer.

Large pieces of meat or whole chicken should be thawed completely before cooking otherwise it is difficult to be sure the centre will be cooked properly. The health risk will be much less if these foods are thawed in the refrigerator. A chicken will take about 24 hours to thaw in the refrigerator. Meat and chicken may be thawed in a microwave but once thawing is complete, cook immediately. Remember once food has thawed it should not be refrozen as bacteria will have started to grow.



Food that contains dangerous levels of bacteria may not look, smell or taste any different from food that is safe.

**If in doubt throw it out!**

## Food safety standards

- Check with your local government Food Surveillance Officer or Environmental Health Officer about notification of your service as a food business.
- Your local government Food Surveillance Officer or Environmental Health Officer will also be able to help guide you in the area of safe food handling and hygiene, as well as keeping you informed regarding current food safety standards.
- All food handlers are required to have safe food handling and hygiene knowledge and skills for the work that they do.
- Services should have safe food handling and hygiene policies and programs in place.
- For more information visit the NSW Food Authority website [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au) or contact them on 1300 552 406.

<sup>1</sup> CSIRO, 2014.

## Cooking with Children

Cooking with children can be an enjoyable activity that allows them to learn about food and become interested in what they eat. The following simple precautions will help to ensure safe cooking experiences:


- Children wash and dry their hands before and after cooking.
- Tie back long hair.
- Ensure the area used to conduct cooking activities is safe. Be aware of the dangers of heat.
- Ensure adequate supervision of children at all times.
- Don't let children lick the bowl or utensils when making cakes, muffins or biscuits etc.
- It is recommended that children only prepare food that will be cooked afterwards<sup>1</sup>. Any bacteria in the food will be destroyed when the food is cooked. Suitable foods include cooked biscuits, soups, pizza, quiche, muffins.
- If the food will not be cooked, only allow children to prepare food to eat themselves<sup>1</sup>. For example fruit salad, fruit or vegetable kebabs, fruit or vegetable platters, fruit smoothies, and wraps.
- Making pikelets can be a popular activity. Ensure there is no raw batter left around the edges and serve cooked pikelets immediately<sup>2</sup>.

It is advisable that when children are obviously unwell they are not allowed to handle food<sup>2</sup>.



<sup>1</sup> Staying Healthy, 2013.

<sup>2</sup> NSW Food Authority, 2014.



## Food Customs of Different Religious and Cultural Groups

Many services will have children from a variety of ethnic and religious groups. These children may require different and special diets. If this is the case, talk to the families to make sure that your service will be able to appropriately cater for these children.

Dietary habits and customs vary according to religion, culture and background. They may exclude certain foods, include certain foods or have food prepared in a particular way. They may also include how and when food is eaten. There may be parental expectations in regard to mealtime behaviour. An example could be children serving themselves. This may not be encouraged by some. Discussion with families will generally allow these differences to be resolved.

Many of the meals and snacks suggested in this book are suitable for all children however, when the menu meal is not appropriate for some children, having suitable meals in the freezer could be helpful. A sauce that is appropriate for all children could be made (and frozen if need be). This could then be suitable for a variety of dishes.

Some families may prefer to provide the food for their children and this practice should be supported.

When meals are different for some children, these differences can promote discussion, learning and understanding.

Sharing recipes with families within your service is another way of promoting discussion and learning.

Remember that *cultural competency* is part of the **Early Years Learning Framework and National Quality Standards**. All staff in your service have a responsibility to role model culturally competent practices and respect the diversity that exists within families and the wider community.

## Menu Planning

Menu planning should be a team effort involving the cook, educators, families and children.

Planning menus will help ensure the best food choices are made, meals are varied and preparation is as hassle free as possible. Planning ahead also means that food availability and food orders can be established.

Planning a cyclic menu of at least two weeks is recommended. Less than a two week cyclic menu would make it difficult to include the recommended variety and nutrition.

### When planning your service menu

- Use the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* (page 92) or the *Two Week Menu Cycle Planning Tool* (page 93). You may like to refer to both when compiling your menu.

The *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* also lends itself to easily explain the menu choices to staff and families.

The *Two Week Menu Cycle Planning Tool* addresses in more detail, recommended serve sizes of the various food groups. This tool also provides for day to day “checking” of the food offered on the menu.

- Plan morning and afternoon tea as part of the daily nutrition. This is important to ensure the nutritional requirements of a child in care are met.
- Variety is important. Children may not accept new foods or flavours straight away so introduce slowly.
- Plan menus according to the season. Wherever possible use fruit and vegetables in season.
- Rotate the menu days of a cyclic menu so that children who attend on one or two set days each week will be offered a variety of meals.
- Choose combinations of vegetable colours. This not only makes meals look attractive but increases the variety of vitamins and minerals.
- Include a variety of textures. Texture not only refers to how food feels in the mouth but also, how much chewing is required. Firm, crisp textures encourage children to chew. The natural textures of vegetables are best retained by not over cooking.
- Vary food temperature and presentation both within the meal and from day to day. Include both raw and cooked food. Hot food or cold salad can be served throughout the year.



- Plan menus to include finger foods as well as foods that need to be plated.
- Include menu items that the children can self-serve or help to make e.g. wraps, tacos and pizza. Involving children is a good way to introduce new foods.
- Include multicultural recipes.
- Avoid recipes that are complicated or require a lot of last minute preparation. Quick and simple meals need not lack appeal or nutritional value.



# Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning

Use this checklist to plan each two-week cycle of your service menu. The number of serves recommended is the minimum required to meet the nutritional needs of children when one main meal and two midmeals are provided.

## Main Meals

### Beef/Lamb/Kangaroo

■ Lean red meat is included on the menu at least **6** times per fortnight

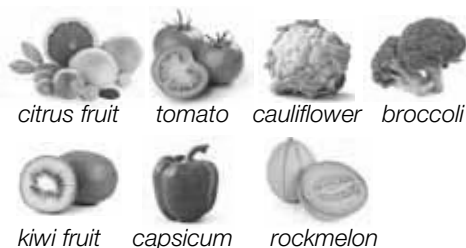
### Chicken/ Fish/ Pork/ Veal/ Non-Meat Meals

■ A variety of lean white meat/non -meat meals are included on the menu up to **4** times per fortnight

■ Non-meat meals are based on eggs, cheese, tofu or legumes

■ Raw vegetables or fruit high in vitamin C are served with the non-meat meal

### Raw vegetables and fruit high in vitamin C include



### Iron Containing Foods

■ On each day that a red meat meal is served, at least **1** other iron containing food is included on the menu

■ On each day that a white meat or non-meat meal is served, at least **2** other iron containing foods are included on the menu

### Other iron containing foods:



## Vegetables and Fruit

■ The menu includes at least **2** serves of vegetables daily

■ The menu includes at least **1** serve of fruit daily

*\*A variety of vegetables and fruit throughout the menu is important.*

## Dairy Foods

■ The menu includes a total of **1** serve of dairy foods daily

Serving milk at morning and afternoon tea may be an easy and reliable way to meet this requirement.



*\*Cream, sour cream and butter are not substitutes for milk, yoghurt and cheese*

## Breads, Cereals, Rice and Pasta

■ The menu includes at least **2** serves of bread, cereal, rice or pasta foods daily

■ High fibre varieties e.g. multigrain, wholemeal, high fibre white are included daily

**Other breads include:** Pita, lavash, Turkish, Lebanese, fruit bread, scones, etc.

## Morning and Afternoon Tea (Midmeals)

■ Midmeals are planned on the menu as part of the total day's intake

■ Milk, cheese, yoghurt or custard is included if necessary to meet the recommended daily serve

■ Bread/cereal based foods are included if necessary to meet the recommended daily number of serves

■ Vegetables and fruit are included if necessary to meet the recommended daily number of serves

Refer to Table 3 on page 48 for the serve sizes for each food group

# Two Week Menu Cycle Planning Tool

Menu Component	Frequency while in care for 8hrs	Week 1					Week 2				
		Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri
One main meal	daily										
One morning tea	daily										
One afternoon tea	daily										
Red meat (70g raw, per child)	at least 6 times per fortnight										
+ one iron containing food**	same day										
White meat (75g raw, per child), fish (100g raw, per child) or non-meat meals (based on eggs, cheese, tofu, or legumes)	up to 4 times per fortnight										
+ two iron containing foods**	same day										
+ a raw veg or fruit high in vitamin C***	with non meat meals										
1 vegetable serve (1/2 cup)*	2 serves daily per child										
1 vegetable serve (1/2 cup)*											
1 fruit serve* <i>1 medium or 2 small pieces, or 1 cup canned</i>	1 serve daily per child										
1 dairy food serve* <i>1 cup milk or 200g yoghurt or 40g cheese ****</i>	1 serve daily per child										
1 serve bread, cereal, rice or pasta* <i>1 slice bread or 1/2 cup rice or pasta</i>	2 serves daily per child										
1 serve bread, cereal, rice or pasta* <i>1 slice bread or 1/2 cup rice or pasta</i>											
High fibre varieties <i>wholemeal, wholegrain, high fibre white</i>	daily										

The menu includes water as a drink

\* Refer to page 48 for more examples of what quantity is a serve

\*\* Additional iron containing foods include wholemeal high fibre bread and bread with added iron, iron fortified breakfast cereal or infant cereal, dried fruit, and Milo™

\*\*\* Fruit and raw vegetables high in vitamin C include citrus fruits, tomato, cauliflower, broccoli, kiwi fruit, capsicum, rockmelon

\*\*\*\* Choose reduced fat dairy food for children aged 2 years and over

Adapted from the Hunter New England Local Health District, *Good for Kids Good for Life 'Menu Manager', 2008.*

## Food Purchasing, Storage and Cooking Hints

### Vegetables

- Up to 6kg of vegetables could be needed daily if 40 children are being catered for. This amount will vary according to the age and appetite of the children at your service. While in care for 8 hours or more, 2 to 3 year olds should be offered  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup or 100 g (1½ serves) of vegetables while 4 to 6 year olds should be offered one cup or 150g (2 serves). This is 50% of the RDI according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.
- Vegetables could be given at morning or afternoon tea as well as with the main meal.
- Vegetables do not need to be perfectly shaped in order to provide good nutrition so don't be put off buying just because the shape isn't perfect.
- Fresh vegetables in season are usually the best for flavour, colour and price.
- If fresh vegetables are not available frozen vegetables are a good option and the nutritional value of frozen vegetables is excellent.
- Canned vegetables are acceptable if fresh or frozen are unavailable. There is some loss of nutrients in the canning process.
- When purchasing canned vegetables look for 'no added salt' or 'reduced salt' or no added salt in the ingredient list. Examples of canned vegetables include corn kernels, tomato and legumes.
- Colour of fresh vegetables is a good indicator of nutrients. The deeper and brighter the colour the better. Those green outer leaves of lettuce and cabbage should be used if possible. Having a variety of vegetables (on the menu) is nutritionally important as different colours mean different vitamins and minerals.
- Prepare vegetables as close as possible to cooking time. If early preparation is necessary, the quality and food value will be best retained if prepared vegetables are placed in airtight containers or plastic bags and refrigerated until cooking time.
- When cooking vegetables avoid cutting them into very small pieces as this can mean a greater loss of nutrients.
- When boiling vegetables, the water does not have to completely cover the vegetables. Using less water will help to reduce loss of nutrients.
- Steaming or microwaving vegetables will help to minimise nutrient loss as little water is used.
- Do not add salt when cooking vegetables.
- Don't overcook vegetables as this decreases nutrient content, colour and texture appeal. Cooked vegetables should be tender but not mushy.

- When using frozen vegetables, they will not need much cooking as the freezing process will have softened the vegetables. Bringing to the boil is usually all that is required.
- Try to serve vegetables as soon as they are cooked if possible. Keeping vegetables hot for prolonged lengths of time will cause loss of nutrients and spoil texture, colour and flavour.
- Correct storage of raw vegetables will help retain nutrient value and quality as well as avoid waste. For example:
  - Take potatoes and onions out of the plastic bag and store in a cool, dark cupboard.
  - Leafy vegetables, salad vegetables and root vegetables such as carrots should be kept in a vented (small holes) plastic bag in the refrigerator. This will help to prevent wilting and softening.
  - Pumpkin can be stored in the refrigerator. Wrapping in plastic will help to prevent the surface from drying out. Removing the seeds may help pumpkin to last longer.
  - Tomatoes can be placed straight in the refrigerator.

## Legumes

- Legumes are vegetables. Legumes include red kidney beans, haricot beans (or baked beans), soy beans, cannelloni beans, chick peas and brown, green or red lentils.
- Canned legumes are ready to serve or combine with other foods. Drain and rinse canned legumes before using. Draining the liquid off can help to reduce the salt content. If there is no added salt there is no real need to drain or rinse.
- Uncooked legumes are cheaper to purchase but do require a long cooking time. The exception is red lentils, these cook quickly.
- Soak uncooked legumes in cold water for at least four hours or overnight. Use about three cups of water to each cup of legumes.
- If soaking overnight, cover and refrigerate. Pour off the soaking water, cover the legumes with fresh water and boil with the lid off until tender. One hour (or more) cooking time may be needed depending on the type of legume. Legumes double their bulk (approximately) when cooked.
- Lentils are the only legumes that do not have to be soaked before cooking. Red lentils are easy to use as they do not require soaking or cooking before adding to a dish. Add red lentils to soups, stews and casseroles. They soften and break up after about 15 minutes of cooking and will thicken the liquid. They do not have a strong flavour. As green and brown lentils take about 40 minutes to cook, they may need to be cooked before adding to a dish.
- Cooked legumes freeze very well.

## Fruit

- Like vegetables, fruit does not have to have the perfect shape or size in order to have good nutritional value.
- Fresh fruit in season is usually the best value for flavour, colour and price.
- Canned fruit is acceptable when fresh fruit is not available. It adds variety and is useful for desserts and midmeals. Purchase fruit canned in natural juice wherever possible. If fruit has been canned in syrup, drain before serving. When serving canned fruit consider only the fruit (not the juice) when estimating how much fruit the children are getting.
- Frozen fruit (usually berries) make a useful addition to the menu.
- If cooking fruit, very little or no water is required and little or no sugar needs to be added.
- Prepare fresh fruit as close as possible to serving time. If it is necessary to prepare ahead of time, always cover or place in an airtight container and refrigerate.
- Fresh fruit is preferable to fruit juice. Juice is low in fibre and easy to over consume. Juice is an unnecessary expense.
- In hot weather fruit will probably keep better in the refrigerator. If bananas are put in the refrigerator the skin will go brown but the inside is fine.

## Cereals (wholemeal and wholegrain bread, rice, barley and pasta)

- White rice triples its bulk when cooked. Brown rice approximately doubles in bulk and takes a little longer to cook than white rice. Barley doubles in bulk when cooked as does refined pasta. Wholemeal pasta doesn't bulk up as much as refined pasta but does cook quickly.
- Cooked rice, barley and pasta freeze successfully. A little oil or pasta sauce mixed through cooked pasta before freezing will help prevent it from being 'gluggy' when thawed.

## Meat

- Purchase 2¾ kg lean red meat to cater for 40 children in order to provide the recommended amount while they are in long day care.
- Purchase 3kg of chicken to cater for 40 children. This should be bone and skin free i.e. fillets.
- Lean meat with little or no bone is good value. Take care if purchasing trays of meat as underneath layers may be poor quality.
- High fat and bone content make it difficult to determine how much to buy and means that children may not receive the recommended amount of meat.

