



St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy



Healthy Lifestyle Guidance Booklet

St Peter and St Paul Catholic Primary Academy is committed to giving children the opportunities for a healthy lifestyle. This booklet will help parents and careers in achieving this, or assist with your already healthy lifestyle. We know that when children are healthy and happy, they can achieve more.

To achieve a healthy lifestyle children must:

- Have a healthy balanced diet.
- Take part in regular exercise.
- Have an understanding of healthy and unhealthy diet.
- Be emotionally well, along with physically well.

Every child has a right to nutritious food. When children eat better, they do better – they are in better shape to reach their potential. By getting them eating well today, we are creating the healthier adults of tomorrow, who are less likely to suffer health conditions linked to poor diet. That means cutting costs for the NHS, a more productive workforce and families passing on better food habits to future generations. But it is a huge challenge as children are not eating enough fruit and vegetables and too much saturated fat, sugar and salt. Around one in five children is overweight or obese as they start school; that rises to one in three by the time they leave primary school.

Here are 8 top tips....



1. Base your meals on starchy foods: bread, potatoes, pasta, rice, noodles

Choose wholegrains and potatoes with skin where possible which have more fibre, vitamins and minerals.

Remember starchy foods contain fewer than half the calories of fats per gram

2. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables



Choose a variety of fruit and vegetables as they contain different combinations of vitamins and minerals.

Fresh, frozen, tinned and 100% fruit juices all count!

Try grating vegetables like carrots and courgettes into bolognaise or add lots of vegetables to homemade tomato sauce and blend.

3. Eat more fish - aim for at least two portions per week and one of these should be oily



- Remember that one portion of fish is approximately 140g cooked weight.
- Oily fish are one of the only natural food sources of vitamin D, important for bone health. Oily fish includes salmon, fresh tuna, sardines, mackerel and trout.
- Choose from fresh, frozen, smoked and canned, but remember that smoked fish contains salt, and canned can do, so check labels and pick lower salt varieties.

4. Cut down on saturated fat and sugar



- Although we need some fat in our diet (to provide the essential fatty acids and aid the absorption of the fat soluble vitamins A, D, E and K), too much fat may lead to weight gain as fat provides 9 calories per gram, more than double that from carbohydrates and protein.
- Replace saturated fats from butter, lard, pastries, cream, pies and cheese (which can increase your blood cholesterol levels) with unsaturated fats found in vegetable oils, nuts, seeds, oily fish and avocados.
- Too much sugar, especially between meals can increase risk of tooth decay and will add extra calories so limit your added sugar intake! If you get a sweet craving try having fruit instead, helping you to achieve your 5-a-day!

5. Eat less salt - adults should eat no more than 6 g per day and children should have even less



- A high salt intake is associated with an increased risk of developing high blood pressure which puts you at a greater risk of developing stroke or heart disease.
- Most of our salt intake comes from processed foods rather than salt added during cooking or at the table, so always check food labels for the salt content!
- When comparing foods, a high salt content is more than 1.5g salt per 100g (or 0.6g sodium). Low is 0.3g salt or less per 100g (or 0.1g sodium).
- Try using extra herbs, spices, citrus juices (lemon and lime), mustard or vinegar to flavour foods so you can use less salt in your recipes.

6. Get active and be a healthy weight!



- The government recommends 150 minutes of moderate intensity or 75 minutes vigorous intensity physical activity for adults 19-64 years of age and muscle strength training on at least two days per week.
- What counts? Moderate intensity activities include cycling or brisk walking. High or vigorous intensity activities include swimming and running. Muscle strengthening activities include exercises with weights or carrying heavy boxes or groceries.

Did you know....? Over 60% of adults in the UK are overweight or obese which increases the risk of getting type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Physical activity can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and stroke and help maintain a healthy weight.

7. Don't get thirsty



- Aim for 8-10 glasses of fluid per day. Water is the best choice as it hydrates you without adding any extra calories to your daily intake.
- Most types of drink count including water, tea, coffee, soft drinks, milk, fruit juice and smoothies, but try to avoid added sugar in your drinks as this can increase risk of dental decay.
- Alcohol does not count because it makes you pass urine more frequently and contributes to dehydration rather than hydration!

