Well actually it's what's in it that should be healthy not the box, unless your lunchbox has a secret life!

Your lunch should be a part of your balanced daily diet. Look up our topic "Balanced diet" if you haven't seen it.

Lunch is an important meal. As you are going to be in school for about 12 years of your life, you will certainly need to get some fresh ideas about what to make from time to time.

After all, the same boring food every day is, well…. boring!

**Important things to do**

If you are going to make your own lunch then here are some ideas to keep you safe, healthy and out of trouble.

**Do**

- Ask mum which food you can use (she may be planning to use just what you want).
- Wash your hands before you start.
- Use different chopping boards and knives for meat and vegetables.
- Get everything together that you are going to use.
- Wash and dry salad vegetables. Use a paper towel to dry them properly.
- (Soggy sandwiches are not too good, especially if you've been looking forward to a nice crisp lunch.)
- Use small knives - they are easier for you to manage.
- Clean as you go. You don’t want to be eating a ‘germ’ sandwich do you?
- Wash your hands if you do something different while you are making your lunch - for the same reason. Ask mum to help if you need to grate anything or use anything electrical, like a can opener or a blender.
- When you've finished, wrap the foods you have used or put lids on before you put them away.

**Lunch box ideas**

We are lucky to have such a wide range of foods nowadays.

People have come from all over the world to make their home in other countries and they have brought some wonderful foods with them.

**Bread**

You think that's boring? So look around the stores and bakeries and you'll find some very exciting things out there. Here are some of them:
> white sliced, fortified white, high fibre, brown, wholemeal, wheatmeal, rye, fruit, cheese and chives, pumpkin, pitta, Lebanese, brioche, mountain bread and heaps of others - so there is a big choice for you, and a chance to liven up your sandwich straight away.

**Fillings**

Remember how to avoid soggy sandwiches? Good because you wouldn't want to spoil these. Spreading a little butter or margarine on the bread will help keep the sandwich from getting soggy if you have a runny filling to put into it, but most sandwiches do not need a lot of butter or margarine.

If you are going to have fillings which are normally kept in the fridge, such as cooked meat, you need to be able to keep your sandwich cold. An icebrick or frozen drink can help with this.

> Cream cheese, chopped celery and sultanas.
> Grated carrot and cheese with 'lite' mayonnaise (mayo)
> Chopped cooked chicken and mayonnaise, with lettuce.
> Grated cheese and chopped celery, or carrot.
> Leftover roast meat with grated carrot, chopped lettuce and chutney or tomato sauce.
> Lean ham, sliced cheese and a pineapple ring (make sure you dry it well).
> Peanut butter and grated carrot. (Peanut butter is a very good food, but some kids are allergic to peanuts. Check with your teacher about whether there is a policy that asks children not to bring peanuts or peanut butter to school.)
> Vegemite**, cheese and tomato.
> Take a roll and a banana to eat together.
> Take a roll, a sliced boiled egg wrapped in food-wrap, and lettuce to build your sandwich when you are ready to eat it.
> Put your fillings inside Pitta bread or roll them inside Lebanese bread (Vegemite** tastes great in either of these)

*This is a good idea. Wrap any strong smelling foods separately then build your sandwich just when you're ready to eat it, or they tend to be a bit smelly by lunchtime.

**What else?**

> Use rice cakes, English muffins, crispbreads and cracker biscuits with cooked chicken drumsticks, cheese and apple, vegetable slice or leftovers and salads. (Remember that kids need energy, so don't use low energy rice cakes or crispbreads only, because they will not give you enough energy).
> Try to include a piece of fruit and a drink. Frozen water or juice can keep your lunch box cool in summer.
> If you want to drink milk at lunchtime you could freeze a tetra-pack milk drink (one in a sealed carton) or buy it from the school canteen as milk goes off pretty quickly - or you could freeze a small tub of yoghurt.
> You can make some special lunch box treats and freeze them for later.
Your family will probably have some favourite recipes but here are a couple of healthy lunches, which some children want to share with you.

**Kid's favourite lunches**

- A sandwich of multi-grain bread, with a filling of crunchy lettuce, a slice of cheese and mayonnaise.
- A banana
- A small piece of coconut.
- A few banana chips.
- A bottle of apple juice.

- Celery is great with cream cheese.
- A salad sandwich
- A bottle of water
- A green apple.

- 2 slices of high-fibre bread.
- A slice of cheese, 2 sardines, mayonnaise, a slice of tomato, lettuce, cucumber.
- A green apple.
- Orange juice.

- Lebanese bread with hommos and tabouli rolled up.
- Orange juice
- An apple

- Brown bread
- Left-over cold meat
- Tomato or tomato sauce
- Apple
- Water

- 4 Wholemeal biscuits
- Slice cheese
- Slice ham
- A small bowl of salad
- Orange
- Water.

- Raw fruit and vegies are good for your teeth.

What do you like to find in your lunchbox?

**Dr Kate says:**

Skipping lunch is not the way to keep you going through the day. Make a healthy lunch a part of eating healthy, being smart.

Can you choose healthy food at your school canteen?
'Go for 2 & 5 website'

Here you can find out about the benefits of fruit and vegies, nifty ways to get more fruit and vegies into your day, plus some super simple tasty recipes.