- Minced beef comes in different grades. Premium and low fat minced beef are the best choices. Regular and hamburger minced beef have higher fat content. Fat content of lamb mince is about the same as low fat beef mince and pork mince has a fat content similar to premium beef mince so both have acceptable fat content. Kangaroo mince is a very lean meat.
- Commercial hamburger patties are high in fat (as much as 25g of fat per 100g of patty) and are not a good choice.
- Not all deli meats are high in fat. Low fat chicken or turkey loaf, lean ham and lean bacon breakfast rashers (short cut) have an acceptable fat content. Devon and fritz have a high fat content and should not be included on the menu. All deli meats are high in salt.
- As far as food safety is concerned, meat is a high risk food. The following practices will help keep meat safe:
  - If meat is packaged, loosen cover and pierce cover in a couple of places as this will help to stop meat from 'sweating' and developing an unpleasant smell.
  - Store raw meat on the bottom shelf to prevent raw juices from dripping on to other food.
  - Containers of meat should be placed in the refrigerator so that cold air can circulate around each container.
  - Most raw meat cuts can be kept in the refrigerator for up to three days. If meat cuts need to be kept for longer than three days they should be frozen.
  - Any type of minced meat, including chicken mince, should not be refrigerated for more than two days before cooking. If wishing to keep minced meat longer than two days, it should be frozen when purchased.
  - To freeze meat, place into freezer bags (or similar) and expel as much air as possible. A flat container with a tightly fitting lid could be used. Note that if the meat is in a 'thick lump' it will take a longer time to freeze. The quicker the food freezes, the better. Make sure that cold air can circulate around containers or packages of meat.

## Eggs

- If eggs are replacing meat in a non-meat meal, at least one large egg per child will be needed.

## Fish

- When buying fresh fish, purchase 3½ kg to cater for 40 children. The flesh of fresh fish should be firm and there should be no unpleasant smell. Refrigerate for no longer than two days before cooking.
- When buying frozen fish, check the 'use by' date. Packets should be unbroken. If in plastic packets, there should be no crystals of ice on the contents. If in cardboard containers, the cardboard should not be torn, damp or wet.

- Plain frozen fish is preferable to crumbed or battered.
- The amount of fat in frozen fish fingers varies. If you do have fish fingers on the menu, purchase ones that have less than 10g of fat per 100g. Include on the menu no more than once a fortnight. Bake or grill (don't fry). It should be noted that the protein content of fish fingers is low compared to fresh fish.
- Canned fish is an excellent alternative to fresh fish. Purchase canned fish in spring water rather than brine. Brine is very high in salt. If fish canned in spring water is not available, canned in oil is preferable to brine.
- As far as food safety is concerned, fish is a high risk food. The following practices will help keep fish safe:
  - Fresh fish is best cooked within two days of purchasing.
  - When purchasing frozen fish it should be completely frozen. No part should be even slightly thawed.
  - Freeze fish in single layers in flat airtight containers or freezer bags. This will mean that the fish freezes as quickly as possible.
  - Frozen fish fillets do not have to be thawed before cooking.
  - If large pieces of fish do need to be thawed before cooking, thawing must be done in the refrigerator.

## Milk

- If milk is to be the only dairy food offered on any one day, 10 litres will need to be ordered in a service catering for 40 children so that each child can be offered the recommended amount of dairy (one serve or 250ml).
- This amount of milk can be reduced if other dairy foods such as yoghurt, cheese or custard are given in sufficient amounts.
- Milk can be fresh, long life (UHT) or powdered. Evaporated milk is also suitable. Sweetened condensed milk is **not** suitable.
- Children two years and under, should be having full cream milk as their main beverage. Children over two years of age can be given reduced fat milk and other dairy foods.
- As far as food safety is concerned, milk is best stored in the body of the refrigerator, especially if it is to be kept for more than 24 hours. UHT milk must be refrigerated once it has been opened. Powdered milk should be stored in airtight containers.



## Discretionary foods (or foods for special occasions)

These foods are not necessary for a healthy diet. Discretionary foods and drinks are high in kilojoules, saturated fat, added sugar and added salt. They should be eaten only sometimes and in small amounts.

Examples of these foods include:

- sweet biscuits and cakes
- meat pies and other pastries such as sausage rolls, jam tart, etc.
- commercial burgers, hot chips and fried food
- fatty processed deli meats such as devon, fritz and frankfurts
- sausages
- ice-cream, confectionary and chocolate
- cream and butter
- crisps and other fatty and/salty snacks
- sugar sweetened cordials, soft drinks and sports drinks

Small amounts of discretionary foods could be included sometimes or on special occasions, for variety and enjoyment.

- Sausages may be included on the menu from time to time (no more than once every two weeks) or, on special occasions such as barbeques. Reduced fat sausages are the best choice. Pierce sausage skin and cook well to remove as much fat as possible. Serve sausages with foods such as wholemeal or wholegrain bread, boiled or steamed vegetables or salad.

## Planning Sandwich Menus

**Why is a checklist needed to plan sandwich menus?** Menus should be planned to ensure they provide at least 50% of the RDI for all nutrients when one main meal and morning and afternoon tea are provided.

When sandwiches are provided it is very hard to meet the nutritional requirements of children in care. This is particularly true for the nutrients: iron, zinc and calcium<sup>1</sup>. A hot main meal on most days of the week, in addition to morning and afternoon tea, is the best way to ensure adequate nutrition (See *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* page 92). If your service provides sandwiches as the main meal, the checklist on page 101 will help to ensure provision of at least 50% of the RDI for all nutrients.

### **When planning sandwich menus it is important that:**

- *At least one sandwich filling is lean red meat and all other filling choices are a good source of iron or protein.*

Red meat is the best source of iron. Salad fillings can be included with red meat and other filling choices high in iron or protein, and are encouraged. Fillings such as jam or honey provide very few nutrients and are not recommended. Aim to include 45g of protein filling in each sandwich.

- *No more than three filling choices are offered each day.*

Limiting the choice of fillings, helps to encourage children to eat more of the fillings that will provide important nutrients such as iron and zinc. Limiting the number of filling choices does not limit a child's variety of foods. Variety can be provided by a variety of foods over the whole day, including morning and afternoon tea.

- *Bread with added iron should be used for all sandwiches.*

Bread with added iron, preferably wholemeal varieties, should be offered everyday on a sandwich menu, to help ensure a child's iron requirements are provided.

- *A raw vegetable or fruit high in vitamin C is served with sandwiches.*

Vitamin C increases the absorption of iron from non-meat foods. So including vitamin C rich foods with sandwiches will help to maximise the iron absorbed from the bread.

- *Iron containing foods are also included at morning and afternoon tea.*

Iron containing foods need to be included at morning and afternoon tea in addition to the lean red meat and bread provided at the main meal. Extra iron containing foods are important to help meet iron needs.

<sup>1</sup> Central Coast Health, 2001.

# Nutrition Checklist for Planning Sandwich Menus

Use this checklist to plan each two-week menu cycle that provides sandwiches as the main meal on all or most days of the week.

*The numbers of serves recommended are the minimum required to meet the nutritional needs of children in care when one main meal and morning and afternoon tea are provided.*

## Main Meals

### AMOUNT AND TYPE OF FILLINGS

■ Each day, at least **1** sandwich filling is lean red meat. For example: beef or lamb.

■ All other sandwich fillings are a good source of iron or protein. For example: chicken, fish, baked beans, eggs or cheese

■ At least 45g of protein filling is provided for each child

### Number of sandwich fillings

■ No more than 3 filling choices are offered each day

*\* Limiting the number of fillings encourages children to try different fillings and will help to ensure they get enough protein and iron.*

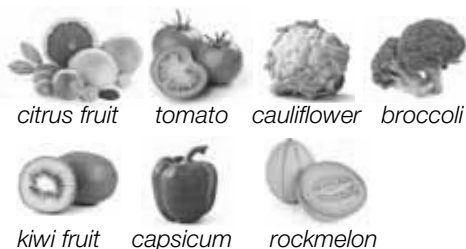
### AMOUNT AND TYPE OF BREAD

■ Bread with added iron is used where available, preferably wholemeal

■ 2 serves of bread is provided per child

### SOURCE OF VITAMIN C

■ A raw vegetable or fruit high in vitamin C is served with sandwiches at main meals



*\*These can be included in sandwich fillings or served separately.*

## Vegetables and Fruit

■ The menu includes at least **2** serves of vegetables daily

*It is recommended that a salad/vegetable platter is served with sandwiches to help meet this requirement*

■ The menu includes at least **1** serve of fruit daily

*\*A variety of vegetables and fruit throughout the menu is important.*

## Dairy Foods

■ The menu includes a total of **1** serve of dairy foods daily

*Serving milk at both morning and afternoon tea may be an easy and reliable way to meet this requirement.*



*\*Cream, sour cream and butter are not substitutes for milk, yoghurt and cheese.*

## Morning and Afternoon Tea (Midmeals)

■ Midmeals are planned on the menu as part of the total day's intake

■ Milk, cheese, yoghurt or custard is included if necessary to meet the recommended daily serve

■ Vegetables and fruit are included if necessary to meet the recommended daily number of serves

## IRON CONTAINING FOODS

■ At least 2 iron containing foods are included on the menu, in addition to the main meal sandwiches

**Iron containing foods include:** Wholemeal bread, bread with added iron, or wholegrain crispbreads/biscuits

• Red meat, meat and fish pastes, sardines, hommus, baked beans • Iron fortified breakfast cereal e.g. Weetbix™, Puffed Wheat™, Mini Wheats™ • Milo™, dried fruit

Refer to Table 3 on page 48 for the serve sizes for each food group



## How to use the Sample Menus

The following sample menus have been planned to meet the nutritional needs of children who are in care for eight hours or more.

Four weeks of daily menus have been provided. Each two week cycle meets the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning*.

Each daily menu provides the recommended food serves as follows:

- 1 serve of fruit
- 2 serves of vegetables
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of a serve of meat
- 1 serve of dairy
- 2 serves of wholegrain cereal foods

Foods served with the main meal menu item have been selected to help ensure adequate nutrients have been provided. For example Bobotie has been served with a salad and a slice of bread (with added vitamins and minerals) for extra iron.

If you prefer to mix and match by 'swapping' main meals, morning and afternoon tea from the menus provided in this resource, be sure to check that your overall menu complies with the *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* on page 92 or the *Two Week Menu cycle Planning Tool* on page 93. You will also need to use one of these checklists when you are using your own recipes and menu ideas.

All main meal recipes in the sample menus are included in this resource.

The menus have considered budget constraints, kitchen space, and staffing.

The sample menus provide a format for the development of additional menus.

Extra foods could be added if children are still hungry at any of the meal times. For example, at morning tea if vegetable sticks and dips are not enough, toast could be added. This could be the case for children who have had a very early breakfast or only a small breakfast.

## Sample Menu A - Week 1

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Crumpets with margarine Dried fruit</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milo™ milk Wholemeal crispbreads and Vegemite™ Fruit platter</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk ½ Toasted muffin with tomato and cheese</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Date loaf</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Avocado and cottage cheese dip and vegetable sticks Oven toasted Lebanese bread</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b> Tuscan beef casserole Boiled potato Custard and fruit Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Tuna and sweet corn bake 1 slice wholemeal bread and margarine Watermelon Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Bobotie Side salad 1 slice wholemeal bread and margarine Fruit yoghurt Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Minestrone Soup 1 slice wholemeal bread and margarine Canned two fruits and vanilla yoghurt Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Lamb and noodle hot pot Wholemeal pasta ½ banana and custard Water</p>
<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Chicken and vegetable soup 1 slice wholemeal bread</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Carrots/celery/capsicum with hommus</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Pineapple and ricotta dip with vegetable sticks Fresh fruit</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Vegetable sticks with Tzaziki and salsa dips</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Wholegrain crispbreads with Vegemite™ and cheese Orange segments</p>

## Sample Menu A - Week 2

Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Raisin toast and margarine Fruit platter</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Vegetable sticks and Lebanese bread with salsa</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Grilled cheese on wholemeal toast</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Wholemeal toast with margarine Edamame(soya) beans or alternative</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Wholemeal toast with margarine and cheese spread Tomato wedges with olive oil and balsamic vinegar</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b> Tomato glazed meatloaf Corn cob Mashed potato Vanilla yoghurt and fruit salad Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Vegetable slice 1 slice wholemeal bread and margarine Side salad Canned apricots and custard Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Minced beef stroganoff Wholemeal pasta Fresh fruit platter Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Asian style fish Wholemeal pasta Rockmelon or other fresh fruit and custard Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Moroccan lamb with couscous Fruit yoghurt Water</p>
<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Wholegrain crispbreads and spreads Dried apricots</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Weetbix™ slice Seasonal fruit</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Rice crackers with hommus Capsicum, celery, cucumber and carrot medley</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Weetbix™ with 125ml milk Fruit and vegetable platter with tzaziki</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Fruit platter ½ banana</p>

## Sample Menu D - Week 1

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Pikelets and margarine Red and green grapes Cherry tomatoes</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 1 Weetbix™ with 125ml Milk ½ banana</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Wholemeal cheese scones with margarine Orange segments</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Vegetable platter and dip Wholemeal crispbreads with Vegemite™</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Wholemeal fruit loaf with margarine</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b> Sweet lamb curry Rice Frozen fruit yoghurt Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Zucchini slice 1 slice wholemeal bread and margarine Mandarin Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Beef, potato and pumpkin bake Side salad Stewed apple Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Vegetable lentil bolognaise Wholemeal pasta Canned peaches Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> LBeef balls and beans Potato Fruit salad Water</p>
<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Mini Wheats™ Vegetable sticks</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Vegetable sticks and dip</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Weetbix™ with 125ml milk</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Iron rich muffin</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Lebanese bread crisps, Vegetable sticks Spinach dip</p>

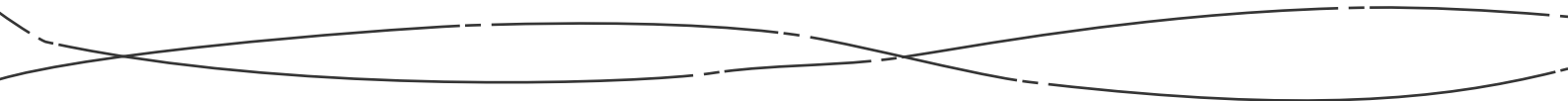
## Sample Menu D - Week 2

Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Toasted wholemeal muffin with margarine and cheese</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Toasted crumpet with margarine</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Vegetable platter with hummus Seasonal fruit</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Toasted French loaf with cheese, sliced tomato and mushrooms</p>	<p><b>Morning Tea</b> 125ml Milk Wholemeal crispbreads, margarine and Vegemite™</p>
<p><b>Lunch</b> Baa baa rippy rissoles Mashed potato Mixed vegetables Yoghurt ice block Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Tuna mornay Wholemeal pasta Canned peaches and vanilla yoghurt Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Italian beef Wholemeal pasta Side salad Fruit crumble and custard Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Tandoori chicken Rice Custard and canned apricots Water</p>	<p><b>Lunch</b> Fruity island curry Wholemeal pasta Fruit trifle Water</p>
<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> Weetbix™ and 125ml milk Fruit platter</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Dried fruit Vegetable and fruit platter</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Wholemeal toast with margarine</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milo™ Milk Iron rich muffin Vegetable sticks</p>	<p><b>Afternoon Tea</b> 125ml Milk Vegetable and fruit platter</p>



## About The Recipes in This Resource

1. Recipes in this resource have come from childcare services and are popular with the children. Some favourite recipes from the original edition of *Caring for Children* have been retained.
2. The recipes have been developed and included keeping in mind that it is recommended that children should be receiving at least half of their daily nutrition requirements if they are in care for eight hours or more.
3. The quantity of ingredients in each recipe is meant to cater for 40 older children. You may have to modify the amounts depending on the age, taste and varying appetites of the children.
4. The quantity of meat in each recipe meets the required number of serves for children in care for eight hours or more.
5. The number of serves of vegetables and cereal foods that recipes will provide for each child is indicated in a box next to the ingredients. This is to enable you to determine how much more of those foods need to be offered at morning or afternoon tea. The number of serves indicated includes any additional vegetable or cereal foods that are suggested to be served at that meal time.
6. Read recipes completely before including in menu or cooking.
7. All preparation and cooking times are approximate.
8. The size of cans and packets in the recipes are not always accurate but do give a good idea of amounts of ingredients that need to be used.
9. Any changes that are made to the type and quantity of ingredients or to the method, should be recorded to:
  - make sure the recipe turns out the same each time
  - assist replacement cooks
  - help with food ordering
  - help keep the budget on track.
10. You will notice that wholemeal bread and pasta are included in many of the recipes. This has been done to improve the fibre and iron content. Children may not be used to the appearance and taste of these foods. By gradually introducing wholemeal varieties e.g. offering a mix of refined and wholemeal, most children will eventually accept these foods. Note that when cooked, wholemeal pasta does not bulk up as much as refined pasta but it does cook quickly.
11. Legumes are included in some recipes. These improve the amount of protein, iron, fibre and vegetables in the children's diet. If these are new foods for children, introduce slowly.

