

Lunch Box Ideas

Today's Parenting Post I will be highlighting packed lunch guidance, please look at the first picture for lunchbox ideas. This guide is to create a healthy and nutritious lunch box that is easy to prepare for your child. This post includes ideas for a healthy lunch, potential choking hazards, how foods should be cut in your child's lunch box and foods to avoid. This currently only applies for the children who are attending Nursery 30 hours, I have added to all children's journals as this may apply to you in the future.

We ask that all food is ready to serve as Staff will be unable to reheat due to health and safety requirements. Within the lunchboxes you could add ice packs to keep food fresh and thermal food container to keep warm.

Please note, on the Lunchbox ideas- the foods are suggestions to help guide when packing a healthy lunch, if there's other things you would normally have and unsure if this is suitable for your child, please speak to either myself or a member of staff within your child's room.

Guidelines for choking hazards-

- Cut food into small pieces or thin slices for easy chewing
- Cut small round shaped food into strips (see pictures for examples)
- Cut grapes and cherry tomatoes into quarters
- Cut cherries into bite size bits and remove pits
- Slice/ Grate cheese

Common foods that are choking hazards -

Sausages or hot dogs – cut into short, narrow strips lengthways as thin as possible. Removing the skin makes them easier to swallow.

Meat – cut into strips and remove any bones, skin or fat.

Fruit – check for pips or stones and remove them.

Round fruit like grapes, blueberries, cherries, strawberries and cherry tomatoes – cut lengthways and then into quarters.

Vegetables and larger fruit like melon, apple, mango, carrot and cucumber – cut into thin strips.

Removing skin from fruits or vegetables makes them easier to swallow and reduces the risk of your child choking on the skin.

Legumes like chickpeas and butter beans – mash or steam to soften them.

Whole nuts should not be given to children under five.

Cheese – cut into narrow batons or strips.

White bread can form a doughy ball in the throat, so brown or toasted bread is a good option. Cut all types of bread into narrow strips.

Please find attached picture of foods that are potential hazards and how they should be chopped. Follow this link to find out more on choking- <https://capt.org.uk/choking-prevention/>

Additional Information

We kindly ask for you to please avoid the following foods listed due to safety for the children/ high choking risk-

NUTS- due to allergies, nuts are not advised for children under 5 years, this includes Nutella or any other kind of nut spread.

Popcorn- can easily get stuck.

Marshmallows- get sticky when wet so can seal the airway and may not come out with back blows.

Round hard sweets- are slippery so can easily be swallowed and completely block the airway.

Fizzy drinks

For more ideas please follow NHS guidance on lunch box recipes- <https://www.nhs.uk/healthier-families/recipes/healthier-lunchboxes/>