8. Don't skip breakfast



A healthy breakfast can provide fibre, calories, vitamins and minerals important for health. Choose wholegrain cereals, porridge or wholemeal toast with fruit for a healthy start to the day.

A balanced packed lunch should



- Be based on starchy foods such as a wholegrain roll, bagel, wrap, pitta pocket, pasta, rice, potatoes or noodles
- Include plenty of fruit and vegetables, e.g. an apple, satsuma, handful of cherry tomatoes, carrot, cucumber, pepper or celery sticks, small tub of fruit salad or small box of raisins. These can also be incorporated into other dishes like pasta salads, wraps, pittas, sandwiches, sandwich fillers such as onion and sweetcorn with your tuna or cucumber with salmon, frittatas and omelettes.
- Remember to take a drink too! Grab a bottle of water or a carton of fruit juice or semi-skimmed fat milk.

Try to include some lean protein to help keep you full. Try fish, eggs, pulses, prawns or chicken. Consider how much dairy you've had over the day – if you haven't had much, add a portion to your lunch. Try a single pot of yogurt or an individual cheese.

There are currently no government guidelines regarding the types of foods that can be included in packed lunches for children at school, although we have our own policy on what packed lunches should or should not contain. As outlined previously, a healthy packed lunch for school should contain:

- A portion of a starchy food
- Plenty of fruit and vegetables
- A portion of meat, fish, eggs beans or another (non-dairy) source of protein and/or milk or a dairy food
- A drink e.g. a bottle of water, fruit juice, semi-skimmed or 1% fat milk.

Below are some ideas for children's packed lunches

Why not get your child involved with making the packed lunch the night before? They will really enjoy eating the food that they have helped to prepare. You can even get them to help plan a weekly lunch menu and go shopping for the main items that will go into their lunch box. You could also try a checklist from which they can choose lunch items and drinks each day, emphasising healthy options and encouraging variety. Some ideas for mains, treats and drinks to get you started include:

Sandwiches, bagels, wraps and pittas

If you have a few mouths to feed, you could do 'mix and match' sandwiches – make a few different flavours, divide into two or three and put one of each flavour in each lunchbox. This works well with bagels or sliced bread. Mini wraps and mini pittas make tasty alternatives to traditional sandwiches.

Experiment with different fillings such as:

- smoked mackerel mixed with some salad leaves, chopped tomato, cucumber and some Greek yogurt, lemon juice and black pepper
- tuna, red pepper, spinach and sweetcorn with a small amount of reduced fat mayonnaise
- for a tasty vegetarian option, why not try a falafel wrap with grated carrot, lettuce leaves and some reduced fat hummus or tzatziki?

Pasta salads

Pasta salads can be quick and easy, especially if you are having pasta for dinner the night before – just cook a little extra and keep aside for lunchboxes. Here are some suggestions to get you started, but remember that pasta goes with most things, so experiment with what you have in the house.

- Tuna pasta salad with peppers, sweetcorn, tomato, spring onion and some reduced fat mayonnaise.
- Pasta with cooked frozen peas, broad beans and sweetcorn with lemon juice, black pepper and some cheddar cheese (great for those days just before you need to do the shopping again!)
- Pasta with ham, mozzarella, cherry tomatoes and chickpeas (or leave out the ham for a tasty vegetarian lunch).

Homemade mini pizzas

These are really simple and delicious and you can get the children involved too. Spread some tomato purée and some fresh or dried herbs onto some pitta breads and top with vegetables such as onion, sweetcorn, peppers, courgettes, spinach or rocket, some cooked chicken or ham and some grated cheese or slices of mozzarella. Grill until the cheese is melted. Cool and place in the lunchbox in the fridge for the next day.