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12. Milk and cheese used in the recipes, are reduced fat.
  13. Many of the recipes can be cooked in the oven or on the stove top.
  14. A wide variety of foods may be introduced to infants when they are about six months old. See the *Nutrition for Infants and Toddlers* section page 9. With this in mind, many of the recipes in this resource lend themselves to modification for infants and toddlers. The following information will help that process:
    - Some sauces will need to be left out especially those high in salt and/or with a strong flavour.
    - Recipes containing legumes may have the quantity of legumes reduced or left out completely.
    - Using reduced fat milk or cheese in recipes is acceptable for infants and toddlers.
    - Vegetables will need to be cooked until they are tender.
    - Ingredients that cannot be mashed or pureed may need to be left out. This will depend on the age and developmental stage of the child.
    - Foods that are hard, even when cut into small pieces, should not be included in the recipe.
    - Honey should not be used in recipes meant for children 12 months and under. Golden syrup is a suitable alternative to honey for this age group.

When choosing other recipes, ask yourself

1. Are the ingredients easily available and if not, are there suitable alternatives?
2. Is there any preparation that would need to be done the day before and if so, would that be workable. It may be better to avoid recipes that need a lot of previous preparation.
3. Will there be enough time to prepare this recipe?
4. Would this recipe be easy enough for an inexperienced cook to prepare?
5. Could this recipe be modified to suit toddlers as well as the older children?
6. It is important to encourage children to eat more vegetables. Try to choose some recipes that will help to increase the quantity of vegetables eaten by children. These could include 'wet dishes' such as soups, stews, casseroles and mornays as well as vegetable dishes such as stir fry.
7. As much as possible, is the recipe using vegetables that are in season?
8. Is there enough kitchen space (including bench top space) and equipment including hot plates or oven space, to prepare this recipe?
9. Has the food budget been considered?

For recipes in general

**1. Avoid or reduce saturated fat**

- Use healthy oils. For example sunflower, canola and olive oil.
- Choose margarines based predominately on sunflower, canola or olive oil. This information may be clearly visible on the label or found in the ingredient list. Some margarine may have 'polyunsaturated' on the label. Such a product would be a good choice.
- Use reduced fat milk and cheese in recipes.
- Replace sour cream with light sour cream or plain yoghurt.
- Use lean mince, meats, ham, and bacon.
- Use skin free chicken.

**2. Where possible use 'no added salt' or salt reduced packaged and canned food**

- Purchase canned fish in spring water rather than brine. If canned in spring water is not available, canned in oil is preferable to brine.
- Examples of available 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' food products include some canned vegetables, some margarines and sauces.
- There is no need to add salt to recipes or cooking water.

**3. To enable the menu to meet the iron needs of children use**

- wholemeal pasta
- wholemeal bread or bread with added vitamins and minerals that include iron
- iron enriched breakfast cereal
- wheat germ instead of white breadcrumbs
- wholemeal flour
- golden syrup instead of honey - golden syrup contains more iron. *It is important to note that honey should not be given to children under 12 months as it contains bacteria that could be harmful to this age group.*



On days where a white meat or vegetarian meal is served extra iron containing foods will need to be on the menu. Include at least two extra iron containing foods e.g. iron enriched breakfast cereal, iron enriched infant cereal, bread with added iron or milk with Milo™.

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**Key to abbreviations used in this resource**

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tablespoon = T

teaspoon = tsp.

gram = g

kilogram = kg

millilitre = ml

**Liquid Measures**

1 metric cup = 250ml

1 tablespoon = 20ml

1 teaspoon = 5ml

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**Oven temperature**

Oven temperatures stated in the recipes may have to be modified if a fan forced oven is being used. Refer to manufacturer's instructions.

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# Apricot Chicken

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken thigh fillets

3 cups apricot nectar (750 ml)

¾ cup chicken stock

3 packets French onion soup

1 cup rolled oats

2 – 3 kg vegetables (frozen or chopped up fresh)

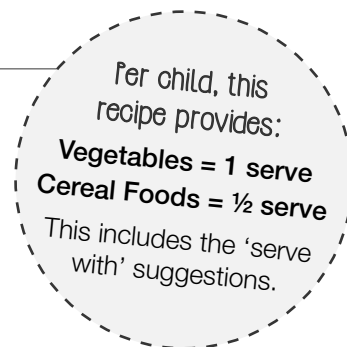
1½ kg wholemeal pasta

## Method

1. Cut chicken into bite-sized pieces. Remove visible fat. Place in casserole dish.
2. Mix nectar, stock, soup, rolled oats and vegetables and pour over the chicken.
3. Cover and cook in a moderate oven (180°C) for 1- 1½ hours or until chicken is cooked.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta.



## Helpful hints

1. Chicken breast fillets could be used instead of thigh fillets.
2. Wholemeal pasta is an important source of iron and fibre. If children are not used to wholemeal pasta perhaps it will be accepted if introduced slowly. Try mixing wholemeal pasta with 'ordinary' pasta.
3. This recipe could be cooked on the stove top rather than in the oven. Once all the ingredients are combined, place in large saucepan(s), bring to boil using moderate heat then, turn heat down and simmer gently with the lid on, until chicken is cooked. This may take less time than cooking in the oven.
4. Whether cooking in the oven or cooking on the stove top, the chicken must be cooked thoroughly i.e. no pink meat or pink juices.
5. This recipe could be made using round steak instead of chicken. Preparation steps will be the same. Cooking time will be longer (whether stewing or casseroles) to allow time for the steak to tenderize. A little extra liquid may be needed.
6. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Asian Style Fish

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 – 50 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 – 30 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = 1 serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

4 kg Basa fish fillets	1 kg broccoli
½ cup soy sauce	1½ cups mushrooms (optional)
½ cup oyster sauce	1 x 410g can baby corn, cut into chunks
4 tsp. crushed ginger	4 carrots
4 tsp. crushed garlic	2 zucchini
½ cup brown sugar	1½ kg thin wholemeal spaghetti
2 tsp. five spice (optional)	6 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
2 capsicums	
3 cups snow peas	

## Method

1. Cut up all the vegetables in sizes suitable for a stir fry. Carrots could be coarsely grated and baby corn will need to be cut into chunks.
2. Combine sauces, spices, garlic and ginger.
3. Place fish over the base of greased oven proof dishes, pour ½ the sauce mix over the fish then cover and cook in a moderate oven (180°C) until fish flesh flakes easily. This will take about 20 minutes.
4. Place water on to boil ready to cook the spaghetti.
5. While the fish is cooking, heat the oil in a large fry pan and stir fry the vegetables with the remaining sauce mix, until just tender.
6. When water is boiling, cook the spaghetti.
7. Drain the cooked spaghetti and cut the cooked fish into serving size portions.
8. Serve.

## Helpful hints

1. If using snow peas, cut in half (or smaller). Trim to remove ends and 'string'.
2. Snow peas could be replaced with peas or green beans. Frozen peas and green beans are easy to use.
3. Wholemeal spaghetti could be replaced with other wholemeal pasta.
4. Spaghetti (or other pasta) can be stirred through the vegetables or served separately.
5. Suitable vegetables in season can replace vegetables listed in ingredients.



# Baa Baa Rippy Rissoles

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 - 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 45 minutes – 1 hour

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Ingredients

1¼ kg lamb mince	1 T crushed garlic
1 kg kangaroo mince	1½ cups breadcrumbs
1 cup black olives, chopped	4 – 5 kg potatoes
3 onions, chopped	½ kg frozen peas
¾ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')	½ kg frozen corn kernels
3 T fresh oregano, chopped	3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Preheat oven to moderate (180°C). Prepare potatoes for baking. Grease a baking tray with the oil, arrange potatoes on the tray and place in the oven. Cook until soft, about 40 minutes.
2. Combine meat, onions, olives, tomato paste, breadcrumbs and oregano.
3. Roll meat into golf ball size balls.
4. Cook rissoles in batches, in a greased frying pan or electric fry pan with moderate heat. Flatten rissoles slightly when putting into fry pan and turn over half way through cooking time. Cook rissoles thoroughly, no pink meat or juices.
5. When almost finished cooking the rissoles, cook the frozen vegetables. Frozen vegetables only need to come to the boil. They do not need much cooking.

## Serve

Serve rissoles with the vegetables. Gravy or sauce could be served with the rissoles.

## Helpful hints

1. Rissoles could be cooked on a tray in the oven.
2. Rissole mix could be cooked as a 'flattish' meat loaf in the oven and then cut into serving sized pieces when cooked.
3. If rissoles are cooked in a fry pan, the potatoes could be boiled and mashed (to save turning on the oven). If mashing add 100g margarine and approximately 200ml reduced fat milk. More milk may be needed depending on the type of potato.
4. Small corn cobs would make a change from corn kernels.
5. Corn and peas could be replaced with other vegetables such as pumpkin, carrot, green beans, sweet potato and zucchini.
6. 3 slices of bread will make about 1½ cups of breadcrumbs. If making breadcrumbs, wholemeal is preferable.
7. Wheat germ or quick oats could replace breadcrumbs.

# Beef And Vegetable Pie

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

2 onions, chopped

6 carrots, peeled and grated

2 kg potato, peeled and cut into chunks

2 kg pumpkin, peeled and cut into chunks

2 – 3 stalks celery, chopped

6 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

5 T margarine (sunflower, canola or olive oil margarine)

2 T Worcestershire sauce

¾ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')

1½ cups beef stock

1 cup grated, reduced fat cheese

## Method

1. Heat approximately half the oil in a pan or saucepan, add the mince. Cook until brown. About 5 minutes. Stir occasionally. Remove meat from the pan.
2. Add remainder of the oil to the pan then add onion, carrot and celery and stir fry for 5 minutes.
3. Combine stir fried vegetables, meat, tomato paste and Worcestershire sauce. Bring to boil, turn heat down and simmer gently, lid on for about 15 minutes. Stir occasionally.
4. While the meat is cooking, boil potato and pumpkin until soft.
5. Mash cooked potato and pumpkin together along with the margarine.
6. Spoon vegetables and meat into oven proof dishes and spread with mashed potato and pumpkin. Smooth the top with a knife dipped in milk. Sprinkle with the grated cheese.
7. Place into a moderate (180°C) oven and heat for about 10 minutes or until a light brown.

## Serve

Serve with salad.

## Helpful hints

1. Sweet potato could replace pumpkin.
2. Mashed vegetables could be served with the meat instead of making into 'pie'.
3. Minced meat should be cooked for a total of at least 20 minutes to ensure that it is cooked thoroughly.
4. The reduced fat cheese could be replaced with ½ cup of parmesan cheese for a flavour change. Mix parmesan through the mashed potato and pumpkin.
5. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Beef Balls And Bean Sauce

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

1 cup breadcrumbs (preferably wholemeal)

2 eggs, beaten

3 onions, chopped

2 T minced garlic

2 tsp. mixed herbs

1 kg tomatoes, chopped

1 x 375g can tomato puree

4 x 400g cans red kidney beans, drained

4 kg potato

200 ml reduced fat milk

5 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Mix together the mince, breadcrumbs, chopped onion, garlic, egg and herbs.
2. Form the meat mix into small balls (about a heaped tablespoon) and place onto a greased baking tray. Cook for 30 minutes at 180°C.
3. Once meat balls are in the oven, boil the potatoes.
4. Puree the tomatoes, red kidney beans and tomato puree together. Place into a saucepan to reheat.
5. Mash potatoes with the milk and margarine.

## Serve

Serve meat balls with the tomato and bean sauce and mashed potato.

## Helpful hints

1. Use 1 x 800g can of chopped tomatoes instead of fresh tomatoes as well as the pureed tomato.
2. 2 slices of bread makes about 1 cup of breadcrumbs.
3. Use wheat germ or quickoats instead of breadcrumbs.

# Beef Tacos

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

Taco shells (allow 2 per child)

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

2 onions, chopped or grated

2 packets of taco seasoning

2 x 400 g cans red kidney beans, pureed or mashed

2 cloves garlic, crushed or chopped finely

4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1 jar (about 200g) taco sauce

3 zucchini, grated

6 tomatoes, chopped

1 small lettuce, chopped

500g reduced fat cheese, grated

2 capsicums, cut into strips

8 carrots, cut into sticks

4 cucumbers, cut into chunks

Per child, this  
recipe provides:

**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**

This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan or frying pan.
2. Add the meat, onion, garlic and stir fry until meat is brown.
3. Add the taco seasoning, red kidney beans and grated zucchini and taco sauce to the meat and cook for a further 15 minutes.
4. While the meat is cooking, warm the taco shells in a moderate oven.

## Serve

Serve taco shells and meat filling, chopped tomatoes, chopped lettuce and cheese along with a vegetable platter of capsicum strips, carrot strips and cucumber chunks.

## Helpful hints

1. Tacos offer the perfect opportunity for children to serve themselves.
2. Salsa or other sauces could be used instead of the taco sauce.
3. The vegetable platter accompanies the tacos to increase the vegetable serves.
4. Bread wraps, soft tacos or mini burritos could be used instead of taco shells.

# Bobotie

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 4 onions, chopped
- 6 cups wholemeal breadcrumbs (12 – 14 slices of bread)
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 2 tsp. turmeric
- 2 tsp. vinegar
- 12 eggs
- 1 litre reduced fat milk
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Soak the breadcrumbs in 1 cup of the milk.
2. Heat oil in a fry pan and brown the meat. Add the onion and garlic.
3. Combine the meat, vinegar, curry powder, turmeric and half of the beaten eggs. Place this mixture into baking dishes and pat flat.
4. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 minutes.
5. Mix together the remaining milk and egg and pour over the meat. Return to oven and continue baking until the 'custard' is set.

## Serve

Serve with bread and salad or vegetables.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Grated vegetables such as zucchini and sweet potato could be added to the mince.
2. Use quiccoats instead of breadcrumbs.

# Chicken And Vegetable Ragout

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken breast fillets, cut into bite-sized pieces	250g frozen spinach
4 onions, chopped	1 x 410g can soy beans, drained
1 kg carrots, chopped	1 cup plain flour
1½ kg pumpkin, cut into bite-sized pieces	4 – 5 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
2 kg potato, peeled and cut into bite-sized pieces	4 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)
500g broccoli, broken into small pieces	2 – 3 T stock powder (according to taste)
2 x 800g cans chopped tomato	2 T garlic
	8 cups rice

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan or pan, lightly brown chicken in batches and set aside.
2. Place the chopped onion, garlic, pumpkin, potato, carrot and broccoli into the pan. Cook gently until the vegetables are tender then add the browned chicken and soy beans.
3. Add the margarine to the vegetables and chicken and when margarine is melted, sprinkle in the flour, stirring all the time.
4. Add the canned tomatoes and stock powder. Continue to stir while bringing the ragout to the boil. Turn heat down and simmer gently, lid on, for 20 minutes. Stir occasionally.
5. While ragout is simmering, cook the rice.
6. Add defrosted spinach to the ragout after it has simmered for 20 minutes, reheat.

