



# make a Healthy menu

A resource for children aged 2-5 years  
in Early Childhood Education & Care (ECEC) settings

This resource was  
developed by South  
Eastern Sydney  
Local Health District



# Acknowledgements:

Reproduced or modified material has been used with permission throughout the document. Sources have been referenced including:

- National Health and Medical Research Council, *Australian Dietary Guidelines*, 2013
- NSW Ministry of Health, *Caring for Children - Birth to 5 years (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences)*, 2014.
- NSW Ministry of Health, *Munch & Move Resource Manual - Birth to 5 years*, 2017
- NSW Ministry of Health, *The NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy*, 2017
- The Yummy Tummy Book, *Western NSW Local Health District Health Promotion Team*, 2018
- Hunter New England Local Health District, *Choosing Recipes - Baked Items*
- National Health and Medical Research Council, *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*, 2013
- Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, *Healthy Food for Babies & Toddlers*, 2013
- Vegemite - [www.vegemite.com.au/#recipes](http://www.vegemite.com.au/#recipes)
- Kidspot - [www.kidspot.com.au](http://www.kidspot.com.au)
- Commonwealth of Australia, *Get Up & Grow: Healthy eating and physical activity for early childhood. Cooking for Children*, 2009.



## About this resource

The *Make a Healthy Menu* guide is a simple resource for Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services to plan, create and review menus that are in line with *Caring for Children - Birth to 5 years (2014)* and the *Australian Dietary Guidelines (2013)*. This resource can be used alongside *Nutrition Checklist for Menu Planning* or *Two Week Menu Cycle Planning Tool from the Caring for Children - Birth to 5 years (2014)*. It offers an easy step-by-step guide to plan or review a menu with the support of nutrition-based information.

As more young children aged 0-5 years spend time in care, the ECEC settings can play a significant part in supporting healthy choices around nutrition. The *Make a Healthy Menu* guide addresses guidelines in the context of the early childhood setting and provides useful ideas to assist cooks, directors and educators in their role.

## National Quality Framework (NQF) and Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF)

This resource helps ECEC services meet areas of the NQF and EYLF. The program reflects parts of the National Quality Standard having strong links to Quality Area 2 - Children's Health and Safety and the Early Years Framework. In particular, Standard 2.1.3 relates to the provision of healthy food in ECEC services.

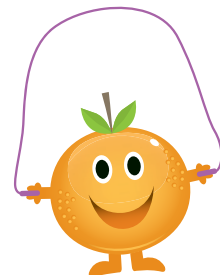
Education and care services that provide food and beverages to children must ensure that (according to the *National Law and Regulations 78-80*):

- The food or beverage provided is nutritious and adequate in quantity.
- The food or beverage provided must take into account the 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.

*Caring for Children - Birth to 5 years (Food, Nutrition and Learning Experiences), 2014*

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## 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 from birth to 5 years.

The 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 screen and get active

This resource supports the implementation of the three Munch key messages marked (\*) at ECEC services.



# Healthy eating for early childhood

Healthy eating in early childhood is essential as it provides children with the energy and nutrients to learn, play and grow. Starting good nutrition practices early can help children establish healthy behaviours to continue throughout life, as well as reducing the risk of developing chronic lifestyle-related diseases later in life.

## A bigger picture of why it matters



**1/3 of 2-3year-olds**  
have iron intakes below  
the recommended  
daily intake

**<1%**

**Less than 1%**  
of children eat the  
recommended daily  
amount of vegetables



**4 out of 5**  
children eat the  
recommended daily  
amount of fruit



**Over 1/3**  
children eat an unhealthy  
snack every day



**Only 1/10**  
children have  
reduced-fat milk

*National Nutrition Survey, 1995/1996*

*What NSW Children Eat and Drink, Report of the Chief Health Officer 2017: NSW Ministry of Health.  
Australian Health Survey: Consumption of Food Groups from the Australian Dietary Guidelines, 2011-12.*

# The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

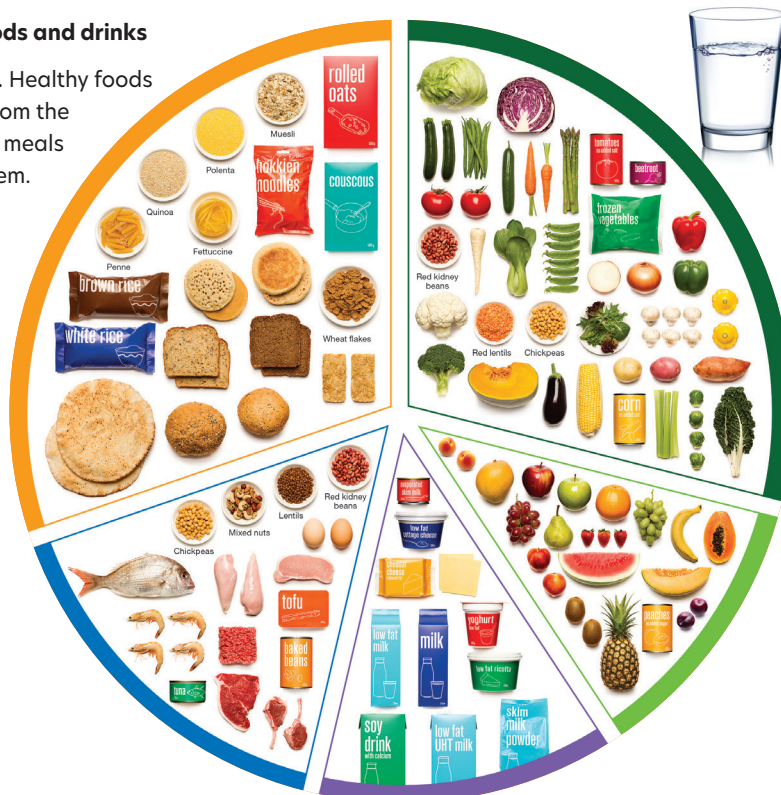
The *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* summarises the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* outlining the food groups and the proportions of each basic food group needed for a healthy, balanced diet.

It is recommended that all ECEC services plan menus based on the five core food groups in accordance with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines* and to teach, encourage and provide the consumption of 'Every day' foods to build long-lasting, healthy habits.

For ECEC services that provide food for children, the *Make a Healthy Menu* guide is an easy, useful tool to plan an enjoyable, well-balanced menu based on the five basic food groups.

## Every day foods and drinks

Eat every day. Healthy foods (and drinks) from the five groups or meals made from them.



## Occasional food and drinks

Foods to eat sometimes and in small amounts. Not a necessary part to a child's diet.

Discretionary foods (or 'Sometimes' foods) are high in energy, saturated (unhealthy) fat, added sugars and added salt.

## Only sometimes and in small amounts



## Use small amounts



## Providing food in care

ECEC services should promote a supportive environment through positive role modelling and by providing children with a variety of healthy food choices. A healthy menu ensures children in care are receiving the appropriate amount and types of food to ensure nutritional requirements are met.

ECEC services should offer at least **50% of children's recommended dietary intake** from all five food groups each day children are in care. The below table outlines the minimum number of serves required by each child calculated for each main food group.

	Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, legumes/beans	Grain/cereal foods	Vegetables	Fruit	Dairy
Number of serves per child each day	3/4	2	2	1	1
What does this look like?	One serve = Red meat, 70g raw White meat, 75g raw Fish, 100g raw 1 egg Legumes, 55g raw (115g cooked)	One serve = Cereal, 30g Bread, 1 slice Rice or pasta 1/2 cup Crispbreads, 3 medium	One serve = Cooked vegetables, 1/2 cup Salad, 1 cup	One serve = 1 medium or 2 small pieces	One serve = Milk, 250ml Yoghurt, 200g Cheese, 2 slices or 40g

Table 1: Caring for Children (2014)

**Note:** The above table is based on 50% of the recommended number of serves for the 4-8 year old age group according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. Children who are aged 2-3 years should eat slightly less amounts of each main food group.

The number of hours an ECEC service is open in a day indicates how many meals should be served.