Easy frittatas

Frittatas are a great lunchbox item that can be enjoyed by all of the family. You can add any vegetables, beans, pulses, meats and cheese that you like and it is a great way to use up any leftovers. Try:

- sweet potato, chickpea and spinach
- baby potato, tomato and goats cheese
- pea, mint and courgette
- ham, rocket and mozzarella

Tasty potato salads and potato cakes

Potato salads are delicious and filling and make use of any leftover potatoes. Have a go at making a smoked mackerel and potato salad with spring onion, cucumber, mushroom and sweetcorn. If your child likes spicy food, substitute the mackerel for a tin of sardines in spicy tomato sauce or replace with some jerk chicken. For a vegetarian twist, substitute the mackerel for some tofu, Quorn or beans (broad beans, butter beans, cannellini beans, black eyed beans, kidney beans and chick peas will all work well).

Potato cakes are an excellent lunch following a roast the day before. Why not get your child involved in mashing any of the leftover potatoes and vegetables and shredding the leftover meat? Simply combine the ingredients and add a whisked egg and some black pepper, grill or fry in a small amount of oil until piping hot and leave to cool, ready to pop in the lunch box.

Alternatively, check out this recipe for potato cakes with sweet potato from the [NHS Change 4 Life website](#).

Additional packed lunch items for children

It is important to include extra items in your child's lunchbox, such as fruit or vegetables, a dairy item and a drink. Although some cakes and savoury snacks may be allowed by your child's school policy, these should be included less often and it is a good idea to select healthier options where possible. Some ideas for these are given below.

Fruit and Vegetables (Pick 1 -2 for the lunchbox each day and try to vary these throughout the week!)



- Any piece of fruit such as apples, satsumas, clementines, pears, peaches, nectarines, berries, grapes, pineapple, melon, mango, lychees, kiwi fruit, bananas, raisins, dried apricots, prunes or dates. Remember that these can be fresh, tinned, frozen or dried.
- Supermarkets often have packs of chopped fresh fruits, individual packs of dried fruits and child-sized pots of fruit in fruit juice. It is a good idea to have some of these available for those days when you don't have much time to prepare. However, be aware that these can be more expensive. An alternative option is to make some of your own over the weekend, for example placing a small handful of mixed dried fruits into some food bags or sealed containers to store in the cupboard.
- Vegetable sticks such as baby corn, sugar snap peas, celery, carrots, peppers and cucumber. These can be served alone or with a tasty dip such as tzatziki, hummus, salsa, cottage cheese or a bean dip.

Dairy items (Pick 1 for the lunchbox each day – aim for a different one each time)



If you're not including a dairy food in the main lunch item (e.g a salad or sandwich), there are lots of tasty dairy items available for children that will make interesting additions for lunch boxes. Why not try:

- Mini cheeses such as cheese triangles, cheddar sticks or cheese strings
- A tube of fromage frais or yogurt
- A drink of milk or a milkshake (or for vegans or those who can't eat dairy foods, calcium-fortified soya and nut drink alternatives)
- A smoothie made with milk or yogurt

Occasional treats



Having a healthy lunch does not mean not allowing any treats. Healthier treats could include a slice of malt loaf, banana bread, fruit jelly or a fruit scone. It's a good idea to check with your child's school policy that these items are allowed.

Get your kids involved in baking some healthier cakes and savoury snacks for their lunch boxes. Here are some ideas that the kids may like (these can also be enjoyed by adults too!)

- Banana cake
- Plain, fruit or cheese and chive scones
- Apple, apricot and sultana squares
- Fruity flapjacks
- Bag of plain popcorn (you could try this dusted with cinnamon or mixed with dried apple or banana chips)
- Oat cakes with cottage cheese
- Savoury ham and cheese muffins

Food safety and hygiene

Harmful bacteria can multiply when food is stored at room temperature. It is often difficult to find refrigeration for packed lunches, especially for children at school and so it is important to consider food safety when preparing and storing a packed lunch.

Here are some tips for keeping a packed lunch safe:

- Put a cool pack or frozen drink in the lunch box to keep it cool
- Freeze yogurt or fromage frais tubes – they'll act as a cool pack to keep the rest of the lunch cold and melt back to yogurt by lunchtime.
- Wash your hands and clean any surfaces before preparing and eating food
- Try to use a separate chopping board for raw meat and any other products, or wash after use in hot soapy water

If possible, store the packed lunch in a fridge or somewhere cool.