## Serve

Serve ragout with rice.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. 4 - 5 leaves of fresh spinach could be used instead of frozen spinach. Wash fresh spinach well and chop up. Add to ragout along with other vegetables.
2. Soy beans could be replaced with other legumes such as butter beans, chick peas and red kidney beans.

# Chicken Chow Mein

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 40 – 45 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = 1 serve  
Cereal Foods = 1 serve

## Ingredients

- 3 kg chicken breast fillets
- 2 onions, chopped
- ½ bunch celery, chopped
- ½ small cabbage, finely shredded
- 1 kg frozen mixed vegetables
- 1 x 750g can mixed beans (about 2 cups when drained)
- 2 packets chicken noodle soup
- 4 cups water
- 8 cups rice

## Method

1. Place rice on to cook and drain when tender.
2. While the rice is cooking, in a large boiler or two fry pans, mix together the chicken, onions, celery, chicken noodle soup, frozen vegetables and water.
3. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes.
4. Add the beans, cooked rice and shredded cabbage. Heat through and serve.

## Helpful hints

1. Thigh fillets could be used instead of breast fillets. Trim all visible fat.
2. Cooked chicken could be used. Add along with the rice, beans and cabbage.
3. Cooked meat or canned fish could be used instead of chicken.
4. Noodles could be served instead of rice. Wholemeal noodles are recommended as they contribute significant amounts of iron and fibre.
5. Legumes such as butter beans, red kidney beans and soy beans, could be used instead of the mixed beans.

# Chilli Con Carne

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

2 x 400g cans red kidney beans, drained

2 x 400g (approx.) cans butter beans, drained

3 x 420g cans tomato soup (ready to eat, not concentrate)

2 onions, chopped

1 packet of taco seasoning

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

1 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan or pan. Cook mince for at least 15 minutes, stirring all the time.
2. Add the beans, onion, tomato soup and taco seasoning. Bring to simmering point, turn heat down and simmer gently for 5 minutes.
3. While the meat is cooking, cook the pasta.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta and tomato wedges or slices.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. A can of diced tomato could be added to the meat mix. If this is done, one can of tomato soup may be all that is needed.
2. Other vegetables could be added e.g. peas, corn kernels and grated carrot.
3. Extra soup could be added if necessary.
4. Purchase 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' canned products if available.
5. Tomato puree could be used instead of tomato soup.



# Fried Rice With Tofu

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

500g lean bacon, chopped

6 shallots, chopped

2 capsicums, chopped

500g peas (frozen)

500g corn kernels (frozen)

3 x 420g cans mixed beans, drained (about 3 cups)

500g tofu, cubed

5 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

8 cups rice

## Method

1. Place rice on to cook and drain when cooked.
2. While rice is cooking, heat oil in pan and lightly fry the bacon, vegetables (includes beans) and tofu.
3. Combine the cooked rice with lightly fried ingredients and serve.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Legumes such as chick peas, butter beans or red kidney beans could be used instead of mixed beans. Purchase 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt' legumes if available.
2. When buying tofu, choose a firm one that is less likely to break up when being cooked.
3. Lean ham could be used instead of bacon.
4. 2 kg chopped, cooked chicken could replace the tofu.
5. Fried rice could be served then garnished with slices of hard cooked egg.

# Fruity Island Curry

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

2¾ kg lean round steak, cut into bite-sized pieces

3 onions, chopped finely

3 tsp. curry powder

4 cups beef stock

4 cups peas (fresh or frozen)

4 cups grated carrot

1 kg sweet potato (grated)

1 T tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')

2 cups sultanas

4 cooking apples, chopped, skin on

1 cup red lentils

4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Heat the oil and brown the meat in batches.
2. Combine the meat, stock, onion, curry powder, tomato paste and red lentils. Bring to the boil, turn heat down and simmer gently until meat is tender.
3. Add fruit and vegetables and simmer for a further 10 minutes.
4. While the meat is cooking, cook the pasta and drain.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta.

## Helpful hints

1. Browning meat in batches reduces the 'stewing' effect and meat browns more easily.
2. Other vegetables or canned legumes could be added.
3. Red lentils do not have to be soaked or precooked before adding. They soften and cook in approximately 20 minutes.
4. Other meats that would be suitable to use include blade steak, lean lamb and kangaroo steak. Minced meat could also be used.
5. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Mustard Chicken

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 45 minutes

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken breast fillets, cut into bite-sized pieces	3 T plain flour
6 carrots, sliced thinly	3 T golden syrup
2 cups broccoli, chopped	600 ml milk
2 capsicums, chopped	3 T mustard
4 zucchini, chopped	1½ kg wholemeal pasta
2 onions, chopped or grated	
½ cup oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)	
3 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)	

## Method

1. Heat the oil and brown the chicken in batches. Remove from the pan and set aside.
2. Add all the vegetables to the remaining oil in the pan and stir fry for about 5 minutes or until vegetables are just tender.
3. Put pasta on to boil.
4. Combine the chicken and vegetables and set aside while making the melted butter (margarine) sauce.
5. To make sauce, melt margarine in a large saucepan, remove from heat and stir in the flour. Return to heat and gently cook for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in the milk. Return to moderate heat, bring to boil stirring all the time. Turn the heat down and simmer gently for 1 minute.
6. Add the golden syrup and mustard to the sauce.
7. Combine the sauce, chicken and vegetables. Reheat if necessary.

## Serve

Serve with pasta and extra salad or vegetables.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Cut the vegetables into similar sized pieces so that they cook evenly.
2. Brown chicken in batches to help browning.
3. Brown sugar could be used instead of golden syrup.
4. If children who are going to eat this dish are all more than 12 months old, honey could replace the golden syrup. Honey is not recommended for children under 12 months because it may contain bacteria that could be harmful to this age group.
5. Wholemeal pasta is an important source of iron. If children are not used to wholemeal pasta perhaps it may be accepted if introduced slowly. Try mixing wholemeal pasta with 'ordinary' pasta. The wholemeal portion could be increased gradually over time.

# Hawaiian Meat Balls

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 1½ cups rice
- 3 kg pork mince
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 onions, chopped
- 1 T mixed herbs
- ½ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 3 red capsicums, finely diced
- 6 eggs, well beaten
- ½ cup plain flour for coating meat balls
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Sauce

- 4 x 450g cans crushed pineapple, no added sugar or light syrup (don't drain)
- 200 ml soy sauce
- ¾ cup of tomato or barbeque sauce
- 1 cup (250 ml) water
- 5 T corn flour

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Cook the rice, drain.
2. Mix together the mince, garlic, eggs, capsicum, herbs, parsley and rice.
3. Make meat balls (about 2 tablespoons of mince). Dust with flour and slightly flatten.
4. Heat oil in large pan and cook meat balls in batches. Cook for about 10 minutes (about 5 minutes on each side) or until cooked right through. Meat should be well cooked, not rare.
5. As each batch of meat balls is cooked, drain on absorbent paper and keep warm.
6. Make sauce by blending the corn flour with the water to make a smooth paste. Stir this into all the other sauce ingredients. Stir continuously over moderate heat until it comes to the boil and thickens. Pour over or serve with meat balls.

## Serve

Serve with bread and salad or a selection of vegetables.

## Helpful hints

1. Meat balls could be cooked in the oven. Place onto a greased oven tray and bake in a moderate oven.
2. Serve sauce in small jugs so that children are able to help themselves.
3. Other sauces or chutneys could replace the sauce in the recipe.

# Italian Beef And Spaghetti

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 4 onions, chopped
- 4 carrots, chopped
- ½ cup chopped parsley
- 1 x 800g can chopped tomatoes
- 1 x 820g can tomato soup (concentrated)
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 1½ kg wholemeal spaghetti

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the meat and cook until brown.
2. When meat is brown, add the remainder of the ingredients (except the pasta) bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently for 20 minutes.
3. While the meat is cooking, cook the pasta until just tender and drain.

## Serve

Serve with a side salad. Pasta can be stirred through the meat or served with the meat.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Extra vegetables such as zucchini and canned legumes (drained) could be added.
2. Any type of wholemeal pasta could be used.
3. Garnish with grated cheese or parmesan and chopped parsley.
4. Tomato puree could be used instead of tomato soup.

# Lamb And Noodle Hot Pot

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

2¾ kg lean lamb, cubed

3 onions, chopped

4 green apples, skin on, diced

8 carrots diced or grated

½ bunch celery, chopped

4 cups diced pumpkin

1 kg frozen peas

1 T curry powder

2 x 440g cans beef or lamb soup (ready to eat)

1 x 300g can of tomato soup (concentrate)

1½ kg wholemeal pasta, cooked and drained

4 T (80ml) oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Lightly brown the lamb and onion in the oil.
2. Add all the other ingredients except the pasta, to the meat.
3. Bring to the boil then reduce the heat, place the lid on and simmer gently until the meat is tender. About 1 hour.
4. About 30 minutes before the meat is finished, cook the pasta.
5. Cooked pasta can be stirred through the meat once the meat is cooked or, it can be served separately.

## Serve

Serve with salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Pork could be used instead of lamb.
2. This dish could be cooked in a slow cooker or casseroled in a moderate (180°C) oven. If a slow cooker is used, the cooking time will be much longer and this will need to be planned for.
3. Tomato puree could be used instead of tomato soup.

# Lamb Burgers

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

2¾ kg lamb mince

3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1 cup wheat germ

6 carrots, grated

40 hamburger buns

200g margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

10 tomatoes, sliced

6 cucumbers, sliced or cut into sticks

1 small lettuce, shredded

20 slices of reduced fat cheese, cut in half

Barbeque sauce (if required)

## Method

1. Mix the wheat germ and grated carrot through the lamb mince.
2. Make mince patties and flatten so as to fit on the hamburger bun.
3. Heat the oil and cook patties for at least 5 minutes on each side.
4. Cut cucumber and carrot into sticks or slices. These can be served alongside the burgers as a finger food.
5. Slice tomato, shred lettuce and cut slices of cheese in half (ready to place onto the buns).
6. Warm or toast buns if desired. Spread buns with margarine.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 2 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Cucumber could be sliced and placed in the hamburger bun along with the meat however, this may make it difficult for the children to manage.
2. Breads other than hamburger buns could be used. Turkish bread could be warmed and sliced to make a 'sandwich type' hamburger. Pocket bread could also be used. If pocket bread were to be used, grated carrot and chopped up cucumber would be fine to include.
3. Meat patties could be baked in a moderate oven, instead of cooking in a fry pan.
4. Extra finger food vegetables could be served e.g. small pieces of cauliflower and broccoli.
5. Burgers offer an opportunity for children to participate by assembling their own 'meal'.
6. Beef could be used instead of lamb.

# Lasagne Al Forno

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

500g (2 cups) tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')

2 tsp. mixed herbs

3 onions, chopped

2 cloves garlic, crushed

2 litres reduced fat milk

½ cup cornflour blended with 1 cup of the milk

4 eggs, beaten

2 x 800g cans chopped tomatoes

2 cups grated reduced fat cheese

700g lasagna sheets (precooked / quick cooking type)

4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Turn oven on to moderate (180°C).
2. Heat oil in pan or large saucepan and brown the meat.
3. Add tomato paste, herbs and onion to the meat. Simmer gently for 15 minutes then turn heat off, cover and leave.
4. Combine the beaten egg and blended cornflour.
5. Heat the remaining milk along with the garlic and when almost boiling stir in the blended cornflour and egg mix. Simmer very gently for about 30 seconds, stirring all the time. Remove from heat.
6. Place a layer of lasagna sheets on the base of a greased baking dish. Layer meat, tomato, white sauce, cheese and lasagna sheets into baking dish, finishing with a layer of cheese.
7. Place into the moderate oven for 20 – 30 minutes. Remove from oven and stand for 10 minutes before serving.

## Serve

Serve with salad or vegetables.

## Helpful hints

1. If using commercially crushed garlic use 2 – 3 teaspoons.
2. ½ cup of chopped parsley could be added. This is an opportunity to use fresh parsley growing in the herb garden at your service.
3. The mixed herbs could be replaced with chopped fresh herbs such as basil and oregano (that may also be growing at your service).
4. For a flavour change, replace 1 cup of the grated cheese with ½ cup of parmesan cheese. The parmesan cheese could be mixed in with the white sauce.



# Lentil Soup

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

3 cups brown or green lentils

3 cups red lentils

4 onions, chopped

10 carrots, sliced thinly or chopped

6 zucchini, chopped

½ bunch celery, chopped

4 – 5 litres water

200ml soy sauce (about  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup)

2 x 400g can soy beans (about 2 cups when drained)

## Method

1. Soak the brown or green lentils overnight if possible. Covered and refrigerated. Drain and rinse. Red lentils do not need to be soaked.
2. Combine all the ingredients in a large saucepan or boiler. Bring to the boil, turn heat down, cover and simmer for about 1 hour.
3. This soup may be pureed.

## Serve

Serve with bread or damper.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

If this soup is to be served to toddlers, leave soy sauce out of the recipe.

# Mince And Beans Mexican Style

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

2 onions, chopped

2 cloves of garlic, crushed

1 x 800g can chopped tomatoes

2 green capsicums, chopped

½ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')

2 beef stock cubes or 2 teaspoons beef stock powder

2 x 400g cans red kidney beans, drained

1½ cups red lentils

200g corn chips, crushed

3 cups (300 g) reduced fat cheese, grated

4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

500g wholemeal pasta

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Cook pasta and drain when cooked.
2. While pasta is cooking, heat oil in large pan and lightly brown the mince and onions.
3. Add garlic, tomato, capsicum, tomato paste, red lentils and crushed stock cubes (or stock powder).
4. Bring to the boil, turn heat down and simmer gently for 20 – 30 minutes.
5. Add the kidney beans and simmer for a further 5 minutes.
6. Divide the cooked pasta between 2 greased baking dishes, top with mince mixture then sprinkle with crushed corn chips and grated cheese.
7. Reheat in a moderate oven (180°C).

## Serve

Serve with salad and bread.

## Helpful hints

1. If using commercially crushed garlic use 2 – 3 teaspoons.
2. Stir meat mixture from time to time when simmering. If necessary add a little water.
3. The red lentils help to thicken this dish. Reduce the amount (next time) if necessary.
4. Cold, plain yoghurt served with this dish is a pleasant taste sensation.

# Minced Beef Stroganoff

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 – 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 45 – 50 minutes

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

4 onions, chopped

8 carrots, cut into bite-sized chunks

500g mushrooms, sliced

4 cups corn kernels

4 cups peas

2 cups green beans

1 x 140g can tomato puree

2 cups beef stock

3 T gravy powder

300ml light sour cream

3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Heat oil in a large saucepan and brown the mince and onions.
2. Blend the gravy powder with the stock.
3. Combine all the ingredients (except pasta and sour cream) and bring to boil. Turn the heat down and simmer gently for 30 minutes.
4. Place pasta on to cook about 15 minutes before serving time. Drain when cooked.
5. Just before serving, stir the sour cream through.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta.

## Helpful hints

1. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.
2. Stock powder is also very suitable for making the stock. It is light to carry and well priced compared to other products. It may be lower in salt than some other products.
3. Steak could be used instead of minced beef.
4. Other vegetables could be added.
5. Could be served with mashed potato instead of pasta.