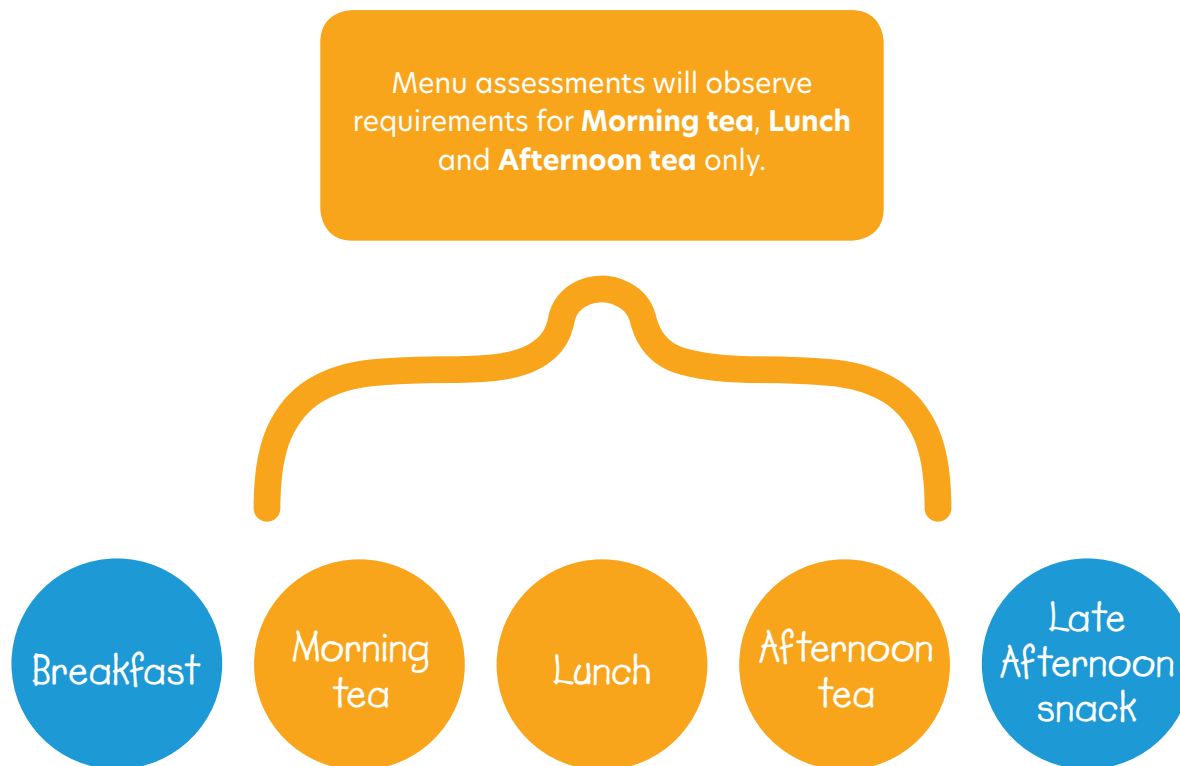
8 hours = Morning tea + Main meal (lunch) + Afternoon tea

8 hours or more = Breakfast + Morning tea + Main meal (lunch) + Afternoon tea + Late Afternoon snack

## 8 | MAKE A HEALTHY MENU

## Menu Reviews

All ECEC services who are trained in *Munch & Move* are offered a **free** menu review each year by a *Munch & Move* Support Officer. See page 35 for more information.





# The 5 step guide to a healthy menu

The following five steps below provide a brief overview of how to plan a healthy menu in accordance with the *Caring for Children* requirements and which pages or tabs to turn to for more information.



## STEP 1. SELECT A PROTEIN FOR MAIN MEAL (LUNCH)

### Red meat

- Serve a 'red meat' lunch **at least six times per fortnight**
- On the days a 'red meat' lunch is served, add **one** more high iron food  
For more information, see tab *High iron foods*; page 25.

*For non-red meat lunch days, choose either white meat or non-meat (vegetarian) protein alternatives.*

### White meat

- On the day(s) a 'white meat' lunch is served, add **two** more high iron foods. For more information, see tab *High iron foods*; page 25.

### Non-meat (vegetarian)

- Non-meat (vegetarian) lunch must include **one** of the following:
  - Legumes • Tofu
  - Cheese • Egg
- Serve **one** Vitamin C-rich food with the 'non-meat (vegetarian)' lunch.  
For more information, see tab *Vitamin C-rich foods*; page 27.
- On the day(s) a 'non-meat (vegetarian)' lunch is served, add **two** more high iron foods. For more information, see tab *High iron foods*; page 25.



### STEP 2. BREADS, CEREALS, RICE & PASTA

- Provide **one serve** of a grain food (i.e. bread, cereal, rice and pasta) on **two separate occasions** every day.

Choose high fibre varieties (wholegrain, wholemeal or high fibre white).  
For more information, see tab *Step 2. Breads, cereals, rice & pasta*; page 17.



### STEP 3. VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

- Provide **one serve** of vegetables on **two separate occasions** every day & **one serve** of fruit every day. For more information, see tab *Step 3. Vegetables and Fruit*; page 19.



### STEP 4. DAIRY FOODS

- Provide **one serve** of dairy (i.e. milk, yoghurt and cheese) every day
    - Full cream dairy for children below 2 years
    - Reduced fat dairy for children above 2 years
- For more information, see tab *Step 4. Dairy foods*; page 21.



### STEP 5. PLAIN WATER AS A DRINK

- Serve plain water as a drink every day.  
For more information, see tab *Step 5. Plain water as a drink*; page 23.

*Do not include discretionary items (or 'Sometimes' food) on the menu.*

Aim for a **wide variety of foods** on the menu.



# Step 1. Select a protein for main meal (lunch)

## Red meat

- Serve a 'red meat' lunch at least **six times per fortnight**
- On the days a 'red meat' lunch is served, add **one more high iron food**

### WHAT IS A RED MEAT\*?:

- Beef
- Lamb
- Kangaroo

One serve =  
Red meat, 70g

*\*Lean cuts or mince are recommended to be used when planning menus*

### WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Toddlers and children have high iron requirements. Iron is needed for normal brain development and function, and helps fight off sickness. Red meat is the **best source** of iron and is well absorbed by the body. One more high iron food is added to meet the high iron requirements.

Red meat also provides other important nutrients including **protein, zinc** and other **minerals and vitamins** such as **Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>** for healthy growing bodies.

### WHAT IS NOT CONSIDERED A RED MEAT?

- Commercial meat pie or sausage roll
- Sausages (see page 16 for more information), frankfurts (hotdogs), chorizo
- Processed meat such as salami, devon or fritz

The above list of foods are discretionary (or 'Sometimes' foods). They contain high amounts of unhealthy fats and salt, and little amounts of iron.

### ADDING IRON FOODS

ECEC services have the option of serving the **additional high iron food at Morning tea or Afternoon tea. It does not have to be served with the lunch meal.**

**Examples of high iron foods:**



**For more options see *High iron foods* tab.**

# Step 1. Select a protein for main meal (lunch)

## White meat

☐ On the day(s) a 'white meat' lunch is served, add **two more high iron foods**

### WHAT IS A WHITE MEAT\*?:

- Chicken
- Pork
- Turkey
- Fish
- Veal<sup>^</sup>

One serve =  
White meat, 75g (raw)  
Fish, 100g (raw)

*\*Lean cuts or mince are recommended to be used when planning menus.*

*<sup>^</sup>Veal is a red meat, however, contains the same amount of iron as white meat varieties.*

White meat is also a source of iron, however does not have as much iron as red meat. Two more high iron foods are added to meet the high iron requirements of toddlers and children.

Similar to red meat, it also provides other important nutrients including **protein, zinc** and other **minerals and vitamins** such as **Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>** for healthy growing bodies.

### WHAT IS NOT CONSIDERED A WHITE MEAT?

- Packaged chicken patties, nuggets, schnitzels or tenders
- Packaged pies (chicken, pork or fish)
- Packaged fish fingers

The above list of foods are discretionary (or 'Sometimes' foods). They contain high amounts of unhealthy fats and salt, and little amounts of iron.

### ADDING IRON FOODS

ECEC services have the option of serving the additional high iron food at Morning tea or Afternoon tea. It does not have to be served with the lunch meal.

Examples of high iron foods:



For more options see *High iron foods tab.*

# Step 1. Select a protein for main meal (lunch)

## Non-meat (vegetarian)

Non-meat (vegetarian) lunch meals must contain **one** of the following:

- Legumes (chickpeas, lentils, beans including, cannellini beans, red kidney beans, black-eyed beans, soybeans)
- Tofu
- Cheese
- Egg

One serve =  
Legumes, 55g (raw)  
or 115g (cooked)  
Tofu, 130g  
Cheese, 40g  
1 egg

Serve **one** Vitamin C rich food with the 'non-meat (vegetarian)' lunch

On the day(s) a 'non-meat (vegetarian)' lunch is served, add **two more** high iron foods

Meat alternatives are a good source of iron, however the iron is not absorbed as well as iron from red or white meat. Therefore, **Vitamin C** is added to help **iron absorption**. Two more high iron foods are added to meet the high iron requirements of toddlers and children.