Healthy snacking

Fruit and vegetables

Many fruits and vegetables are perfectly packaged for snacking, at home or on the go. Bananas, clementine's, satsumas, plums, apples and mini bags of carrots or cherry tomatoes make excellent snack choices that will help you to meet your 5-A-DAY target. Keep some fruit in a bowl somewhere within easy reach and a supply of dried fruits in your bag, so you always have some healthy snacks available when on-the-go. Dried fruits are best included as part of a meal as they are high in sugar compared to fresh fruits, which can be damaging for health if eaten between meals as a snack. At home, a supply of frozen berries can also be handy for a quick sweet snack and can taste delicious with reduced fat yogurt or custard.

Some other healthy snacking ideas include

- Some carrot, cucumber or celery sticks with a tablespoon of reduced-fat cottage cheese, salsa, reduced fat hummus or Greek yogurt and fresh herbs = 30 – 85 kcal (130 – 370 kJ)
- A large slice of melon or pineapple = 20 – 40 kcal (85 – 170 kJ)
- A selection of crudités like sticks of pepper, cauliflower or broccoli florets = 25 kcal (110 kJ)



Milk and dairy foods

These foods contain protein, calcium and a range of other nutrients. Calcium is vital for healthy bones and teeth and also contributes to normal blood clotting and muscle function, so try to include some of these foods as snacks. Opt for lower fat varieties where possible, to reduce the level of saturated fat consumed, as well as calories. For those who can't or choose not to eat dairy foods, make sure non-dairy alternatives are fortified with calcium and vitamin D where possible. Some suggestions for milk and dairy snacks are:



- A low-fat yogurt or fromage frais = 50 – 135 kcal (215 – 580 kJ)
- A low-calorie hot chocolate mix made with skimmed milk = 130 kcal (560 kcal)
- 2 cream crackers with 30g half-fat cheddar cheese = 140 kcal
- A banana smoothie made with 200ml skimmed milk = 140 kcal (600 kJ)

Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein

Foods in this group are a good source of protein and provide important vitamins and minerals needed for good health. Nuts and seeds are great snacks as they contain healthy polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats. Just remember to control your portion as nuts are high in energy – a small handful is all you need. Oily fish like sardines, salmon, mackerel, herring and pilchards also contain omega-3 fatty acids, which help to keep the heart healthy. These are a great choice for a snack, especially if you do not use oily fish in your usual meals. Some ideas of snacks from this group include:

- A small handful of unsalted nuts e.g. 6 whole almonds or 10 cashew nuts = 60 – 80 kcal (260 – 340 kJ)
- A tablespoon of seeds e.g. sunflower seeds = 90 kcal (390 kJ)
- A hard-boiled egg = 75 kcal (320 kJ)
- 2 crackers with peanut butter = 130 kcal (560 kJ)
- 1 tablespoon of hummus and vegetable sticks = 85 kcal (370 kJ)
- A small bowl of lentil soup = 150 kcal (645 kJ)
- Sardines (half a can), a poached egg or 2 tablespoons of baked beans (reduced sugar and salt) on a slice of wholemeal toast with low fat spread = 140 – 150 kcal (600 – 650 kJ)



What about crisps, chocolates, sweets and sugar-containing drinks?

These foods and drinks belong to the smallest food group - foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar. It is fine to have them occasionally, but only in small amounts. For those that are high in sugar such as sweets, chocolate, non-diet soft drinks and some pastries, biscuits and desserts, it is better to have them as part of a meal than as a snack between meals, as frequent snacking on sugar-containing foods between meals contributes to tooth decay.

Foods high in fat such as cream, butter, some crisps and pastries should also be limited as these contain a lot of fat, saturated fat and often salt, which we should aim to cut down on.

Remember to check food labels to help you make a healthy choice.