# Minestrone Soup

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1½ hours

## Ingredients

5 cups (750g) uncooked legumes  
(lima, butter beans or red kidney beans)  
½ bunch celery, chopped  
500g frozen peas  
3 onions, chopped  
¼ cauliflower, cut into small florets  
250g carrots, chopped  
2 cloves garlic, crushed

½ cup chopped, fresh parsley  
1 tsp. mixed herbs  
1 x 800g can chopped tomatoes  
4 T tomato paste (optional, look for 'no added salt')  
500g wholemeal macaroni  
4 litres beef stock  
2 litres of water

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Soak legumes overnight (covered in the refrigerator).
2. Drain off the soaking water and rinse legumes. Place into a large saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Boil until tender (approximately ¾ hour) then drain.
3. Combine all the ingredients (including the cooked legumes) in a large boiler. Bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently for about 30 minutes.
4. Add extra stock or water if necessary.

## Serve

Serve with wholemeal bread, with added vitamins and minerals, if possible.

## Helpful hints

1. Minestrone soup is a great way to use leftover fresh, frozen or cooked vegetables.
2. Other legumes could be used. Examples include chick peas and soya beans.
3. Although the recipe has specified uncooked legumes, canned legumes could be used. This will save soaking and cooking time. The issue would be just how many cans of legumes would be needed. Allow approximately 2 tablespoons of drained legumes per child.
4. When purchasing canned legumes, look for 'salt reduced' or 'no added salt'.
5. Macaroni shapes could be replaced with other pasta shapes.
6. Garnish with chopped parsley for added flavour, iron and vitamin C.
7. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Moroccan Lamb With Couscous

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1 ½ hours

## Ingredients

2¾ kg diced lamb

2 onions, chopped

½ bunch celery, chopped

6 carrots, diced or sliced

3 zucchini, chopped

1 kg pumpkin, cut into 'chunks'

2 red capsicums

3 x 420g cans mixed beans

2 x 800g cans chopped tomatoes

5 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

16 cups couscous

Per child, this  
recipe provides:

**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**

This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan and brown the lamb in batches. Set aside.
2. Lightly cook onion in the pan.
3. Combine onion, meat, celery, carrot, pumpkin and capsicum. Add the tomatoes, bring to the boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently until meat is tender. The zucchini doesn't take long to cook so can be added in the last 15 minutes or so.
4. Make couscous according to directions on the packet.

## Serve

Serve sprinkled with chopped fresh coriander (optional). This could be an opportunity to use fresh herbs from the garden. If coriander is not available, parsley would be fine.

## Helpful hints

1. Chicken could be used instead of the lamb.
2. Use wholemeal couscous if available.
3. Sweet potato could be used instead of pumpkin.
4. Legumes such as chick peas, butter beans or red kidney beans could be used instead of mixed beans.
5. If this recipe is too 'sloppy', the amount of tomato could be slightly reduced next time OR up to 1 cup of red lentils could be added at the beginning of the cooking time. Red lentils do not need to be soaked or precooked. They will cook, soften and break up in about 20 minutes.

# Saucy Beef And Vegetable Loaf

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

2¾ kg good quality beef mince

1 cup wheat germ

2 carrots, grated

2 cups grated pumpkin

3 zucchini, washed and grated

2 onions, chopped

¼ cup reduced fat evaporated milk

3 cups celery, finely chopped

4 eggs, beaten

2 cups rice

3 x 300g cans tomato soup (concentrate, not 'ready to eat')

## Method

1. Cook the rice and drain.
2. Combine all the ingredients (except the tomato soup) and spoon into greased baking dishes. Press down evenly.
3. Pour the tomato soup over the top of the meat.
4. Bake in a moderate (180°C) oven for about 1 hour.

## Serve

Serve with baked potato and salad or other vegetables. If baking potatoes, allow about 5 kg to cater for 40 children depending on the age and appetite of the children.

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. 2-3 extra cups of vegetables could be added to the meat loaf. Vegetables such as grated sweet potato, corn kernels and diced capsicum would be suitable.
2. Tomato puree could be used instead of tomato soup. 2 x 375g cans of tomato puree should be enough.

# Savoury Baked Beans With Pasta

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

10 x 420g cans baked beans

5 onions, grated

5 carrots, grated

6 zucchinis, washed and grated

500g reduced fat cheese, grated

## Method

1. Cook the pasta.
2. While pasta is cooking, combine the beans, onion, carrot and zucchini in an electric fry pan or large saucepan, and bring to the boil. Turn heat down and simmer gently for 10 minutes.
3. Drain cooked pasta.

## Serve

Serve bean and vegetable 'sauce' on pasta and sprinkle with grated cheese.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Purchase reduced salt baked beans if available.
2. Other vegetables such as grated pumpkin and grated sweet potato could be used. Also frozen peas and frozen corn are suitable.

# Savoury Chilean Mince

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = 1 serve

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 2 onions, finely chopped or grated
- 5 carrots, grated
- 2 x 400g cans red kidney beans
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp. dried oregano
- 3 T tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 8 cups rice

## Method

1. Cook the rice.
2. While the rice is cooking, heat oil in a large pan and lightly cook the meat and onions.
3. Add all other ingredients to the meat and simmer gently for 20 minutes.
4. Add cooked rice to the meat and serve. Note that the rice can also be served alongside the meat.

## Helpful hints

1. Rice could be cooked ahead of time and frozen.
2. Other vegetables could be added.
3. Purchase 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' canned legumes if available.
4. About ½ cup of chopped fresh oregano or fresh parsley could be used instead of the dried oregano.



# Spaghetti Bolognaise

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 45 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 4 onions, chopped
- 6 carrots, chopped or grated
- ½ bunch celery, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- ¾ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')
- 2 tsp. mixed herbs
- 1 x 800g can chopped tomatoes
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- 1½ kg wholemeal spaghetti

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a large pan, add the onion, carrot, celery and crushed garlic. Stir fry for about 5 minutes.
2. Add the minced beef and stir fry until meat is brown. This will take 5 – 10 minutes.
3. Add the tomato paste, mixed herbs and tomatoes.
4. Simmer gently for 15 minutes then fold through chopped fresh parsley and simmer for a further 5 minutes.
5. While the meat is cooking, cook spaghetti.

## Serve

Serve with salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Other vegetables could be used or added e.g. grated or diced sweet potato, peas, corn and legumes such as butter beans, red kidney beans and baked beans.
2. Using fresh parsley is an opportunity to use fresh herbs from the garden.
3. Chopped fresh oregano could also be used.
4. Fresh tomatoes could be used instead of canned tomatoes.
5. Provide bowls of parmesan cheese for children to help themselves.

# Sweet Chicken, Vegetables And Pasta

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken breast fillets, diced	½ cup golden syrup
2 onions, chopped	400 ml reduced fat evaporated milk
2½ kg mixed vegetables, frozen	1 litre chicken stock
8 carrots, diced	4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
2 red capsicums, sliced or chopped	1½ kg wholemeal pasta
4 T grain mustard	

## Method

1. Prepare chicken and vegetables.
2. Cook pasta.
3. While pasta is cooking, heat oil in a large pan and sauté (lightly fry) onion and carrot for about 5 minutes.
4. Add the chicken and cook gently for at least 10 minutes.
5. Add stock, capsicum, mustard, golden syrup and evaporated milk. Simmer gently for 5 minutes.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Fresh vegetables could be used instead of frozen vegetables. They would have to be cut into small pieces and stir fried along with the carrot and onion.
2. Brown sugar could be used instead of golden syrup.
3. If children who are going to eat this dish are all aged more than one 12 months, honey could be used instead of golden syrup. Honey is not recommended for children under 12 months because it may contain bacteria that could be harmful for this age group.
4. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Sweet Lamb Curry

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

2¾ kg lamb mince	2 cups sultanas
2 kg frozen mixed vegetables	2 cups chicken stock
3 onions (500g) chopped	3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
4 T curry powder	8 cups rice
1 cup barbeque sauce	
6 Granny Smith apples, washed and grated	

## Method

1. Heat the oil and sauté (lightly fry) onions until tender.
2. Add curry powder and mince to the onions.
3. Stir the mince over moderate heat until brown. This will take about 8 – 10 minutes.
4. Stir in the barbeque sauce, apples, sultanas, vegetables and stock.
5. Bring to boil, turn the heat down and simmer gently for at least 20 minutes. Mixture should thicken slightly.
6. While the curry is cooking, cook the rice.

## Serve

Serve with the rice.

A little Greek yoghurt on top would add to the taste experience.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Curry could be served with pasta instead of rice. Wholemeal pasta will provide more iron and fibre than 'ordinary' pasta.
2. The frozen mixed vegetables could be replaced with chopped fresh vegetables or a combination of frozen and fresh vegetables.
3. Canned legumes could be part of the vegetable mix e.g. butter beans or chick peas. Purchase 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' if available.
4. There is no need to peel the apples as long as they are washed well. If no Granny Smith apples are available other types may be used.
5. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Tandoori Chicken

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 – 1 ½ hours

## Ingredients

3 kg chicken breast fillets, diced  
Juice of 2 lemons  
300g reduced fat, plain yoghurt  
1 T crushed garlic  
2 red capsicums, diced  
2 green capsicums, diced  
500g sweet potato, finely diced or grated

500g pumpkin, finely diced  
2 onions, chopped  
4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)  
1 x 290g jar tandoori paste  
8 cups rice

## Method

1. Combine half the tandoori paste with the lemon juice and yoghurt. Add chicken and marinade overnight (covered in the refrigerator). If this is not possible, marinade for at least 2 hours (covered and refrigerated).
2. Place chicken in baking dishes, place in a moderate oven. Bake until chicken is cooked through.
3. While the chicken is cooking place the rice on to cook.
4. While the chicken is cooking, lightly fry the onion in the oil, add vegetables and continue to stir fry until vegetables are just tender. Capsicums could be added close to the end of the cooking time so that they retain their crispness.
5. Add the remainder of the tandoori paste to the vegetables.
6. Combine the vegetables and the chicken and heat through if necessary.

## Serve

Serve with rice and a salad or other vegetables.

## Helpful hints

Capsicums could be replaced with chopped celery or chopped green beans.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

# Tasty Scrambled Egg

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 minutes

## Ingredients

36 eggs, beaten

3 cups reduced fat milk

3 cups (300g) reduced fat cheese, grated

300g lean ham, chopped

½ cup chopped fresh parsley

3 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Combine the eggs and milk then stir in the ham, cheese and parsley.
2. Melt margarine in pan, pour in the egg mix. Place lid on, turn heat down to low.
3. Stir occasionally to cook evenly.
4. Cook until completely set then remove from heat immediately.
5. While egg is cooking, make toast. Allow at least 1 slice per child.

## Serve

Serve with toast.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. For a variation, chopped cooked vegetables could be added.
2. Grilled tomato or tomato slices could accompany scrambled egg.
3. Serve scrambled egg as soon as possible after cooked. Scrambled egg that is kept hot for any length of time is likely to overcook and spoil.
4. Try adding ricotta cheese for a different flavour.

# Tomato Glazed Meatloaf

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour

## Ingredients

### Meatloaf

- 2¾ kg good quality beef mince
- 2 cups wheat germ
- 3 zucchini, grated (about 3 cups)
- 3 carrots, grated (about 3 cups)
- 4 onions, chopped
- 1 cup chopped parsley
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- 5 eggs, beaten

### Glaze

- 1 cup tomato sauce
- ¼ cup Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 large tomato, chopped finely

## Method

1. Combine all meat loaf ingredients and mix well.
2. Press the mixture into oven proof dishes.
3. Bake in a moderate (180°C) oven for about 1 hour.
4. When cooked, remove from oven and drain off any visible fat.
5. Combine all the glaze ingredients in a saucepan and gently heat through.
6. Pour glaze over meatloaf just before serving.

## Serve

Serve with a salad or vegetables such as mashed potato plus a green and yellow vegetable.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 2 serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. If serving mashed potato, cook about 4 kg. This amount could vary according to the age and appetite of the children. When mashing, add reduced fat milk and margarine for a smooth, palatable result.
2. Wholemeal breadcrumbs or quickoats could replace the wheat germ. 2 slices of bread will make 1 cup of breadcrumbs.
3. Worcestershire sauce could be replaced with barbeque sauce.

# Tuna A La Tima

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

- 4 - 6 x 425g cans tuna, drained and flaked
- 2 onions, chopped
- 4 x 420g cans cream of chicken soup (condensed, not ready to eat)
- 1 kg light ricotta cheese
- 2 cups fat reduced cheese, grated
- 2 ½ cups wholemeal breadcrumbs
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 kg wholemeal pasta shapes

## Method

1. Cook pasta.
2. Preheat moderate oven (180°C).
3. Mix the grated cheese with ½ cup of the breadcrumbs and keep aside as this will be sprinkled over the rest of the ingredients before baking.
4. Combine all ingredients including the remainder of the breadcrumbs and the cooked, drained pasta. Pour into greased ovenproof dishes. Sprinkle with the grated cheese and breadcrumb mix.
5. Bake for approximately 25 minutes.

## Serve

Serve with salad or vegetables.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Cooked chicken or canned salmon could be used instead of tuna.
2. Wheat germ or quick oats could replace breadcrumbs.

# Tuna And Sweet Corn Bake

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 – 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

4 - 6 x 425g cans tuna, drained

8 cups (800g) rice

10 eggs

4 onions, chopped

100g margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

10 T (100g) plain flour

3 litres fat reduced milk

250g reduced fat cheese, grated

½ kg corn kernels (frozen)

½ kg peas (frozen)

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Method

1. Place rice on to cook.
2. While the rice is cooking, hard boil the eggs. Remove eggs from the hot water as soon as they are cooked.
3. Melt margarine in a large saucepan, add onion and cook gently until soft. Remove from heat.
4. Stir in the flour and cook gently for 3 – 5 minutes. Remove from heat.
5. Stir in the milk and return to moderate heat. Stir continuously until the sauce comes to the boil. Turn heat down and boil gently for 2 – 3 minutes.
6. Add the drained tuna, chopped up hard cooked egg, peas, corn and  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the cheese to the sauce.
7. Pour sauce into a greased ovenproof dish, sprinkle with remainder of the grated cheese.
8. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) until heated and the cheese has melted.

## Serve

Serve with the rice, a salad and a slice of wholemeal bread spread with margarine.

## Helpful hints

1. Rice could be cooked the day before and refrigerated. Rice also freezes well so, rice could be cooked well ahead of time and frozen.
2. The eggs could be hard boiled and shelled the day before then refrigerated in an airtight container until needed.
3. If there is no oven space available, the sauce could be served directly onto or with the rice and then sprinkled with a small amount of the grated cheese. There is no real need for this dish to be reheated in the oven.
4. If possible, choose tuna canned in spring water as this will reduce salt content of recipe.



# Tuna Mornay

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 – 40 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

4 - 6 x 425g cans tuna, drained

3 x 420g cans of asparagus soup or chicken soup (concentrate, not 'ready to eat')

2 x 400g cans of chopped tomatoes

4 onions, chopped or grated

3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1 cup fresh wholemeal breadcrumbs

2 cups grated cheese

2 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ kg wholemeal pasta

## Method

1. Fry onion in the oil until it is soft.
2. Rub the margarine into the breadcrumbs then mix with the grated cheese.
3. Combine the onions, soup, chopped tomatoes and the tuna.
4. Place the mixture into greased ovenproof dishes and sprinkle with the breadcrumb and cheese mix.
5. Place into a moderate oven (180°C) for about 30 minutes or until heated through.
6. Cook the pasta while the mornay is in the oven heating through.