Meat alternatives also provide important nutrients including **protein, zinc** and other **minerals and vitamins** such as **Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>** for healthy growing bodies.

## ADDING VITAMIN C FOODS

**Raw vegetables and citrus fruit** are the **best sources** of Vitamin C as heat (or cooking) reduces the content of Vitamin C in food.

**Examples of Vitamin C-rich foods:**



For more options see "Vitamin C-rich foods" tab.

## ADDING IRON FOODS

ECEC services have the option of serving the additional high iron food at Morning tea or Afternoon tea. It does not have to be served with the lunch meal.

**Examples of high iron foods:**



For more options see *High iron foods* tab.

## Processed (deli) meats and sausages

It is recommended that ECEC services **do not** serve processed (deli) meats and sausages, however **lean** or **low-fat varieties** (see below), **once every two weeks can be included on the menu.**

- ❑ **Serve one Vitamin C rich food with the 'processed (deli) meat or sausages' lunch**
- ❑ **On the day a 'processed (deli) meat or sausages' lunch is served, add two more high iron foods**

These foods are considered discretionary (or a 'Sometimes' food) according to the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*.

- Deli-style chicken slices (low fat recommended)
- Deli-style roast beef slices (low fat recommended)
- Ham (lean recommended)
- Turkey loaf or deli-style turkey (low fat recommended)
- Sausages (lean recommended)

All deli meats and sausages are high in salt and/or fat, and low in iron. These foods often undergo a process called *curing*, which means they are dehydrated using salt, smoke, temperature or other chemicals, hence the term *processed* meats.

## ADDING VITAMIN C FOODS

**Raw vegetables and citrus fruit** are the **best sources** of Vitamin C as heat (or cooking) reduces the content of Vitamin C in food.

**Examples of Vitamin C-rich foods:**



For more options see  
"Vitamin C-rich foods" tab.

## ADDING IRON FOODS

ECEC services have the option of serving the **additional high iron food** at **Morning tea or Afternoon tea**. It does not have to be served with the lunch meal.

**Examples of high iron foods:**



For more options see *High iron foods* tab.

# Step 2. Breads, cereals, rice & pasta

☐ Provide **one serve** of a grain food (i.e. bread, cereals, rice and pasta) on two separate occasions every day

- Choose high fibre varieties (wholegrain, wholemeal, high fibre white)

## GRAIN FOODS

Grain foods are made from wheat, oats, rye, barley, millet and corn. Breads, cereals, rice and pasta are common grain food products - see below for more examples.

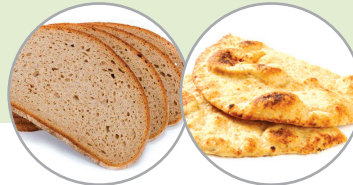
## MORNING OR AFTERNOON TEA



Breakfast cereal  
(wholegrain/wholemeal recommended)



Muesli  
Rolled oats or porridge



Wholemeal/  
wholegrain bread:  
• Wheat • Rye  
• Sourdough



Wholegrain  
crispbreads

One serve =  
Cereal, 30g  
Bread, 1 slice  
Rice or pasta ½ cup  
Crispbreads, 3 medium

Other wholemeal/wholegrain plain breads:

- Pita bread • Tortilla
- English muffin
- Crumpet • Bagel

Baked items  
(100% wholemeal flour) - see  
page 33 for more  
information

## Step 2. Breads, cereals, rice & pasta

### LUNCH



Wholemeal/wholegrain bread, wrap, flatbread or roll (wheat, rye, sourdough)



Brown or basmati rice

Wholemeal pasta



Other wholemeal/wholegrain plain breads (Pita bread, Tortilla, English muffin, Crumpet, Bagel)

Polenta

Couscous



Noodles (hokkien, rice or egg noodles, soba, udon)

Quinoa

Barley

Bulgur

### PROCESSED GRAINS

'Processed' grains that are **not** recommended:

- Flaked or puffed cereals
- Instant or fried noodles
- Sweet biscuits
- Savoury crackers (low in wholegrain content, high in sodium or salt)
- Corn or vegetable chips



'Processed' grains are low in vitamins and minerals, lack fibre (which means children get hungry quicker) and can be high in unhealthy fat and/or sugar.

Wholegrain and wholemeal varieties are high in **fibre**, **vitamins** and **minerals**, which keeps children fuller for longer and provides long lasting energy. If you would like some ideas for different toppings and spreads, see page 49.



# Step 3. Vegetables and Fruit

## Vegetables

- Provide **one serve of vegetables on two separate occasions every day & one serve of fruit every day**

Vegetables and salad are rich in **vitamins, minerals, fibre** and help children maintain a healthy body weight.

It is important to include **different types and colours** of vegetables on the menu. Each colour offers a different type of vitamin, mineral and antioxidant that helps support children's growth and development.



### FRESH, FROZEN OR CANNED?

Fresh, frozen, canned or dried varieties of vegetables are all suitable, however fresh is best!

Check the ingredients list and choose varieties of canned vegetables without added salt. Aim for <400mg/100g of sodium on packaged foods, although <120mg/100g is best.

One serve =

Cooked vegetables, ½ cup; Salad, 1 cup;  
Fruit, 1 medium or 2 small pieces

## Fruit

Fruit also contains many **vitamins and minerals**, and **fibre** for good health.



### Fruit AND SUGAR

Fruit in comparison to vegetables contain higher amounts of sugar. It is important to incorporate the recommended number of serves and to include variety each day.

### DRIED FRUIT AND/OR FRUIT JUICE?

Fruit juice should not be served on the menu. Fruit juice provides energy but most lack fibre and contain concentrated amounts of sugar. Most fruit juices are also acidic, which can lead to a higher risk of teeth decay.

Dried fruit should be eaten less often and in small amounts as it has high sugar concentrations. It does have high fibre, however can stick to teeth, increasing the risk of tooth decay.

### FRESH, FROZEN OR CANNED?

Fresh, frozen, canned or dried varieties of fruit are all suitable. Remember to check the ingredients list and choose varieties of canned fruit with natural fruit juice instead of syrup. Providing fresh fruit is the healthiest option as it provides fibre, vitamins and minerals.





# Step 4. Dairy foods

## ☐ Provide **one serve** of dairy (i.e. milk, yoghurt and cheese) every day

- Full cream dairy for children below 2 years
- Reduced fat dairy for children above 2 years

Dairy foods are a good source of **calcium** - a nutrient that keeps bones and teeth strong! They also provide other important nutrients such as **protein, Vitamin D, iodine, riboflavin** and **Vitamin B<sub>12</sub>** for healthy growing bodies.

## EXAMPLES OF DAIRY FOOD INCLUDE:

- Milk (plain)
- Yoghurt
- Cheese

One serve =  
Milk, 250ml  
Yoghurt, 200g  
Cheese, 2 slices or 40g



## DID YOU KNOW:

There is **no added sugar** in reduced fat milk compared to full fat (cream) milk.

## FULL FAT (CREAM) VS REDUCED FAT

### Full fat (cream) - 4% fat



#### Recommended age:

Less than 2 years (starting from 12 months)

#### Benefits:

Extra energy and other important minerals such as calcium for growth and development (reach important milestones)

#### Nutrition information (250 ml)

Fat	8.5 g
Calcium	292 mg
Protein	8.2 g
Sugar	12 g

### Reduced fat - 2% fat



#### Recommended age:

From 2 years onwards

#### Benefits:

- Reduces consumption of saturated (unhealthy) fat and unnecessary extra energy/calories
- Provides calcium and other important nutrients for healthy growing bodies

#### Nutrition information (250 ml)

Fat	3.2 g
Calcium	305 mg
Protein	8.5 g
Sugar	12.2 g

NOTE: Skim milk (0.15% fat) is not suitable for toddlers and children and should not be served on the menu.

## Step 4. Dairy foods

### Alternatives to cow's milk



Soy  
milk



Almond or  
nut milk



Oat  
milk



Rice  
milk



Coconut  
milk

#### TIPS TO ENSURE IT IS A HEALTHY DAIRY MILK ALTERNATIVE:

1. Ensure it is calcium fortified, i.e. calcium added (rice, coconut and almond milks sometimes do not have calcium fortification).
2. Check if there is any added sugar and select an unsweetened alternative milk.
3. Coconut milk and yoghurt have a high saturated (unhealthy) fat content and should be consumed less often (if at all).