Good Choice (mostly green traffic lights, if shown)

- Fat content of 3 g or less per 100 g
- Saturates (saturated fat) content of 1.5 g or less per 100 g
- Sugar content of 2 g or less per 100 g
- Salt content of 0.3 g or less per 100 g

Occasional Choice (mostly red traffic lights, if shown)

- Fat content of 20 g or more per 100 g
- Saturates (saturated fat) content of 5 g or more per 100 g
- Sugar content of 10 g or more per 100 g
- Salt content of 1.5 g or more per 100 g

Ideas for quick and healthy snacks:

- Toasted peanut butter and banana sandwich (379kcal/1586kJ)
- Small bag of nuts (173kcal/724kJ)
- Instant hot oats zapped in the microwave with milk (180kcal/753kJ)
- Fruit smoothie – you could make your own by blending a small glass milk together with a banana (140kcal/586kJ)
- Bowl of wholegrain breakfast cereal with a sliced banana and ice-cold lower fat milk (284kcal/1188kJ)
- A pot of low-fat yoghurt (118kcal/ 494kJ) or rice pudding (130kcal/544kJ)
- Can of fruit in juice (126kcal/527kJ)



Top tips for eating fruit and veg.

- If someone in your family doesn't like the texture of chopped vegetables, try grating carrots or courgettes into your food to add flavour. Or make a soup or sauce with added vegetables and blend until smooth.
- Frozen fruit and vegetables can contain just as many nutrients as fresh. Indeed, as they are frozen rapidly after harvest, they may contain more of some vitamins than fresh vegetables that are a few days old. They could also help you reduce waste as they keep much longer and are more economical as you only have to cook what you need.
- Try a new fruit or vegetable each week to increase variety, why not pick seasonal fruits and vegetables which are often cheaper and taste great.
- Have a glass of orange juice with fortified cereal for breakfast – the vitamin C in orange juice can help the body absorb iron from the cereal.
- Choose tinned fruits or vegetables in natural juice or water, with no added sugar or salt.
- A good way to ensure you get your 5-A-DAY is to have 1 portion with breakfast, 2 with lunch and 2 with dinner. You can add even more by choosing fruit or vegetables as snacks.

Healthy eating on a budget

Eating a healthy, varied diet does not mean that you need to buy the most expensive foods. There are plenty of cheap, nutritious and delicious foods available, that you can make healthy meals from. By planning your meals you will be able to cut down on waste and save money. Here are a few tips to help make your money go further:

Shopping Tips

Plan your meals, make a grocery list and shop wisely! This will help you avoid making impulse buys that add to your shopping bill. Remember that supermarkets may put the most expensive or popular items at eye level so scan the shelves for lower cost items. Economy ranges are usually great value and nutritionally there is often little difference to the standard or branded versions. Don't be tempted to buy more by special offers if you think the extra may go to waste or it's something that's not on your list. Try heading to the supermarket near closing time when reductions will be at their highest.



Look for special offers on long shelf-life products like dried pasta, rice and noodles, dried or tinned beans and pulses, tinned tomatoes, passata, tomato concentrate and cereals. These can be used to bulk up your meals and make them go further. It is worth checking if there are any food co-ops in your area; these are run on a not-for-profit basis and may have cheap store cupboard ingredients.



Buy cheaper cuts of meat such as chicken thighs or drumsticks instead of chicken breast. A whole chicken can be good value, especially if you use it for more than one meal. Mince is also a popular ingredient, versatile and inexpensive – just remember to drain the fat off before adding other ingredients! Asking the butcher for cuts like shin of beef, lamb neck or pork chump can also save you money compared to the more expensive cuts. Cheaper cuts of meat tend to need longer cooking times but can also be the tastiest! If there are special offers on buying extra you could keep any meat that you are not going to use straight away in the freezer for another time.



Canned oily fish such as sardines and salmon can be cheaper than buying fresh fish. They are high in omega-3 fats which can help to keep the heart healthy, plus they are easy to prepare and have a long shelf life. Opt for ones in spring water to keep the salt content to a minimum. Frozen fish is often very good value and can be added to a range of dishes. If there are special offers on fresh fish you could also take advantage of these and freeze any that you are not going to use straight away. See our tips in the cooking ideas section.