## Serve

Serve with side salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. If possible, choose tuna canned in spring water to reduce the salt content.
2. Two slices of bread makes about 1 cup of breadcrumbs.
3. Wheat germ could be used instead of breadcrumbs.
4. Canned salmon could be used instead of tuna.
5. Cooked chicken could be used instead of canned fish.
6. If consistency of mornay is too thick, add a little milk.
7. Vegetables could be served instead of a side salad.
8. Vegetables could be incorporated into the mornay along with the tuna etc.

# Tuscan Beef Casserole

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** : 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1½ hours

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**

## Ingredients

2¾ kg stewing steak e.g. round or blade (cubed)	1 cup chopped parsley
3 onions, chopped	5 cups beef stock
10 potatoes cut into chunks	4 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)
½ bunch celery, sliced	8 T plain flour
5 carrots cut into bite-sized pieces	2 – 3 T crushed garlic
2 cups peas	¾ cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')
300g mushrooms, sliced	3 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
1 x 400g can butter beans	
1 cup red lentils (uncooked)	

## Method

1. Prepare vegetables and cut up the meat.
2. Dust the meat in half the flour.
3. Heat the oil, add the garlic then brown the meat in batches.
4. Set the meat aside and lightly sauté (fry) the onion until soft. Remove from pan.
5. Melt margarine in the pan (along with the remaining oil). Remove from heat and stir in the remaining flour. Return to heat and cook for about 1 minute, stir all the time.
6. Remove from heat and slowly stir in the stock. Return to heat and bring to the boil stirring all the time.
7. Add meat and all the vegetables except the peas. Simmer, lid on for 1 – 1½ hours or until tender.
8. Add the peas 5 minutes before serving.

## Helpful hints

1. Potato could be cooked separately and mashed. Cook approximately 4kg potatoes if mashing. The amount could vary according to the age and appetite of the children.
2. Browning meat in batches will make browning easier.
3. For extra flavour, the onions could be fried until they are lightly browned.
4. This dish could be cooked in the oven as a casserole or in a slow cooker. Extra time may be needed (especially if a slow cooker is used).
5. Other vegetables could be used e.g. pumpkin, sweet potato and corn.
6. If purchasing stock look for 'reduced salt' or 'no added salt' varieties.

# Vegetable And Meat Strudel

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 minutes (approximately)

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Vegetables = 1 serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

2 – 3 packets of filo pastry

2 ¾ kg good quality beef mince

4 eggs, beaten

1 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

½ cup fresh parsley, chopped

1 cup chutney or tomato sauce

4 cups diced potato

4 cups diced sweet potato

4 cups of other vegetables such as frozen corn kernels

## Method

1. Heat the oil in a pan and brown the meat for at least 10 minutes.
2. Steam the vegetables until they are tender.
3. Mash the vegetables, add the sauce or chutney, chopped parsley then the beaten eggs.
4. Combine the mashed vegetable with the cooked meat.
5. Make individual strudel parcels using 2 sheets of filo pastry for each parcel and about half a cup of filling.
6. Place onto a greased tray (or a tray covered with baking paper) and place into moderate oven for about 10 minutes.

## Helpful hints

1. One cup of grated cheese could be added to the vegetables.
2. Other minced meat could be used instead of beef.
3. Using double thickness of filo for each parcel will help prevent the filo pastry from 'tearing'. This could be done by folding one sheet of filo in half or using 2 sheets depending on the amount of filling that is put into each parcel.
4. There is no need to oil or 'butter' between the sheets of filo pastry.
5. Prevent pastry sheets from drying out by covering with a slightly damp tea towel or plastic wrap.
6. Boxes or packets of filo pastry contain approximately 20 sheets.

# Vegetable Lentil Bolognese

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 40 – 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** approximately 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 3 x 440g cans brown lentils (6 cups when drained)
- 2 onions, diced
- 5 zucchinis, scrubbed and grated
- 5 carrots, grated
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup tomato paste (look for 'no added salt')
- 2 x 800 g cans tomatoes (chopped or pureed)
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup tomato sauce
- 1 T mixed dried herbs
- 1 T garlic (optional)
- 2 cups reduced fat cheese, grated
- 1½ kg wholemeal pasta
- 4 T oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Brown onion in oil, add garlic, zucchini and carrot.
2. Add lentils and all remaining ingredients. Simmer gently for 30 – 40 minutes.
3. While Bolognese is simmering, cook the pasta.
4. Place cooked Bolognese into a serving dish and sprinkle with the grated cheese.

## Serve

Serve with the pasta and a side salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. The zucchini and carrot could be replaced with about 6 cups of other vegetables such as grated sweet potato or frozen corn kernels and peas.
2. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  a cup of chopped fresh herbs could be used instead of the 1 T of mixed dried herbs. This is an opportunity to use fresh herbs from the garden.
3. Parsley alone would be fine or, parsley with basil.
3. Other legumes such as cooked/canned butter beans, kidney beans or lima beans can be substituted for the brown lentils.

# Vegetable Slice

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes

**Cooking time:** approximately 1 hour

## Ingredients

- 4 onions, chopped or grated
- 200g lean ham, chopped
- 6 carrots, grated
- 6 zucchini, washed and grated (skin on)
- 2 capsicums, chopped
- ½ bunch celery, chopped
- 3 cups (300g) reduced fat cheese, grated
- ½ kg frozen corn kernels
- 1 x 400g can red kidney beans, drained
- 5 cups wholemeal self raising flour
- 20 eggs, beaten
- 1½ cups reduced fat milk

## Method

1. Mix together the beaten egg and milk then combine with all other ingredients.
2. Pour mixture into greased baking dishes and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 1 hour or until firm.

## Serve

Serve with wholemeal bread spread with margarine and salad.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1½ serves**  
**Cereal Foods = 1½ serves**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Corn could be replaced with peas and spinach could also be used.
2. Red kidney beans could be replaced with any other canned (or cooked) legumes such as chick peas, butter beans, bean mix or haricot beans.
3. Remove the ham to make a vegetarian option.

# Zucchini Slice

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 45 minutes – 1 hour

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

- 2 kg zucchini, washed
- 4 onions, chopped
- 500g lean ham, chopped
- 3 cups (300g) reduced fat cheese, grated
- 3 cups self raising, wholemeal flour
- 2 cups corn kernels (frozen)
- 2 cups peas (frozen)
- 24 eggs, beaten

## Method

1. Grate the unpeeled zucchinis.
2. Combine all ingredients and pour into greased, ovenproof dishes.
3. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 - 40 minutes.

## Serve

Serve with wholemeal bread spread with margarine.

Per child, this recipe provides:  
**Vegetables = 1 serve**  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**  
This includes the 'serve with' suggestions.

## Helpful hints

1. Vegetables other than corn and peas could be used e.g. grated pumpkin, grated sweet potato or finely diced capsicum.
2. Serve with a garden salad.
3. Remove ham for a vegetarian option.
4. Add herbs such as chopped thyme or parsley for added flavour.

# Banana Bread

**Serves:** 20 pieces

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 – 30 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = 1 serve

## Ingredients

- 2 cup refined self raising flour
- 2 cup wholemeal self raising flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 3 cups infant rice cereal (iron enriched)
- 1 cup wheat germ
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 6 T golden syrup
- 4 eggs
- 4 large ripe bananas (or 6 smaller ones)
- 2 cup reduced fat milk
- ½ cup oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 2 cups sultanas or chopped dates (optional)

## Method

1. Combine all the dry ingredients (flour, cereal, wheat germ, brown sugar and baking powder). Mix well and make sure that there are no lumps. If using sultanas or chopped dates, add now.
2. Beat the eggs and add the mashed banana, golden syrup, milk and oil. Stir and add to the dry ingredients. Mix well.
3. Grease and line the base of cake tin(s), then spoon mixture into them.
4. Bake in a slightly lower than moderate oven (170°C) to help prevent over browning or burning. Cook for 20 – 30 minutes. Test with a skewer to make sure the centre of the banana bread is cooked.

# Banana Pudding

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

## Ingredients

250ml oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1 cup sugar

800ml orange juice

7 eggs, beaten

3 cups refined self raising flour

3 cups wholemeal self raising flour

12 small bananas, sliced

## Method

1. Beat the oil, sugar and juice together then add the beaten eggs and mix well.
2. Fold in the flour.
3. Stir through the sliced bananas.
4. Pour into greased baking dishes and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 minutes.

## Serve

Serve warm with custard.

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Fruit = ½ serve**  
**Cereal Foods = ½ serve**  
This includes the 'serve  
with' suggestions.



# Date Loaf

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 15 minutes

**Cooking time:** 1 hour – 1¼ hours

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

4 cups dates

2 cups water

4 eggs, beaten

½ cup golden syrup

½ cup orange juice

4 cups self raising wholemeal flour

2 tsp. cinnamon

## Method

1. Combine dates and water in a saucepan and simmer gently for about 5 minutes or until dates have softened and blended in with the water. Stir from time to time.
2. Allow the date mixture to cool.
3. Combine the beaten eggs, golden syrup and orange juice then add to the cooled dates.
4. Gently fold in the flour, do not over mix.
5. Pour into two greased, lined loaf tins and bake in a slightly lower than moderate oven (170°C) for about one hour. Test with a skewer to make sure the centre of loaf is cooked.
6. Turn out onto a cake cooler. Slice when cold.

## Helpful hints

1. Two cups of grated carrot could be added.
2. Could be cooked in mini muffin tins. Reduce the cooking time.
3. If cooking in a loaf tin, to prevent over browning, the temperature may have to be reduced a little in the second half of the cooking time.
4. Cutting dates in half (using scissors) will speed up softening and help ensure there are no seeds.

# Fruit Crumble

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 – 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 20 – 30 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve

## Ingredients

3 x 800g cans solid pack (pie) apples

1 cup plain wholemeal flour

1 cup wheat germ

1 cup rolled oats

1 cup coconut

1 cup brown sugar

200g margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

## Method

1. Place fruit in oven dishes.
2. Mix dry ingredients together.
3. Melt margarine and pour over all the dry ingredients and mix well.
4. Sprinkle crumble over the fruit and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 15 minutes.

## Serve

Serve with custard.

## Helpful hints

1. Any fruit could be used instead of apple.
2. If canned fruit in natural juice is used, consider that most of the liquid will need to be drained off. This will mean that more than 3 cans of fruit will be needed.
3. Stewed, fresh or dried fruit would also be suitable.

# Fruit Sponge Pudding

**Serves:** 40 children

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 – 40 minutes

## Ingredients

5 eggs, beaten

250ml oil (sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ cups sugar

2 cups reduced fat milk

2 cups refined self raising flour

3 cups wholemeal self raising flour

3 x 825g cans fruit (in natural juice)

## Method

1. Drain most of the liquid from the fruit.
2. Combine egg, oil and sugar and beat well.
3. Fold the milk and the flour through the egg mix.
4. Place fruit into a large baking dish and cover with the sponge batter.
5. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 – 40 minutes or until cooked when tested with a skewer.

## Serve

Serve with yoghurt or custard.

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Fruit = ½ serve  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

# Iron Rich Muffins

**Serves:** 40 cupcakes

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

¾ cup margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

½ cup sugar

3 T golden syrup

4 eggs, beaten

1½ cups reduced fat milk

2 cups iron fortified infant cereal

1 cup wholemeal self raising flour

2 cups refined self raising flour

Vanilla to taste

## Method

1. Cream together the margarine, sugar and golden syrup.
2. Gradually add the beaten eggs.
3. Gently stir in the milk.
4. Fold through the combined flour and cereal.
5. Spoon into patty papers or well greased cupcake tins.
6. Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about 15 minutes. Test with a skewer.

## Helpful hints

1. The mixture can be cooked as a slab cake then cut into the 40 serve size pieces.
2. This mixture can also be used to make a fruit upside down cake.
3. If making a slab cake or a fruit upside down cake with the mixture, the oven temperature will need to be between 150°C and 170°C. The cooking time will be approximately 20 – 30 minutes. Test with a skewer.
4. All wholemeal self raising flour could be used.
5. For variety, try adding some dried fruit like sultanas.

# Weetbix<sup>TM</sup> Slice

**Serves:** 40 serve size pieces

**Preparation time:** 20 minutes

**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
Cereal Foods = ½ serve

## Ingredients

3 cups self raising wholemeal flour

12 Weetbix<sup>TM</sup>, well crushed

2 cups wheat germ

2 cups Milo<sup>TM</sup>

2 cups sultanas

10 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)

1½ cup brown sugar

2 T golden syrup

4 eggs

## Method

1. Grease a baking tin (approximately 20 x 28 cm) and line the bottom of the tin.
2. Combine the flour, wheat germ, crushed Weetbix<sup>TM</sup>, sultanas and Milo<sup>TM</sup> in a mixing bowl.
3. Melt margarine, brown sugar and golden syrup together (warm only, don't allow to become hot).
4. Stir the beaten eggs and the margarine together then pour into the dry ingredients and mix well.
5. Lightly press the mixture into the prepared baking tin.
6. Bake at 150°C for 20 – 30 minutes. Cut into squares while still warm but leave to cool in the tin.  
This slice is soft when it is first removed from the oven but will firm up as it cools.

## Serve

Don't cook for longer than 30 minutes or slice may become too hard when cold.

## Helpful hints

Other chocolate flavourings or powders cannot replace the Milo<sup>TM</sup>. The Milo<sup>TM</sup> is included to provide iron.

# Wholemeal Cheese Scones

**Serves:** 40 scones (approximately)

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes

**Cooking time:** 15 minutes

Per child, this  
recipe provides:  
**Cereal Foods = 1 serve**

## Ingredients

- 4 cups refined self raising flour
- 4 cups wholemeal self raising flour
- 4 T margarine (based on sunflower, canola or olive oil)
- 2 cups (200g) grated reduced fat cheese
- 2 cups reduced fat milk
- 4 eggs

## Method

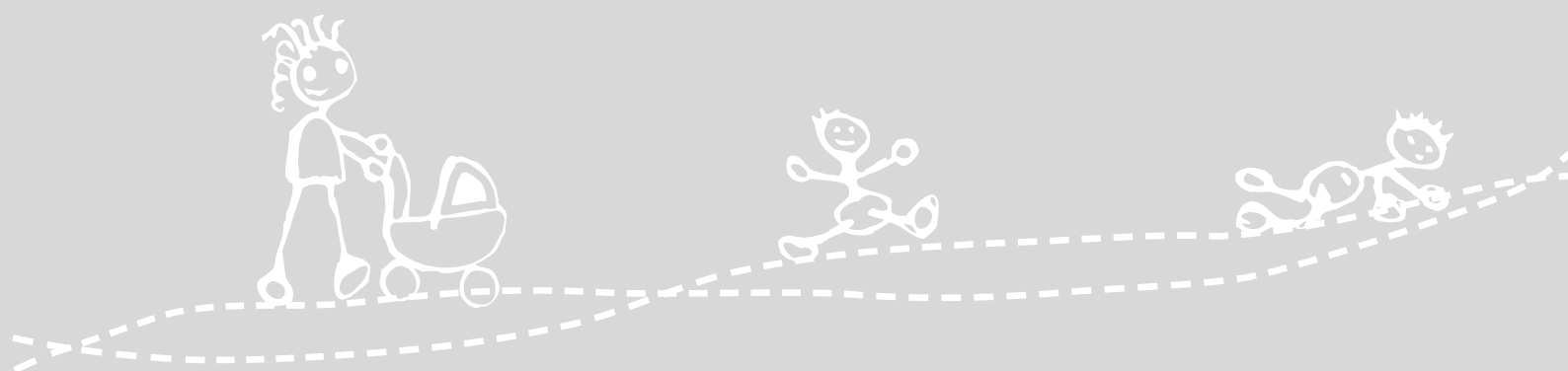
1. Beat eggs and milk together.
2. Rub margarine into combined flours then add grated cheese.
3. Stir the combined egg and milk into the flour to make a soft dough.
4. Lightly knead dough on a lightly floured surface.
5. Pat dough out to approximately 2cm thick.
6. Cut with a sharp, lightly floured cutter or knife into at least 40 scones.
7. Place onto a greased tray and bake in a hot oven (200°C - 220°C) for 10 – 15 minutes.