*See tab "Tips for nutrition label reading" to choose a healthy dairy milk alternative.*

#### WHAT IS NOT CONSIDERED A DAIRY FOOD?

- Commercial 'dairy' desserts (e.g. pudding, chocolate flavoured yoghurt desserts)
- Cream or sour cream
- Commercial custard
- Butter or margarine

There is little to no calcium in the above list of foods and they have higher amounts of saturated (unhealthy) fat compared to dairy foods. These foods are discretionary (or 'Sometimes') foods, which means they are not a necessary part of a child's diet.

#### WHEN TOO MUCH MILK LEADS TO POOR HEALTH!

Young children drinking large volumes of milk (or juice) are at greater risk of low iron stores. Milk is low in iron and if children fill up on milk, it reduces their appetite for high iron foods. It is important to discuss with parents the introduction and/or maintenance of solids particularly from 6-9 months onwards. This is a time in which infants increasingly have more solid foods (including high iron foods) as part of their nutrition for growth and development.

# Step 5. Plain water as a drink

## Serve plain water as a drink every day

Serve water as the main source of drink for toddlers and children. Water helps children stay hydrated and promotes regularity (avoids constipation). It also helps children develop strong teeth. Tap water is recommended.

Educators should encourage drinking water throughout the day and at mealtimes. Avoid serving water right before mealtimes to avoid children filling up on fluids. It is recommended that services encourage children to drink water **regularly** throughout each day. Children may require more water depending on their activity levels and temperature of the day.

**DID YOU KNOW:**  
Most children will enjoy water if they get in the habit of drinking it every day!



# Further menu support

All ECEC services trained in the *Munch & Move* program are eligible to receive free ongoing support from a *Munch & Move* Support Officer - a health professional from your Local Health District. Your service will be provided with resources and support to help implement the program at your service.

If you have questions regarding your menu (or would like further support in the *Munch & Move* program), please contact your Support Officer in your Local Health District. All trained ECEC services are offered a free menu review each year.

To view the contact list of *Munch & Move* Support Officers in your Local Health District, see here:  
[www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-support](http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/campaigns-programs/munch-move-support).





# High iron foods

Iron deficiency (i.e. low levels of iron) is **common** in this age group. It is recommended to include additional high iron foods to the menu according to the type of main (lunch) meal being served - see tab *The 5 step guide to a healthy menu*; page 11, for requirements.

**ECEC services have the option of serving the additional high iron food at Morning tea or Afternoon tea.**

Meat foods are the **best sources** of iron. The iron from plant foods is not absorbed as well as the iron from meat foods. The following are examples of high iron foods listed from highest (top) to lowest (bottom).

*\*Baked goods on the menu are limited to 1-2 times per week*

*#High in sugar, provide less often on the menu*

## HIGH

**Red meat**  
(lean kangaroo, beef, lamb; including mince)

**Lean pork**

**Fish or canned fish**

**Chicken**

**Egg**

**Tempeh**

**Tofu**

**Baby spinach**

**Silverbeet**

**Bok choy**

**Kidney beans - Lentils - Chickpeas -**

**Baked beans - Falafel**

**Cereal**

**Muesli**

**Wholemeal couscous**

**Quinoa**

**Oats**

**Wholemeal pasta**

**Wholemeal/wholegrain breads and wraps (e.g. sandwich bread, wraps, Lebanese bread, English muffins, crumpets etc.)**

**Wholemeal baked goods (e.g. banana bread, muffins, pikelets, etc.)**

**Wholemeal fruit bread**

**Broccoli**

**Green peas**

**Green beans**

**Sweet potato**

**Kale**

**Dried apricots, dates, sultanas or raisins<sup>#</sup>**

## LOW





# Vitamin C-rich foods

Vitamin C promotes iron absorption in the body. It is recommended that **Vitamin C-rich foods** are added on the menu according to the type of main (lunch) meal being served - see tab *The 5 step guide to a healthy menu*; page 11, for requirements.

Vitamin C-rich foods should be added **with the lunch meal** to boost iron absorption.

Raw vegetables and citrus fruit are the **best sources** of Vitamin C as heat (or cooking) reduces the content of Vitamin C in food. The following are examples of Vitamin C-rich foods listed from highest (top) to lowest (bottom).

*Check policies for food allergies. Please refer to anaphylaxis procedures where applicable for some foods listed above.*

**HIGH**

Guava

Papaya or Paw paw

Kiwifruit

Red/yellow capsicum

Brussel sprouts

Broccoli

Orange or Mandarin

Cauliflower

Pineapple

Cabbage, red

Grapefruit

Snow peas

Strawberries

Green peas

Rockmelon

Tomato or  
Cherry tomatoes

**LOW**







# Shopping for a healthy menu + Recipes

## Tips for nutrition label reading

### Nutrition Information Panel (NIP)

Understanding how to read nutrition information panels (NIP) can help you identify healthy foods when purchasing processed or packaged foods to serve on a menu.

### TIPS FOR COMPARING PACKAGED FOODS:

The 'serving size' may change according to the food company so it may be difficult to compare different brands of packaged foods directly. Follow the steps below:

### An example Nutrition Information Panel (NIP):

Nutrition Information Panel		
Servings per package: 16 Serving size - 30g		
	Per serve	Per 100g
Energy	432kJ	1441kJ
Protein	2.8g	9.2g
Fat		
Total	0.4g	1.2g
Saturated	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrate		
Total	18.9	62.9
Sugars	3.5g	11.8g
Dietary Fibre	6.4g	21.2g
Sodium	65mg	215mg
<b>Ingredients:</b> Cereals (76%) (wheat, oatbran, barley), psyllium husk (11%), sugar, rice, malt, extract, honey, salt, vitamins.		

1

Look at per 100g column

2

**Aim for:** less than 10g per 100g (total fat) & less than 3g per 100g (saturated fat)

3

The least amount of sugar or less than 15g per 100g

4

High in fibre\* (more than 4g **per serve**)

*\*Fibre is not always listed on the food label*

5

Less than 400mg per 100g of sodium or salt (less than 120mg per 100g is best)

### For dairy foods:

Aim for more than 100mg of calcium per 100g

# Tips for nutrition label reading

## INGREDIENT LIST

Ingredients are listed in order of **most to least by weight**. If you identify fat, sugar or salt on the list in the first three ingredients, it is best to swap to a better choice. See below for an example.

**Ingredients:** Cereals (76%) (wheat, oatbran, barley), psyllium husk (11%), sugar, rice, malt, extract, honey, salt, vitamins.

“Cereal” is the highest ingredient followed by “psyllium husk”, then “sugar”.

## HERE'S WHAT THEY ACTUALLY MEAN...

If you come across some ingredients that you're not familiar with, read the following for some ingredient translations.

### Fat can be listed as:

Butter or cocoa butter, cream, coconut oil, hydrogenated oil, margarine, milk solids, palm oil, vegetable oil, shortening, full cream milk powder, ghee.

### Added sugar can be listed as:

Glucose, brown sugar, maltose, sucrose, fructose, honey, hydrolysed starch, dextrose, treacle, maple and golden syrup, molasses, rice syrup, rice malt or barley malt.

Fruit concentrates or purees are *natural sugars*.

### Salt can be listed as:

Sodium or sodium bicarbonate, glutamate, mineral salts, MSG, rock salt, garlic salt.

## HAVE YOU SEEN THIS?

Health Star Ratings can help us compare food products, however it is best to refer to the NIP to compare and identify the best food product.



## HEALTH STAR RATING

- A higher star rating indicates a “healthier food product” according to specific nutrition criteria, i.e. energy (kJ), saturated fat, salt, sugar, fibre, protein, fruit, vegetable, nut and legume content.
- Healthier food products may be available even if they don't display the logo.
- Different criteria for different food groups.
- Does not consider sugar or glycaemic index (GI)\*.

\*Low GI is best

# Tips for nutrition label reading

## DON'T BE TRICKED BY HEALTH CLAIMS!

Health or nutrition claims on the packaging of food can lead us to believe that it is more nutritious than what it actually is. Making sense of what these health claims mean can help us make the right choice when selecting a packaged food or ingredient.