Check the frozen and canned fruit and vegetable section for cheaper items. Frozen vegetables tend to be cheaper than fresh varieties, they count towards your 5 A DAY and freezing preserves nutrients so that some frozen vegetables provide more of certain nutrients than fresh versions. You can use them when you want without them going off, which cuts down on waste. Remember to check supermarket own brand and economy ranges – these are often cheaper than branded items.

Top tip: Watch out for canned fruits and vegetables which have added sugar or salt, and opt for those in fruit juice or water instead.

Fresh fruit and vegetables can be cheaper if you buy them from the **local market** rather than supermarkets. If you do buy from the supermarket, consider buying loose fruits and vegetables, which can be much cheaper than pre-packaged ones. **Fresh fruit and vegetables in season** are often cheaper as well and can taste great!

Food Group	Cheaper options	Cooking tips and Ideas
<p data-bbox="130 1339 523 1406">Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy foods</p> 	<ul data-bbox="641 1415 1018 1944" style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy ranges for bread, dried pasta, rice and noodles are usually much cheaper and there may not always be much difference in taste. • Remember to cook foods like pasta and rice in unsalted water. Buying in bulk will save money and these foods last a long time as long as they are kept dry. Bread can be kept in the freezer to keep it fresh for longer. 	<ul data-bbox="1066 1326 1461 1639" style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid frying in lots of oil or butter, as this will add a lot of calories to the dish. Instead opt for tomato sauces for pasta (which can be made cheaply from tinned chopped tomatoes) and bake potatoes or wedges instead of chips.

Fruit and vegetables



- Tinned, frozen and dried fruits and vegetables are often cheaper than fresh.
- Seasonal fruits and vegetables are often cheaper too and can taste great! By shopping seasonally you can also make sure you eat a variety of fruit and vegetables over the course of a year.
- Try pureeing fruit that needs using up to make a breakfast smoothie or add the puree to your porridge or breakfast cereal.
- Save money and get more of your 5 A DAY by substituting some of the meat with vegetables or pulses in meat dishes. This can make dishes go further and will fill you up for less.
- Aim to use at least two different vegetables with your dinner. If cooking for fussy eaters grate carrots or add some frozen vegetables to sauces and blend!
- Buying pre-prepared fruit and vegetable can be expensive. For meals and snacks on the go, you can save a lot and eat healthily by preparing your own salads or fruit salads to have as side dishes or desserts when you are at work or out and about.

Milk and dairy products



- Economy ranges for low fat natural yogurt are usually great value.
- Products like milk and cheese can be frozen so you can take advantage of special offers and store any extra you buy in the freezer.
- Low fat natural yogurt is a great alternative to cream and can be used in savoury dishes such as curries, pasta sauces and also for making your own dips and pâté.
- It can also be used in desserts or blended with ripe bananas and any other leftover fruits for a delicious smoothie!

Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein



- Cheaper cuts of meat such as chicken thighs and drumsticks, mince, beef brisket or skirt (these can be found in butchers and can be cheaper than the supermarket), shoulder of lamb and pork belly can all save you money.
- Tinned fish, eggs, beans and lentils are all relatively low cost ingredients and can be even cheaper when bought in bulk!

- Remember to cut off any visible fat from meats and remove the skin from poultry to reduce your saturated fat intake.
- Bulk up recipes with beans and lentils which count as 1 of your 5 a day, are low in fat and high in fibre!

How to lead a healthy lifestyle

There are five simple ways for your family to lead a healthy lifestyle and get back on track:

1. Get active each day

- Regular physical activity is important for the healthy growth, development and well-being of children and young people.
- They should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day, including vigorous activities that make them 'huff and puff'.
- Include activities that strengthen muscles and bones on at least 3 days of the week.
- Parents should be good role models and have a positive attitude to being active.