## Helpful hints

1. Two cups of sultanas could be added (before adding the milk and egg).
2. If dough is too sticky to knead, divide the mixture between 2 greased loaf tins and bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 30 – 40 minutes or until cooked. Cool before slicing.
3. Dough could be cooked as a damper.
4. Instead of using a scone cutter, pat dough out to about 2cm thick then, using a sharp, floured knife, cut into square (or rectangle) scones.
5. Scones freeze well.

## Section 4

### Making it Happen







## Supporting Ongoing Improvement to Nutrition Practices of Services

Introducing new nutrition practices or improving those that currently exist should occur as part of routine quality improvement processes that are consistent with the National Quality Framework. The aim of this section is to describe each step of a continuous quality improvement process and how it can be used to improve your nutrition practices consistent with *Caring for Children* recommendations. If documented, the steps will also assist in providing evidence for demonstrating achievements and goals in the areas of child health and wellbeing (NQS Quality Area 2.2.2), and can contribute to your Quality Improvement Plan.

**Figure 1: Supporting Continuous Quality Improvement**



### Step 1: Review current practice and identify needs

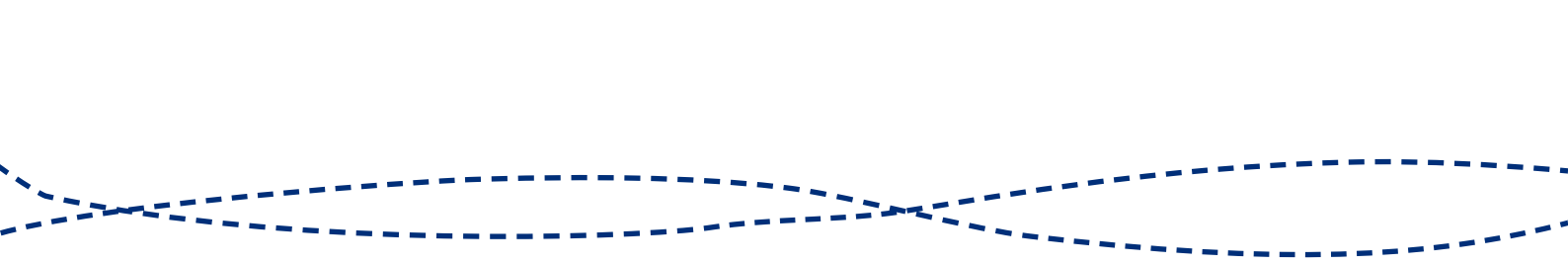
Review the *Caring for Children* resource to assess how your current nutrition practices align with those recommended. Consider what areas your service is doing well in, and record what areas require improvement. Some practices you could assess include:

#### **Policy**

- Are your nutrition policies consistent with *Caring for Children* recommendations?
- Are staff and families aware of service's food and nutrition policies?
- Do staff and families adhere to service food and nutrition policies?

#### **Food and drinks**

- For services preparing food, is the content of menus consistent with nutrition guidelines; are menus reviewed regularly?

- 
- e. For services where food is brought from home, are there service guidelines or policies regarding the type and amount of foods families should pack to meet *Caring for Children* recommendations; are families aware of these; do you have processes/ guidelines/strategies to support families to pack healthy foods?
  - f. Are staff practices and service policies regarding food safety and special dietary requirements consistent with *Caring for Children* recommendations?

#### **Nutrition environment**

- g. Do educators role model healthy eating to children?
- h. Do educators make positive statements regarding healthy eating during meal time?
- i. Do educators use non- food rewards to recognise positive behaviour?

#### Step 2: Plan for change

Good planning will increase the likelihood that efforts to change service nutrition practices will be achieved. Following the review of current practices (step 1):

1. Prioritise and set achievable goals to improve identified practices.
2. Consider any barriers that need to be overcome and what actions may need to be taken to address these. For example, you may need to clarify roles, seek training or learning opportunities, communicate expectations to educators or families, devise new policies, implement reminders or develop resources.
3. Record in an Action or Quality Improvement Plan the goal, the actions that need to take place, when actions are to be completed and by whom (Table 4).
4. Involve the nominated supervisor, educators, cooks and where appropriate families in planning the goal. Reach consensus on which practice to improve and how this will be achieved. This could be done during routine staff or parent meetings.

**Table 4: Example Action Plan or Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) for nutrition practices**

MQS/EYLF – Standard / Element	What outcome or goal do we seek?	Priority (L/M/H)	How will we get this outcome (Steps)	By who	By when	Achieved
Standard 2.2 Element 2.2.1	Provide only non-sweetened drinks and reduced fat milk for children in the 3-5 year old rooms.	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Amend service food and nutrition policy to support the provision of reduced fat milk to children 3-5 years</li> <li>Change milk order to replace full fat with reduced fat</li> <li>Communicate change in milk provision to families through newsletter</li> <li>Educators to provide only non-sweetened drinks and reduced fat milk to children</li> </ul>	Nominated supervisor  Cook  Admin  All staff	6th June  21st June  9th June  25th June	

*\*\* This table is based on the NQF Quality Improvement Plan template*



### Step 3: Implement

Undertake the actions documented in your Action or Quality Improvement Plan. As introducing change can be difficult:

- Have the support and endorsement of nominated supervisors for any changes in nutrition practices.
- Allow sufficient time for change and acknowledge that implementation of nutrition practices may not be perfect from the beginning.
- Communicate any changes, and the rationale for these changes to service practices to staff and families.
- Integrate nutrition practices into existing service processes such as programming and child and staff orientation procedures.
- Monitor implementation progress to ensure completion of tasks documented in Action Plans.

### Step 4: Reflect and evaluate

Reflection and evaluation will enable your service to learn from the successes and challenges of efforts to improve nutrition practices. Such learning will increase the likelihood of successful implementation into the future. Key to reflection and evaluation is the collection of information to assess whether the desired changes to service nutrition policies or practices have occurred. Using this information:

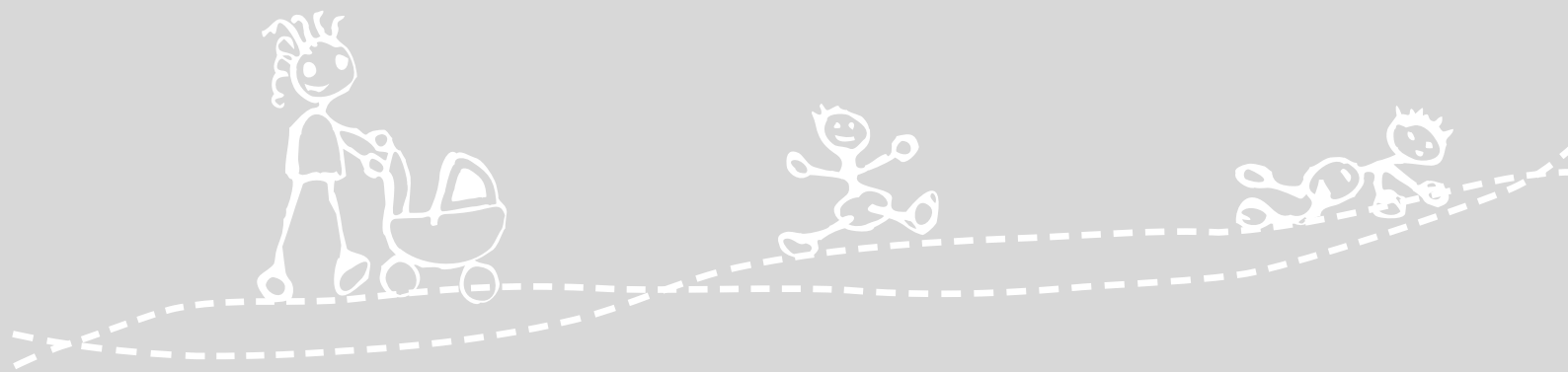
1. Make an objective judgment about the success of efforts to change the nutrition practice or policy documented in the Action or Quality Improvement Plan. Record this in your plan.
2. Seek feedback from relevant staff or families about the change process (i.e. what worked well and what opportunities there are for further improvement). This could also occur at staff meetings.
3. Identify if there are opportunities for further improvement, re-set goals and attempt again practice change or if the practice or policy has been implemented adopt new goals (Step 1).
4. Monitor the on-going implementation of practices to ensure that these are sustained.

#### **An ongoing process....**

The process for bringing about change (see Figure 1) is cyclic, and therefore is a continuous process. Your service should continue to review, plan, implement and evaluate on an ongoing basis to ensure that nutrition practices are improved and improvements are maintained.

## Section 5

### Healthy Eating Learning Experiences





## Healthy Eating Learning Experiences

Learning experiences involving food and healthy eating will encourage children to develop a range of skills as well as their knowledge of food.

At this young age we are aiming for children to develop a positive and relaxed attitude to food and eating rather than creating too many rules and taboos around food. So it is important that discussions with young children about food focus on the positive and avoid describing and categorising food or specific nutrients (e.g. sugar, fat) as 'good' or 'bad', focus on food groups and use the terms 'every day' and 'sometimes' foods.



The healthy eating learning experiences outlined below are designed to encourage cooks (and educators) to promote children's exploration, awareness and enjoyment of healthy eating from a young age. Also these ideas provide cooks with the opportunity to get involved with the children.

Foods from a variety of cultures should be included, particularly those cultures represented at your service.

### **Suggested learning experiences:**

- Food Cupboard - make a food cupboard out of a large piece of cardboard by folding both of the side edges of the cardboard in to meet each other at the centre. These will form the doors of the cupboard. Inside, make shelves which will hold food pictures. Just stick in pieces of clear plastic to form pockets. Food pictures can be glued on to a cardboard backing for durability. The children can then stack the shelves with food pictures and take foods out of the cupboard to make imaginary meals. This activity could be used to make children aware of a variety of foods so try to include a range of healthy food options.
- Gardening - use gardening activities to explain how foods grow. Create a fruit and vegetable garden with children participating and observing the plants growing. Tomatoes, radishes, sweet corn, cucumber, carrots and herbs are easy to grow. Children could plant seeds in individual pots labelled with their own name. When plants are large enough, transplant into the garden and when ready, harvest for children to eat at snack time or use in lunch recipes. Seedlings with some instructions may be available to families to take home and plant in a box or garden. Around harvest time, include some of the harvest foods on the menu or for taste testing.
- A 'hands-on' healthy cooking experiences is the best way to encourage children to eat healthy snacks and to involve them in the preparation and cooking (or making if no kitchen is available) of them. Being able to prepare and cook is a great skill to have and lots of fun.

- Discuss healthy eating with the children at mealtimes, offer a range of foods from different cultures, involve children in setting up the lunch area as a restaurant, create a healthy lunch book that includes recipes and food photos and children's conversations.
- Explore the various senses associated with fruits and vegetables, such as smell, touch, colour, taste, texture and sound. Compare raw vegetables and fresh fruit to cooked vegetables and stewed fruit. For example fresh apple or stewed apple, raw and cooked carrots.
- Explore vegetables or fruits in season - ask the children if they know the name of the fruit/vegetable, have they tasted it before and talk about the colour, taste and the different ways it can be eaten.
- Prepare morning tea or afternoon tea foods that are different shades of one colour such as cucumber, green apples, celery, Chinese cabbage, avocado and green capsicums.
- Consider planning taste a rainbow weeks – featuring fruit and vegetables for different colours of the rainbow.
- Have a compost bin or worm farm at your service to show the children how food scraps can be recycled and what foods are appropriate to feed your worms (i.e. vegetable and fruit peelings).

## Development of Co-ordination and Motor Skills

By helping to prepare food for eating, children can develop and refine various co-ordination and motor skills.

Food handling skills will need to be tailored to the level of muscular development of the young child. Consider the choice of kitchen tools appropriate to each child.

Plan experiences that will minimise adult participation. Adults should be prepared to give positive instruction or provide hints on how to get the job done.

### **Two Year Olds**

Big muscles, for example the arm:

- Scrubbing, wiping, mopping – vegetables, bench tops, floors.
- Tear, break, snap – lettuce, cauliflower, green beans.
- Dipping – use fresh fruit and vegetables from the tear, break and snap activity.

### **Three Year Olds**

Medium muscles, for example the hand:

- Wrapping vegetables in foil for baking.
- Pouring liquid into sink or sand base to begin with. As skill develops children could pour liquid from a jug into a tumbler. Mark the side of the tumbler to show children when to stop pouring. Children should clean up their own spills.



- Mixing easy-to-mix batters.
- Shaking – use a small jar to shake whipping cream until butter is produced. Shake coconut and food colouring in a jar to tint coconut.
- Spreading – use a dull knife or spatula to spread bread.

#### **Four Year Olds**

Small muscles, for example the fingers:

- Peeling – oranges, mandarins, bananas.
- Rolling – a round shape between two hands such as meat balls, dough balls.
- Juicing – using a hand squeezer.
- Mashing – use forks or hand held mashers (not electric) to mash vegetables or fruit.

#### **Five Year Olds**

Fine co-ordination:

- Measuring – using spoons and scales (show them how to pour out ingredients you've already measured, start with small amounts of dry ingredients before moving to wet ingredients).
- Cutting – using dull knives and semi-soft foods such as bananas, cooked potato and cheese.
- Grating – using a hand held upright grater to grate cheese and vegetables (watch their fingers closely so that they don't get cut or scraped).
- Peeling – e.g. carrots. Show children how to safely angle a peeler downward to remove the skin.
- Eggs - cracking and beating eggs with a fork (show them how to gently tap the shell to crack the surface and use their thumbs to pull apart the shell).

#### **Don't forget children can also help:**

- set and clear the table
- clean up – scrape the plates into the bin and stack
- collect the ingredients and equipment and put them away.

#### **Social Skills**

Learning to share, serve food and eat food in an acceptable manner are social skills that may be encouraged and developed at meal time.

Don't forget food experiences that are related to season and celebrations. Include food celebration experiences of different cultures and religions particularly those represented in your service.

Perhaps this would be an ideal opportunity to involve families and the community.

Explore inviting a different family to lunch, when a child's family enjoys a meal at the service with their child.

## Vocabulary Skills

By using the correct terms for equipment, food and food processes, children are able to increase their vocabulary.

## Hygiene and Safety

Encourage positive hygiene habits such as:

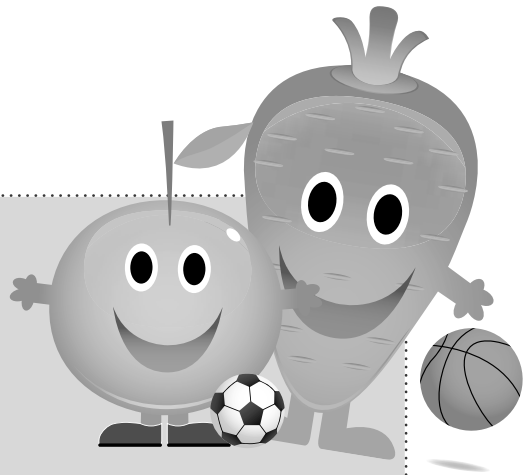
- Washing and drying hands before eating or preparing foods.
- Washing fruit and vegetables before eating or cooking.
- Cleaning up after preparing and eating food.
- Try singing to the tune of 'Mary Had a Little Lamb' the following:  
    "Now it is clean up time, clean up time, clean up time.  
    Now it is clean up time and I will need your help"
- Remember cleaning up should be a part of any experience.