Health Claim	Meaning
<b>Baked not fried</b>	Does not mean lower in fat or energy - always check the NIP
<b>Lite or Light</b>	Does not always mean lower in fat - it can refer texture, colour or taste of food
<b>Natural/Organic</b>	May still have the same amount of sugars, fats or energy as regular varieties
<b>No added sugar</b>	May still be high in energy (kJ), contain natural sugars and increase glycaemic index (GI)
<b>Reduced fat/salt</b>	Has less fat/salt than the "standard" variety, but may be above healthy choice criteria



# Tips for nutrition label reading

## BREAKFAST CEREALS, CRACKERS OR CRISPBREADS, YOGHURT

It can be challenging to select a healthy food among the countless varieties and health claims on packaged foods. Below you will find **easy tips** to follow when selecting a **cereal**, **yoghurt** or **savoury cracker and crispbread** so that you make the best choice for your healthy menu.

### HEALTHY CEREALS HAVE:

High **wholegrain** content  
**Low sugar** - less than 15g per 100g  
**Sodium (salt)** - less than 120mg/100g is best (less than 400mg/100g is good)  
**Fibre** - more than 4g per serve

#### Wholegrain content

Look for "wholegrain" or "wholegrain cereal" in the **ingredients** section

#### Good options:

Wheat bran, wholemeal

#### Avoid:

Flake or puff options including corn, rice or maize (except for allergy requirements)

#### Sugar

#### Avoid:

Cereals with high sugar (see tab *Shopping for a healthy menu + Recipes*; page 29) especially if listed in the first three ingredients

### HEALTHY CRACKERS OR CRISPBREADS HAVE:

High **wholegrain** content  
Low **sodium (salt)** - less than 120mg/100g (less than 400mg/100g is good)  
**Fibre** - more than 4g per serve

#### Wholegrain content

Look for "wholegrain" in the **ingredients** section

#### Avoid:

Flavoured varieties

### HEALTHY YOGHURTS HAVE:

More than 100mg of **calcium** per 100g  
Less **sugar** - less than 15g/100g  
Less **saturated fat** - less than 3g/100g

#### Calcium

Yoghurts that provide the important nutrients such as calcium, protein and B vitamins is **best**

#### Sugar

#### Avoid:

Yoghurts with high sugar (see tab *Shopping for a healthy menu + Recipes*; page 29) especially if listed in the first three ingredients

# Making a baked item

## WHAT IS A 'BAKED ITEM'?

- Fruit muffins
- Cakes or cupcakes
- Scones
- Pikelets
- Scrolls
- Fruit bread or buns
- Fruit rice pudding
- Cookies and biscuits
- Slices or pies (sweet)



## TEACHING CHILDREN TO MAKE HEALTHY CHOICES EVERY DAY

Baked items (even if made from a healthy recipe) may be served up to **1-2 times per week** only. This promotes children's understanding of 'Every day' and 'Occasional' (or 'Sometimes') foods. A key role of ECEC services is to provide nutritious foods and to teach and encourage healthy food choices from an early age.

Most baked goods traditionally contain added sugars and fat, especially when bought from a store. Serving packaged or commercial baked items are not recommended at ECEC services.

Healthier versions using 'Every day' foods or ingredients from the 'Buy' list (see page 34) is recommended when selecting a recipe to make a baked item.

For more information on healthy ingredients to use, see *Baking ingredients* on page 35.

## CHOOSE HEALTH BOOSTING RECIPES THAT INCLUDE:

- 100% wholemeal flour, grains, fruit, vegetables or reduced fat dairy as key ingredients
- Wholegrain varieties and ingredients that are high in fibre, e.g. wholemeal flour, oats, muesli, fruit, vegetables
- No added sugar, honey or syrup. Use natural sweeteners instead like extra-ripe fruits or fruit purees
- Poly- or monounsaturated oils (see page 34) or margarine

## DID YOU KNOW:

35g of flour = 1 serve

## QUICK TIP:

Provide smaller serve sizes than what the recipes suggest for small children.

Modified from the original factsheet sourced from Hunter New England Local Health District, *Choosing Recipes - Baked Items*



# A guide to shopping for a healthy menu

Fill up your pantry (store cupboard) with 'Every day' foods from the main food groups.

- 1 Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds and legumes/beans
- 2 Wholegrain bread, cereals, rice and pasta
- 3 Vegetables
- 4 Fruit
- 5 Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives

You can also make healthy meals and snacks by using the ingredients from the 'Recommended to use' list, which contributes to children meeting their nutritional requirements in their diet.

Ingredients in the 'Avoid' column are **not recommended** to be served or used at an ECEC service.

Recommended to use	Avoid
Oils e.g. canola, sunflower, olive, grapeseed, corn, rice and soybean	Palm, coconut oils and any animal fats such as lard or duck fat
<b>Spreads, dips and salad dressing*</b>	
Margarine	Butter or garlic butter
Cheese e.g. ricotta, cheddar (tasty), halloumi, cottage, mozzarella, feta	Cream cheese, cream or sour cream
Yoghurt (Greek) or tzatziki	Savoury dips (high in fat), e.g. cheese and chive spread (commercial), French onion
Savoury dips, e.g. hummus or roasted vegetables, i.e. capsicum, pumpkin, beetroot (home-made is recommended)	Jam (commercial), honey, maple, golden or rice syrup
Fruit (mashed) or vegetables relishes	Mayonnaise
Vegemite* (use reduced salt)	Caesar salad dressing
Red, white and balsamic vinegar	
Lemon or lime juice	
<b>Pastry</b>	
Filo pastry	Puff pastry
	Short crust pastry

# See page 49 for more healthy toppings and/or dips.

Recommended to use	Avoid
<b>Dairy or dairy alternatives</b> (reduced fat dairy for children > 2 years, full fat dairy for children < 2 years)	
Milk	Flavoured milk
Milk alternatives (soy, rice or nut <sup>^</sup> milks) with added calcium	'Plastic' cheese or cream cheese (40-45% of dairy)
Cheese e.g. ricotta, cheddar (tasty), halloumi, cottage, mozzarella	Cream or sour cream
Yoghurt (Greek or natural yoghurt recommended)	Commercial custard
<b>Condiments, sauces and marinades (use in small amounts, less often)</b>	
Tomato paste or passata	Sauces made with cream or butter e.g. Carbonara, Boscaiola or Béchamel sauce
Tomato and other table sauces e.g. BBQ, sweet chilli, fish, soy (use reduced salt)	Regular coconut milk and coconut cream
Pesto	
Chutney, mustard, relish and salsa	
Marinades (use salt reduced)	
Vinegar (rice, cider, balsamic)	
Reduced fat/light coconut cream and coconut milk	
<b>Baking ingredients</b>	
Flour (100% wholemeal recommended)	Sugar (caster or raw, brown, white)
Desiccated coconut* (in small amounts)	Jam (commercial), Honey, maple, golden or rice syrup
Baking powder or bi-carb soda	Confectionery e.g. 100s and 1000s, chocolate or chocolate chips
Cocoa or cacao powder* (unsweetened)	Icing
Vanilla essence	Chocolate powders
Yeast (instant dried)	Butter, ghee, lard
Breadcrumbs	Puff or short crust pastry
Eggs	
Gelatine, agar	

**Ingredients that are not listed can be reviewed by your local Munch & Move Support Team against the Caring for Children and/ or Australian Dietary Guidelines to determine if it is appropriate to serve on an ECEC service menu. Please contact your local health promotion team to discuss your menu or a recipe further.**

<sup>^</sup> Check policies for food allergies. Please refer to anaphylaxis procedures

\* Use these ingredients less often





## Beef and Tomato Patties

**Prep Time:** 15 mins **Cook Time:** 15 mins **Serves:** 20

**Serving Size:** 1 patty

### INGREDIENTS

- 1.4kg Lean beef mince
- 6 tbs Tomato paste
- 1 tsp Dried mixed herbs
- 3 tsp Seeded mustard
- 1 tsp Minced garlic
- 1 Egg
- 2 Onions, grated
- 3 tbs Olive oil, for frying
- 1 Zucchini, grated
- 1 Carrot, grated

### STEPS

1. Blend all ingredients in a food processor until smooth.
2. Shape mixture into round patties, using 3 tablespoons mixture for each patty.
3. Heat oil in a non-stick frypan. Flatten and cook patties for approx. 4-5 mins on each side or until golden brown in colour and cooked through.

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve with ½ cup of seasonal vegetables per child or serve in a wholemeal breadroll with 1 cup of salad per child.



### HELPFUL TIP

For variety or for young children, you could use 1 ½ tablespoons of mixture per patty and serve 2 patties per child.