2. Choose water as a drink

- Water is the best way to quench your thirst – and it doesn't come with the added sugar found in fruit juices, soft drinks and other sweetened drinks.
- Reduced fat milk for children over two is a nutritious drink and a great source of calcium.
- Give kids whole fruit to eat, rather than offering fruit juices that have a lot of sugar.

3. Eat more fruit and vegetables

- Eating fruit and vegetables every day helps children grow and develop, boosts their vitality and can reduce the risk of many chronic diseases.
- Aim to eat two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables every day.
- Have fresh fruit available as a convenient snack and try to include fruit and vegies in every meal.

4. Switch off the screen and get active

- Sedentary or ‘still’ time spent watching TV, surfing online or playing computer games is linked to kids becoming overweight or obese.
- Children and young people should spend no more than two hours a day on ‘small screen’ entertainment. Break up long periods of use as often as possible.
- Plan a range of active indoor and outdoor games or activities for your children, as alternatives to watching TV or playing on the computer.

5. Eat fewer snacks and select healthier alternatives

- Healthy snacks help children and young people meet their daily nutritional needs.
- Snacks based on fruit and vegetables, reduced fat dairy products and whole grains are the healthiest choices.
- Avoid snacks that are high in sugar or saturated fats – such as chips, cakes and chocolate – which can cause children to put on excess weight.

Why get active?

Regular physical activity is an important part of getting healthy and staying healthy.

Encouraging children to be active from a young age sets good habits early on and helps them develop the skills they need to stay active throughout their lives.

Regular physical activity helps children:

- with healthy growth and development
- build strong bones and muscles
- improve balance and develop skills
- maintain and develop flexibility
- achieve and maintain a healthy weight
- improve cardiovascular fitness
- reduce stress and feel more relaxed
- improve posture

- boost confidence and self-esteem
- have fun with their friends and make new ones

Children who don't get enough physical activity are at a greater risk of becoming overweight or obese. This makes it harder for them to be active and keep up in sport or play.

Being overweight can also make kids more prone to conditions such as asthma, flat feet and joint sprains. In the long term, it can contribute to conditions such as high blood pressure and cholesterol, heart disease, Type 2 Diabetes and liver disease.

Research tells us that the warning signs for these conditions can be present in overweight teenagers as young as 15 years of age.

How much activity?

Children should get at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day, including vigorous activities that make them 'huff and puff'. They can get even more health benefits from doing several hours of physical activity every day.

Kids and teens should do strengthening activities at least three days of the week. Strengthening activities, such as climbing, jumping, running or playing tug-o-war, help to build muscle and strong bones.

To help children become active every day, they need opportunities for sport, play and exercise at school, after school and on weekends.

Physical activity doesn't all have to happen at the one time. It can be accumulated throughout the day; by walking or riding to and from school, being involved in activities at school, active play at home or taking part in organised sport after school and on weekends.

How to help children be more active

- Be a good role model and have a positive attitude to being active. If your children see you enjoying physical activity and having fun, it can motivate them to participate.
- Encourage them to play in the backyard, dance to music, ride a bike or get involved in vigorous activities like running, swimming or playing sports like football, rugby netball or basketball.
- Make time to be active as a family – walk to the local park, go bike riding or take the dog for a stroll.

- Encourage 'active play' by buying gifts that get children up and moving, such as balls, bats, skipping ropes and other equipment. It also helps them develop and practice new skills.
- Park some distance away from your destination – school, sport or the shops – and walk the rest of the way.
- Make sure children and teens have an opportunity to be active after school, either through active play or organised sport.
- Encourage children and teens to try different sports or activities so they can find one or more that they really enjoy and want to continue with.
- Start slowly and build up the amount of physical activity that your children do, particularly if they haven't previously been very active.
- Limit the amount of time that children and teens spend on 'small screen' entertainment – such as watching TV, going online or playing computer games – to no more than 2 hours a day.
- Children and teens should wear hats, appropriate footwear and 30+ sunscreen when they're being active outdoors.
- Make sure they drink plenty of water when they are physically active or playing sports.
- An active lifestyle is fuelled by healthy foods – make sure your children make healthy food and drink choices and limit foods that are high in added sugar, salt and saturated fat