Care should be taken when using actual food in learning experiences:

- Be aware of children with food allergies, food intolerances and special diets.
- Ensure no poisonous parts of fruits or vegetables are used or consumed, including:
  - tomatoes (avoid any green parts - leaves and vines are toxic\*)
  - rhubarb (the leaf blade is toxic)
  - stone fruit (apricot, cherry, peach, plum – the kernel is poisonous)
  - avocado (leaves are toxic\*)
  - potatoes (green skin, green flesh, sprouts, stems and leaves are toxic)
  - take care not to use flowers or plants as decorations on plates or tables that can be highly toxic.
- Some foods may present a choking risk. Cooks and educators need to consider the age and individual ability of the children when undertaking food-based learning experiences.
- Safe food handling requirements must be maintained at all times for staff and children.
- Choose food experiences that limit children's contact with heat or sharp implements.

**Note for toxic\*:** Most of these substances that are toxic need a child to consume a large amount. Generally these substances taste bitter and are unappealing to eat for both adults and children.

# Make your own Fruit Clown Face



## Materials

- Paper plates, 1 per child
- A variety of fresh fruit such as pineapple, blueberries, bananas, kiwi fruit, strawberries, oranges, rockmelon and raisins
- Small bowls
- Reduced fat yoghurt, to use as a dip
- Serving spoons

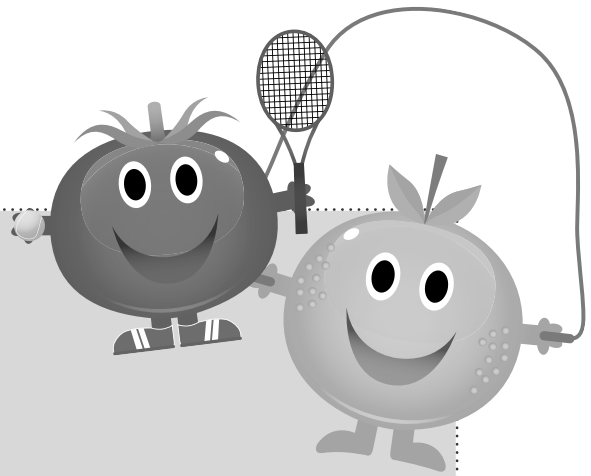
## Prepare beforehand

1. Rinse and cut the fruit into pieces.
2. Make your own Fruit Clown Face as an example.
3. Pour the yoghurt dip into small bowls for sharing. Place a spoon in each bowl.

## With the children

1. Set out cut fruits and materials on a table where children can reach.
2. Ask children to use as many different fruits as they can to make their own Fruit Clown Face.
3. When children are finished, ask them to share their Fruit Clown Face with the class. Ask questions like:
  - o What colours and shapes are the fruits you chose? Do you know their names?
  - o Which of your own clown's fruit are you most excited to eat?
  - o Which of your clown's fruits have you never tried before?
  - o Why is your Fruit Clown Face good for you to eat?
4. Pass out the yoghurt dip. Invite children to eat and enjoy their Fruit Clown Faces.

# Make your own Veggie Super Hero



## Materials

- Paper plates, 1 per child
- A variety of washed vegetables (e.g. 1 head of broccoli, 2 zucchinis, 1 small can of corn, 1 small can of sliced olives, 2 red peppers, 1 bunch celery and 3-4 whole carrots)
- Small bowls
- Hommus, to use as a dip

## Prepare beforehand

1. Rinse and cut the broccoli into small florets; the zucchini into round slices; the red peppers into thin strips and then in half; the celery into 3-inch stalks; and the carrots into 2-inch strips.
2. Drain the corn and olives.
3. Make your own Veggie Super Hero as an example.
4. Pour hommus into small bowls for sharing. Place a spoon in each bowl.

## With the children

1. Set out cut vegetables and materials on a table where children can reach them.
2. Ask children to use as many different types of veggies as they can to create their own Veggie Super Hero. Have them give their hero a name.
3. When children are finished, ask them to share their Super Hero with the class.  
Ask questions like:
  - o What is your Super Hero's name? What are his/her super powers?
  - o What colours and shapes are the veggies you chose? Do you know their names?
  - o Why did you choose the veggies you did?
  - o Which of these veggies have you eaten before? Did you enjoy them?
  - o Will this be the first time you are trying any of these veggies? Which ones?
4. Pass out the hommus. Invite children to eat and enjoy their Veggie Super Heroes.

## Resources

### General Nutrition

- **Eat for Health – Australian Dietary Guidelines**, 2013, Commonwealth of Australia: [www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)
- **Healthy Kids website** is a joint initiative of NSW Health, the Heart Foundation, NSW Sport and Recreation and NSW Department of Education and Communities. This site provides supportive information on promoting healthy eating for children as well as information and resources related to the *Munch & Move* program: [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)
- **Munch & Move resources:** [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-resources.aspx)
- **Get Up & Grow resources.** The Commonwealth Government have developed a comprehensive set of resources entitled *Get up and Grow* designed to be used in a wide range of early childhood settings by families, educators and carers. [www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources](http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-early-childhood-nutrition-resources)
- **Go for 2&5** is an Australian Government, State and Territory health initiative, promoting the good health benefits of eating fruit and vegetables. This site includes many fruit and vegetable recipes: [www.gofor2and5.com.au](http://www.gofor2and5.com.au)
- **Sydney Markets – Fresh for Kids.** This website provides information on healthy eating for children with a focus on fruit and vegetables and healthy lunchbox and snack ideas: [www.freshforkids.com.au](http://www.freshforkids.com.au)
- **Raising Children** website and resources. This Australian parenting website supported by the Australian Government offers information for families on healthy eating for children: [www.raisingchildren.net.au](http://www.raisingchildren.net.au)
- **Kids Health, The Children’s Hospital at Westmead** provides fact sheets for families linking to children’s healthy eating, allergies, special diets and oral care: [www.chw.edu.au/parents/factsheets](http://www.chw.edu.au/parents/factsheets)
- **Nutrition Australia website:** [www.nutritionaustralia.org.au](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org.au)
  - o Healthy Food for Families (cookbook)
  - o Nutrition for Toddlers and Young Children
  - o Publications on a variety of topics
- The **Feeding and Eating Experts:** <http://www.ellynsatter.com/>

## Infant Nutrition

- **Australian Breastfeeding Association:** [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au).
- **Starting Family Foods** brochure. This NSW Health brochure is an easy guide for families on introducing solid foods to babies. A PDF version can be downloaded from the NSW Health website: [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)
- **Teach your baby to drink from a cup** brochure. This NSW Health brochure provides advice on how and when to teach baby to drink from a cup [www.health.nsw.gov.au](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Dental Health

- **Australian Dental Association** website provides information about dental health: [www.ada.org.au](http://www.ada.org.au)
- **Centre for Oral Health Strategy:** [www.health.nsw.gov.au/topics/oral.asp](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/topics/oral.asp)

## Food Allergies and Intolerance

- **Anaphylaxis Australia** website provides resources: [www.allergyfacts.org.au](http://www.allergyfacts.org.au)
- **Royal Prince Alfred Hospital Allergy Unit** Resources [www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/rpa/allergy/](http://www.sswahs.nsw.gov.au/rpa/allergy/)
- **The Children's Hospital Westmead**, Allergy Factsheets [www.kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets](http://www.kidshealth.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/fact-sheets)
- **Australian Society for Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI):** [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)
  - Prevention of Anaphylaxis in Schools, Preschools and Childcare: 2012 update
  - Action Plans for Anaphylaxis
  - Infant Feeding Advice
  - Anaphylaxis E-Training
- To order auto injection training devices:
  - EpiPen trainers: email [alphapharmss@alphapharm.com.au](mailto:alphapharmss@alphapharm.com.au)
  - Anapen trainers: email [info@analert.com](mailto:info@analert.com)
- **Food Intolerance Network:** [www.fedup.com.au/](http://www.fedup.com.au/)
- **The Gut Foundation Information** on Milk Intolerance and Milk Allergy: [www.gutfoundation.com/publications-1/milk-allergy-and-intolerance-in-children-2003](http://www.gutfoundation.com/publications-1/milk-allergy-and-intolerance-in-children-2003)

## Special Diets

Information can be obtained from the following organisations in your state or territory:

- Asthma Australia
- Kidney Health Australia
- Children's Hospital
- Coeliac Australia
- Cystic Fibrosis Federation, Australia
- Diabetes Australia
- Hyperactivity Attention Deficit Association NSW

## Safe Food Handling and Hygiene

- **NSW Food Authority.** [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/industry-sector-requirements/childrens-services/](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/industry-sector-requirements/childrens-services/)
- **Food Standards Australia New Zealand.** [www.foodstandards.gov.au/](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/)
- ***Staying Healthy. Preventing infectious diseases in early childhood education and care services.*** Fifth edition. 2012 (Updated June 2013) [www.nhmrc.gov.au](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au)

## Multicultural Resources

- **Ethnic Child Care Family and Community Services Co-operative Limited** [www.eccfcsc.org](http://www.eccfcsc.org)
- The **NSW Government's Human Services (Community Services)** website provides information booklets for Aboriginal families and carers on basic child development (birth to 5 years of age), including healthy eating and physical activity. There are 9 booklets representing Aboriginal regions throughout NSW: [www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents\\_carers\\_and\\_families/parenting/for\\_aboriginal\\_parents\\_and\\_carers.html](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au/parents_carers_and_families/parenting/for_aboriginal_parents_and_carers.html)

## Healthy Lunchboxes

- **The Magic Lunchbox** – resource for teachers  
A story book which teaches students about packing a healthy lunchbox for school. [www.healthpromotion.com.au/Magic\\_Lunchbox/MagicLunchbox\\_Index.html](http://www.healthpromotion.com.au/Magic_Lunchbox/MagicLunchbox_Index.html)
- Look under the 'Magic Lunchbox Resources' tab to find free education resources.
- **Healthy Kids NSW website:**
  1. Lunchbox ideas [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/parents-carers/healthy-eating-and-drinking/lunch-box-ideas.aspx](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/parents-carers/healthy-eating-and-drinking/lunch-box-ideas.aspx)
  2. *Munch & Move* Healthy Lunchbox factsheet [www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au)

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- **Healthy Kids Association** – Packing a healthy lunchbox  
[www.healthy-kids.com.au/parents/packing-a-healthy-lunchbox/](http://www.healthy-kids.com.au/parents/packing-a-healthy-lunchbox/)
  - **Better Health Channel** – Lunchboxes: Healthy shopping ideas. [www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcsite.nsf/pagesvideo/healthy\\_lunchbox\\_what\\_to\\_include?open](http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/bhcv2/bhcsite.nsf/pagesvideo/healthy_lunchbox_what_to_include?open)
  - **Packing a school lunchbox – Nutrition Australia DVD (15mins)**  
[www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/packing-school-lunchbox](http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/national/resource/packing-school-lunchbox)
  - **Weighing Up Your Lunch – interactive game**  
[www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/html/index.html?Open](http://www.goforyourlife.vic.gov.au/hav/articles.nsf/html/index.html?Open)  
(Go for Your Life -Victorian Government)
  - **Heart Foundation** Lunchbox Ideas [www.heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating/mums-united/healthy-eating/Pages/Lunchbox-ideas.aspx](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/healthy-eating/mums-united/healthy-eating/Pages/Lunchbox-ideas.aspx)
  - **Fresh for Kids** Healthy lunchbox ideas  
[www.freshforkids.com.au/lunch\\_box/lunch\\_box.html](http://www.freshforkids.com.au/lunch_box/lunch_box.html)



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## Appendix

### Alignment with the National Quality Framework

*The Education and Care Services National Regulations* require services to have a nutrition policy in place and, if the service provides food, a weekly menu must be displayed. Food and drinks provided by the service must be consistent with the recommended guidelines for education and care services in Australia, e.g. the *Get Up and Grow Guidelines* and/or the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.

The *National Quality Standard* includes a requirement that services promote healthy eating and physical activity in the program for children.

#### **Quality Area 2 - Children's health and safety**

Standard 2.2 - Healthy eating and physical activity are embedded in the program for children.

*Element 2.2.1 - Healthy eating is promoted and food and drinks provided by the service are nutritious and appropriate for each child.*

The ACECQA *Guide to the National Quality Standard* (pages 62-64) describes how Element 2.2.1 might be put into practice at the service and how it might be assessed. For example:

The Assessor may **observe**:

- educators:
  - o following the service's procedures for the safe storage and heating of food and drink, including breast milk
  - o creating a supportive environment for mothers to breastfeed
  - o feeding babies individually
  - o supporting toddlers to feed themselves independently
  - o providing furniture and utensils that are age appropriate and developmentally suitable to encourage children to be positively involved in and enjoy mealtimes
- children:
  - o being provided with adequate quantities of food that is consistent with the:
    - Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*, and/or
    - *Australian Dietary Guidelines*
  - o eating food that is consistent with advice provided by families about their child's dietary requirements, likes, dislikes and any cultural or other requirements families have regarding their child's nutrition
  - o being encouraged to eat healthy food without being required to eat food they don't like or to eat more than they want
  - o who have not eaten at the routine time or who are hungry being provided with food at times other than during routine meal and snack times

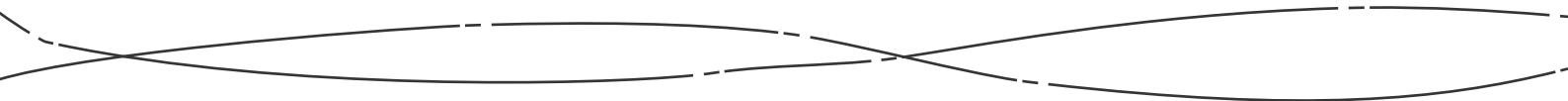
- o being provided with food and drinks consistent with the menu
- o having ready access to water and being regularly offered water throughout the day – both inside and outdoors
- adequate quantities of food available for children, sufficient quantities for children who may request more and quantities that are consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*
- babies being fed individually by educators
- educators following the service’s procedures for the safe storage and heating of food and drink, including breast milk
- a supportive environment for mothers to breastfeed
- toddlers being supported by educators to feed themselves independently.

The Assessor may **discuss with educators**:

- how the service:
  - o meets the needs of children with special dietary requirements
  - o consults with families to learn about children’s individual needs for food, their likes and dislikes in relation to food and any culturally appropriate food needs
- where food is brought from home, encourages families to provide food that is consistent with the:
  - o Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*, and/or
  - o *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.
- supports families’ choices regarding infant feeding, including breastfeeding and bottle feeding
- supports families who choose to breastfeed their child while they are at the service.

The Assessor may **sight**:

- the service’s health and safety policy, including nutrition, food and beverages and dietary requirements
- the service’s policy and procedures for managing medical conditions such as anaphylaxis
- written procedures for the safe storage and heating of food and drink, including babies’ bottles and breast milk
- resources for families on healthy eating and where to go to get further information
- written menus (where the service is responsible for providing food) on display detailing the foods provided for children that are consistent with the:
  - o Australian Government guidelines *Get Up & Grow: Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Early Childhood*, and/or
  - o *Australian Dietary Guidelines*
- furniture and utensils that are age appropriate and developmentally suitable to encourage children to be positively involved in and enjoy mealtimes

- 
- evidence that families are provided with daily information about their child's intake and experiences with food and drink
  - written procedures for the safe storage and heating of babies' bottles and breast milk.

**Note:** The examples provided are not exhaustive and a service may determine that it is able to meet the National Quality Standard in other ways than those described above. During the assessment process the service will need to demonstrate that its alternative approach achieves the same outcomes.