Sourced from *The Yummy Tummy Book*,  
Western NSW Local Health District

## Beef Curry

**Prep Time:** 30 mins **Cook Time:** 60 mins **Serves:** 20

### INGREDIENTS

1.4kg Lean beef, diced  
1 ½ tsp Cumin seeds, ground  
500ml Salt reduced beef stock  
1 ½ tsp Sweet paprika  
2 Onions, finely diced  
2x 400g cans Diced tomatoes  
6 Potatoes, cubed  
2 tbs Olive oil  
800g Pumpkin, cubed  
4 Zucchini, diced  
1 ½ tbs Curry powder  
3 ⅓ cups Basmati rice, uncooked  
Reduced fat plain Greek yoghurt, for serving

### STEPS

1. In a large pot on medium heat, place the oil and onion. Cook until the onion becomes translucent. Add the curry powder, cumin and paprika and cook with the onion until fragrant.
2. Add the beef to the pot with the onion and spices and cook, stirring constantly, until browned.
3. Once the beef has browned, add the tomatoes, potatoes, pumpkin, and stock. Stir constantly to remove any of the beef or spices that may have stuck to the bottom of pan.
4. Cover with a lid and cook on low heat for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. After 30 minutes, add the zucchini to the pot. Stir through, and then cover and cook for a further 30 minutes or until the meat is tender. Remember to stir occasionally to ensure the curry is not sticking to the bottom of the pan.
5. 10 -15 minutes before curry is finished cooking, cook rice following packet instructions.
6. Serve curry with rice and a teaspoonful of reduced fat plain Greek yoghurt.

Sourced from *The Yummy Tummy Book*, Western NSW Local Health District



## Cheesy Beef Rissoles

**Prep Time:** 45 mins **Cook Time:** 30 mins **Serves:** 20

### INGREDIENTS

- 1.2kg Lean beef mince
- 1 ½ cups Reduced fat cheese, grated
- 2 Onions, grated
- 5 tbs Plain flour
- 2 Carrots, grated
- 3 Eggs
- 2 Zucchini, grated
- 1 ½ cups Breadcrumbs
- 1 ½ cups Mixed peas and corn
- 6 tbs Olive oil
- 6 tbs Tomato sauce

### STEPS

1. Combine mince, onion, carrot, zucchini, peas and corn, tomato sauce, cheese, flour and egg in a bowl.
2. Place breadcrumbs in a separate bowl or plate.
3. Divide mince mixture into 20 portions, shape into balls, roll in breadcrumbs, place on baking tray and flatten slightly. Cover and refrigerate for 15 minutes.
4. Heat oil in a large non-stick frypan over medium heat. Cook the patties until cooked through, about 5 mins on each side. Drain on absorbent paper.

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve with 1 slice of wholemeal bread per child and 1 cup of salad or ½ cup of steamed vegetables per child.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Refrigerating the uncooked patties helps to bind the ingredients, however if time is limited you can skip this step.
- If mixture is too sloppy, add extra breadcrumbs.
- Patties can be baked in the oven instead of frying.

Recipe from *The Yummy Tummy Book*, Western NSW Local Health District originally sourced from Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, *Healthy Food for Babies and Toddlers*, 2013

## Chicken and Corn Slice

Prep Time: 15 mins Cook Time: 45 mins Serves: 20

### INGREDIENTS

- 1.2kg Skinless chicken breast
- Water Cover chicken in saucepan
- 8 Eggs, lightly beaten
- 500ml Natural yoghurt
- 2 x 420g cans Creamed corn
- 2 Zucchini, grated
- 1 ½ cups Plain flour
- 2 cups Corn kernels
- 1 cup Frozen peas
- 1 cup Capsicum, chopped up small
- 1 ½ cups Reduced fat tasty cheese, grated
- ⅓ cup Parmesan cheese, grated



### STEPS

1. Place chicken in a large saucepan, cover with cold water and bring to simmer over medium heat. Poach for 4-5 mins or until chicken is cooked through. Drain chicken and cool.
2. Preheat oven to 180°C. Process cooked chicken in a food processor for 30 seconds or until finely chopped.
3. Whisk eggs, yoghurt and creamed corn in a bowl. Squeeze the excess liquid from the zucchini and add it to the egg mixture, along with the chicken, flour, corn, capsicum and peas, and parmesan cheese.
4. Pour the mixture into a lined baking pan, sprinkle with grated cheese, and bake for 40-50 mins or until cooked through.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Use whatever veggies are in season for a tasty veggie slice - spinach, carrot, mushrooms, broccoli, yum!
- Replace chicken with tuna for a variation.
- The creamed corn can be replaced with cottage cheese if desired.

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve warm with 1 cup of salad or ½ cup of steamed seasonal vegetables per child.

Sourced from *The Yummy Tummy Book*,  
Western NSW Local Health District

## Chicken Fingers with Sweet Corn Dip

**Prep Time:** 20 mins **Cook Time:** 20 mins **Serves:** 20

**Serving Size:** 4 fingers and 1 ½ tablespoons of dip

### INGREDIENTS

#### Chicken Fingers

1.5kg Chicken thighs, fat trimmed  
2 tbs Lemon juice  
2 tbs Fresh flat-leaf parsley, chopped  
1 tbs Olive oil  
1 tsp Minced garlic  
1kg Sweet potato, peeled,  
cut into 5mm-thick rounds  
3 punnets Cherry tomatoes, halved  
4 Cucumbers, sliced thinly  
3 Capsicums, sliced into thin sticks  
2 cups Snow peas or sugar snap peas  
7 small Wholemeal pita bread, cut into triangles  
Olive oil spray

#### Sweet Corn Dip

400g can Creamed corn  
2 tbs Sweet chilli sauce  
300ml Reduced fat plain yoghurt

### STEPS

1. Cut chicken thigh into strips and place in a glass or ceramic bowl with the lemon juice, parsley, olive oil and garlic. Mix to combine. Cover and refrigerate for 10 minutes to marinate.
2. Drain chicken from marinade. Preheat a non-stick pan and spray lightly with olive oil. Cook chicken, turning, for 6-8 minutes or until cooked through.
3. In a separate non-stick pan, cook sweet potato for 5 minutes on each side or until tender.
4. Serve 4 chicken fingers on a plate with sweet potato slices, cherry tomatoes, sliced cucumber, capsicum sticks, snow peas, and pita bread.
5. To make the Sweet Corn Dip, place all ingredients into a food processor and blend until smooth. Serve 1½ tablespoons of dip on each plate.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- The strength of sweet chilli sauce varies by brand. Always taste test the dip to determine how much you need to use. If it is too spicy, add extra yoghurt.
- Large tomatoes can be used instead of cherry tomatoes. Simply cut into small bite sized wedges to serve.
- 1 slice of wholemeal toast could be used instead of pita bread.

Sourced from *The Yummy Tummy Book*,  
Western NSW Local Health District



## Honey Soy Lamb Stir Fry

**Prep Time:** 25 mins **Cook Time:** 15-20 mins **Serves:** 20

### INGREDIENTS

2 tbs Olive oil  
1/3 cup Reduced salt soy sauce  
1.4kg Lean lamb fillets, cut into strips  
1/3 cup Honey  
1kg Wholemeal noodles  
10 cups Vegetables, chopped (e.g. bok choy, carrot, capsicum, snow peas, mushrooms, zucchini, tomato, broccoli)

### STEPS

1. Heat oil over high heat in non-stick frypan or wok.
2. Add lamb and brown. May need to do this in batches, removing each batch once cooked.
3. Add vegetables and cook for 3-4 minutes. Add lamb back into pan with vegetables.
4. Cook noodles as per the instructions and combine with honey and soy sauce. Stir over gentle heat until heated through.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Adapt amount of soy sauce and honey to taste, depending on which vegetables are used.
- Choose seasonal vegetables for affordability.
- Replace noodles with basmati rice or other pasta.

### SAFETY TIP

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.

Recipe from *The Yummy Tummy Book*, Western NSW Local Health District originally sourced from Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, *Healthy Food for babies and toddlers*, 2013

## Pea and Chicken Frittata

**Prep Time:** 30 mins **Cook Time:** 60 mins **Serves:** 25

### INGREDIENTS

2 tbs Olive oil  
4 cups Peas  
1 Onion, chopped  
4 large Boiled potatoes, sliced  
18 Eggs  
2 cups Reduced fat cheese, grated  
900g Chicken, cooked and diced

#### HELPFUL TIP

To make tuna and broccoli frittata, replace chicken with 800g drained tuna in spring water, replace peas with equal quantity of broccoli florets, and add 400g corn kernels.

### STEPS

1. Heat oil in pan and add onions. Stir and cook until soft but not brown.
2. Add chicken, peas and potato. Gently stir to heat through.
3. Whisk eggs in separate bowl.
4. Place chicken and vegetables into ovenproof dish.
5. Sprinkle grated cheese over chicken and vegetable mixture.
6. Pour egg mixture over chicken, vegetables and cheese.
7. Bake in oven at 160°C for 30 minutes (or until cooked through).

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve with 1 slice of wholemeal bread and 1 cup of salad or ½ cup of steamed vegetables per child.



## Sweet Potato and Chickpea Patties

**Prep Time:** 60 mins **Cook Time:** 30 mins **Serves:** 25

### INGREDIENTS

- 1.5kg Sweet potato
- 2 Zucchini, grated
- 1 Red onion, small, finely chopped
- 4 x 400g cans Chickpeas
- 2 cups Breadcrumbs
- 2 tbs Lemon juice
- 4 Eggs

### HELPFUL TIP

Replace sweet potato with white potato, replace chickpeas with 720g of drained tuna in spring water, and add 500g of canned sweet corn (drained) at step 7.

### STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Peel and chop sweet potato into small pieces.
3. Steam sweet potato for 20 minutes or until tender.
4. Drain sweet potato. Drain and rinse chickpeas.
5. Mash sweet potato and chickpeas with lemon juice until smooth. Place in fridge to cool for 30 minutes.
6. Combine sweet potato and chickpeas with onion, zucchini, breadcrumbs and egg.
7. Take small handfuls of mixture and roll into balls. Flatten gently to form patties.
8. Line baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Place patties on lined tray.
9. Spray lightly with olive oil spray.
10. Bake in oven at 180°C, turning once, for 30 minutes or until golden.
11. Serve with Turkish bread, chutney and salad or soft vegetables.

## Toddler Chicken Couscous

**Prep Time:** 25 mins **Cook Time:** 15-20 mins **Serves:** 20

### INGREDIENTS

1.5kg Chicken thigh or breast, diced small  
1 Onion, peeled and chopped  
2 ¼ cups Salt reduced chicken stock  
2 Zucchini, finely diced or grated  
3 cups Couscous  
6 Tomatoes, finely diced  
3 tbs Olive oil  
3 Capsicums, finely diced

### STEPS

1. Heat oil in a large non-stick frypan. Sauté onion on medium heat until soft.
2. Add diced chicken and stir-fry until chicken is almost cooked through.
3. Place couscous in a separate bowl. Boil chicken stock and pour over couscous. Allow it to stand for approx. 6-8 minutes or until liquid is absorbed.
4. Add zucchini and capsicum to chicken and cook for approx. 6 minutes or until softening, stirring frequently. Add tomatoes and cook for another 2-3 minutes.
5. Fluff the couscous with a fork and mix in the chicken and vegetables. Serve.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Replace vegetables with frozen vegetables such as peas, carrots and corn
- Use up any leftover vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, or pumpkin
- If additional couscous is needed, use 1 cup dry couscous to ¾ cup stock.

Recipe from *The Yummy Tummy Book*, Western NSW Local Health District originally sourced from Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, *Healthy Food for babies and toddlers*, 2013

## Tuna and Vegetable Fritters

**Prep Time:** 15 mins **Cook Time:** 15 mins **Serves:** 20

**Serving Size:** 2 fritters

### INGREDIENTS

1 ½ cups Self raising flour  
425g can Corn kernels  
½ cup Wholemeal self raising flour  
2 cups Frozen peas  
1 ½ cups Carrots, finely chopped  
4 Eggs  
2 Onions, finely chopped  
⅔ cup Reduced fat milk  
⅓ cup Parmesan cheese, grated  
2 x 425g cans Tuna in Brine, well drained  
Olive oil spray

### STEPS

1. Whisk together eggs, milk and parmesan cheese.
2. Place flour into a mixing bowl. Make a well in the centre and gradually pour in the egg mixture, stirring gently to combine.
3. Fold in the corn kernels, carrots, peas, onion and tuna; taking care not to over-mix or the fritters will be tough.
4. Spray a non-stick pan with oil. Place ¼ cupful's of mixture into the pan, allowing room for spreading. Press down gently to flatten (if the fritters are too thick, the centre won't cook properly).
5. Cook for 2-3 minutes on each side until golden brown, ensuring the centre is not doughy. Repeat in batches with the remaining mixture.

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve with ½ cup steamed seasonal vegetables or 1 cup of salad per child.

### HELPFUL TIP

Mixture should be the texture of thick pikelet batter.  
Add extra reduced fat milk if needed.

## Vegetarian Delights

**Prep Time:** 25 mins **Cook Time:** 25 mins **Serves:** 20

**Serving Size:** 2 patties

### INGREDIENTS

2 x 425g cans Lentils, rinsed and drained  
2 cups Frozen peas  
½ cup Reduced fat milk  
4 Spring onions, finely chopped  
2 Potatoes, peeled and halved  
2 cups Wholemeal bread crumbs  
1 Sweet potato, peeled and chopped  
2 Eggs, slightly beaten  
1 Carrot, grated  
1 Zucchini, grated  
1 ½ cups Parmesan cheese, grated  
½ tsp Mixed dried herbs  
1 ½ cups Reduced fat cheddar cheese, grated  
2 tbs Olive oil  
Flour or additional breadcrumbs to coat

### STEPS

1. Steam potatoes and sweet potato until soft. Drain and mash, slowly adding milk.
2. Cook peas in microwave for 2-3 minutes.
3. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl and mix well.
4. Roll mixture into small patties and coat in flour or breadcrumbs.
5. Heat oil in non-stick pan. Cook patties for 3-4 minutes either side or until golden brown.

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve with a wholemeal roll and 1 cup of salad per child.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Substitute carrot, peas and spring onions for zucchini, corn and red onion.
- Substitute potato and sweet potato for pumpkin. If using pumpkin, add an additional egg and extra breadcrumbs to hold mixture together.



## Ideas for Morning & Afternoon tea

Plan Morning and Afternoon teas that complement the main meal (lunch) to ensure that children meet their nutritional requirements. Remember, children have small stomachs, which limits the amount of food they can have in one sitting.

Observing children's eating behaviours also ensures all adequate nutrition is provided each day. For example, serve fruit and vegetables separately (not together) to encourage their consumption of each main food group each day.

Below are some ideas and/or recipes for planning Morning or Afternoon tea.

### GRAINS (BREADS, CEREALS, RICE AND PASTA)

#### Wholegrain cereals

- Cereal (wholegrain/wholemeal recommended) served with milk or yoghurt, fruit
- Muesli served with yoghurt and fruit
- Rolled oats or porridge served with milk and/or water

#### Wholegrain bread and crackers

- Raisin bread
- Wholemeal/wholegrain bread or wrap (wheat, rye, sourdough)
- Wholemeal English muffin, crumpet or bagel
- Wholegrain crispbreads
- Rice cakes or 'brown' rice crackers
- Corn thins
- Vegetable fritter or pikelet (savoury)

#### Healthy toppings and/or dips

- Margarine
- Cheese e.g. reduced fat sliced cheddar, ricotta, cottage cheese, feta
- Baked beans (reduced salt)
- Fruit (e.g. mashed avocado, banana) or vegetable (sliced tomato)
- Vegetable relish (corn or tomato) or salsa
- Tomato paste, vegetables and cheese (to make healthy pizzas or scrolls)
- Egg i.e. scrambled or boiled (sliced)
- Canned tuna or salmon spring water, flavoured or oil (drained)
- Dips such as hummus, roasted vegetables (i.e. sweet potato, capsicum, pumpkin, sweet corn, beetroot)
- Yoghurt (Greek) or tzatziki

- Sushi or rice paper rolls

- Baked items using 100% wholemeal flour (limit to 1-2 times per week)  
For more information, see tab *Step 2. Breads, cereals, rice & pasta*; page 17.

# Ideas for Morning & Afternoon tea

## VEGETABLES

- Fresh vegetables i.e. carrot, snow peas, capsicum, cherry tomatoes, green beans, cucumber, celery, radish, zucchini, cauliflower or broccoli florets, etc.
- Oven roasted vegetables, e.g. sweet potato, zucchini, beetroot (add herbs for flavour)
- Corn on the cob
- Salad with dressing
- Edamame (soybeans)

## FRUIT

- Fresh, seasonal fruits cut-up
- Frozen fruit (e.g. pineapple, mango slices, berries) make a great snack in summer
- Dried fruit (apricot, sultanas, dates)  
\*Serve this less often.

For more information, see tab Step 3. *Vegetables and Fruit*; page 19.

## DAIRY

- Milk or alternative milk
- Yoghurt served with fruit and/or muesli
- Frozen yoghurt (great snack in summer)
- Cheese served with wholegrain/ wholemeal bread or crackers
- Smoothies - recipes can include muesli, fruit (fresh, frozen or canned)

Plain water or water are the best drinks to offer at Morning or Afternoon tea. Simply offering ½ cup (125ml) of milk either at Morning or Afternoon tea is an easy way of meeting one serve of dairy each day. Adding extra serves of dairy, i.e. cheese or yoghurt is not necessary. Related: *When too much milk leads to poor health* on page 22.



## Cheese and Vegemite Scrolls

Prep Time: 10 mins Cook Time: 20 mins Serves: 20  
Serving Size: 1 scroll

### INGREDIENTS

6 cups Self raising flour  
650ml Reduced fat milk approx.  
Pinch Table salt  
3-4 tbs Vegemite  
100g Margarine  
400g Reduced fat tasty cheese, grated

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Tomato paste can be used as a variation to Vegemite. Sprinkle some basil or oregano onto the tomato paste before sprinkling the cheese.
- Lean diced ham and tomato paste could be used to make pizza scrolls.

### STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 220°C.
2. Sift flour and salt into a bowl then rub through margarine. Stir in enough milk to make a soft dough.
3. Working with half the dough at a time, knead gently on a lightly floured surface and roll out to form a 40cm x 25cm rectangle.
4. Spread the Vegemite over the dough then sprinkle  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the cheese. Roll up along the long side to enclose the cheese.
5. Cut each roll into 12 x 2cm thick pieces and place close together, cut side up, on a greased baking tray.
6. Sprinkle with the remaining cheese and bake for 15-20 mins or until cooked and golden.



Recipe from *The Yummy Tummy Book*, Western NSW Local Health District  
originally sourced from [www.vegemite.com.au/#recipes](http://www.vegemite.com.au/#recipes)

## Creamy Avocado Dippers

**Prep Time:** 10 mins **Cook Time:** 0 mins **Serves:** 20

**Serving Size:** 1 tablespoon dip with ½ cup vegetable sticks and ¼ slice pita bread

### INGREDIENTS

#### Dip:

- 1 ½ cup Reduced fat Greek-style plain yoghurt
- 6 Ripe avocados
- 1 tsp Minced garlic
- Juice of 2 Lemons
- ¼ tsp Ground cumin

#### Dippers:

- 10 cups Seasonal vegetables such as capsicum, cucumber, snow peas, celery, cut into small sticks
- 5 slices Wholemeal pita bread, cut into small triangles and toasted.

### STEPS

1. To make dip, place all ingredients in a food processor and process until smooth. Serve immediately as it will turn brown over time.
2. Serve each child a small bowl containing 1 tablespoon of dip, ½ cup of vegetable sticks and ¼ piece of pita bread triangles.

### HELPFUL TIP

Leftover dip can be stored in the fridge covered with plastic wrap that is flush with dip (i.e. no air pockets) to minimise browning.

## Mini Pizza Rounds

**Prep Time:** 20 mins **Cook Time:** 10 mins **Serves:** 20

**Serving Size:** ½ muffin

### INGREDIENTS

10 Wholemeal English muffins  
1 Onion, finely diced  
400g Tomato paste  
200g Mushrooms, finely diced  
1 Red capsicum, finely diced  
5 Tomatoes, finely diced  
1 Green capsicum, finely diced  
250g Reduced fat cheese, grated

### STEPS

1. Cut muffins in half. Spread with tomato paste.
2. Place small amounts of onion, tomato, capsicum and mushroom on each slice.
3. Top with grated cheese.
4. Place under the grill for 3-4 minutes or until golden brown.

### SERVING SUGGESTION

Serve pizzas with ½ cup of vegetable sticks or 1 cup of salad.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Mini Pizza Rounds served with vegetable sticks or salad on the side become an easy meal option. When serving as a meal, cook 500g of lean mince to add with diced vegetables and cheese as the pizza filling.
- Use up leftover vegetables for pizza toppings.
- Chicken or lean ham could also be added to toppings, however a vegetarian pizza will be tasty and less expensive.
- Fresh herbs could be added for extra flavour, particularly basil or oregano. This is a great opportunity to use fresh herbs from your vegetable garden.
- Children could assemble their own pizzas.

## Pumpkin Scones

**Prep Time:** 25 mins **Cook Time:** 15 mins **Serves:** 20

**Serving Size:** 2 large or 2 small scones

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbs Margarine
- 2 Eggs
- 1 cup Sugar
- 2 cups Cold mashed pumpkin
- 1 tsp Mixed spice
- 4 ½ cups Self raising flour

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Butternut pumpkin works particularly well to give a sweet, mild flavour to these scones.
- The amount of flour needed to make a dough will vary depending on the moistness of the pumpkin. If required, add extra flour gradually to reduce the stickiness of the dough.
- These scones freeze and re-heat well.

### STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 225°C (205°C fan forced).
2. In a bowl, combine margarine and sugar with electric mixer. Add eggs, spice and pumpkin and beat until well combined.
3. With a spatula, stir through the flour and turn out on bench. Combine with your hands and flatten the dough out to 2.5cm thickness - add more flour if needed.
4. Flour a scone cutter, and cut out 40 scones.
5. Place scones on a greased tray with 1cm space around each scone and brush the tops with milk.
6. Bake for 10-15 mins, depending on the size of the scone. When cooked they should be golden brown on top.
7. Serve warm with a smear of margarine.



Recipe from *The Yummy Tummy Book*, Western NSW Local Health District  
originally sourced from [www.kidspot.com.au](http://www.kidspot.com.au)

## Yoghurt Sundae

Prep Time: 10 mins Cook Time: 0 mins Serves: 20

Serving Size: 1 sundae

### INGREDIENTS

2kg Reduced fat vanilla yoghurt  
400g Passionfruit pulp (fresh or canned)  
1.5kg Frozen berries, defrosted  
3 cups Untoasted muesli  
1  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup Frozen berries, defrosted to serve

### STEPS

1. Puree berries in a blender until the consistency of a 'chunky' sauce.
2. In small cups (1 per child) place 1 tablespoon of passionfruit pulp. Add 100 grams of yoghurt to cup.
3. Top with approx. 3 tablespoons of berry puree.
4. Add 1 tablespoon of muesli and a few berries on top to decorate and serve.
4. Alternatively, place the berry puree, muesli and fruit in bowls on the table for children to decorate the top of their own yoghurt filled cups.

### HELPFUL TIPS

- Stewed fruit can be used instead of berries, e.g stewed peaches, plums, apples - whatever is in season.
- Passionfruit pulp may be added on top as well.
- Sliced banana could be put in the bottom of the cup to make a yoghurt banana split.

# Appendix: Menu template\*

\*ECEC services can use this template to display at services.

Here's what children are munchin' on this week!

Late afternoon snack	Afternoon tea	Lunch	Morning tea	Breakfast

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

## OUR HEALTHY MENU INCLUDES:

### For lunch:

- Red meat i.e. beef, lamb or kangaroo (served at least 6 times a fortnight)
- Includes a high iron food

White meat i.e. chicken, pork or fish (served up to 4 times a fortnight)

- Includes two high iron foods

'Non - meat (vegetarian)' (served up to 4 times a fortnight)

- Includes legumes, tofu, cheese or egg

- Includes two high iron foods
- + Vitamin C food served with meal

### Breads, cereals, rice & pasta:

- Two serves every day
- Wholegrain or wholemeal provided

### Vegetables:

- Two serves every day

### Fruit:

- One serve every day

### Dairy:

- One serve every day

Reduced fat for children 2+ years





## Here's what children are munchin' on this week!

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning tea					
Lunch					
Afternoon tea					

**Notes**

### OUR HEALTHY MENU INCLUDES:

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- Red meat i.e. beef, lamb or kangaroo (served at least 6 times a fortnight)
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- Includes legumes, tofu, cheese or egg

- Includes two high iron foods
- + Vitamin C food served with meal

**Breads, cereals, rice & pasta:**

- Two serves every day
- Wholegrain or wholemeal provided

**Vegetables:**

- Two serves every day

**Fruit:**

- One serve every day

**Dairy:**

- One serve every day

*Reduced fat for children 2 + years*





