



PACKED LUNCH IDEAS FOR SOUTH ASIAN CHILDREN

By Tahira Sarwar
Senior Specialist Dietitian

Packed lunches don't have to be boring. With a little thought and imagination they can be fun, healthy and tasty too.

Just include something from each of the 4 main food groups.

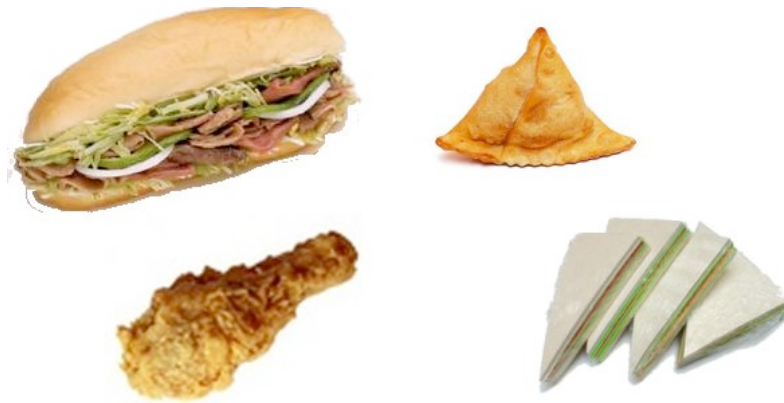
Starchy Foods
(For energy and fibre)



Bread, cereals, rice, potatoes and pasta.

- Try different types of bread such as sliced bread, bread rolls, chapattis, naan bread, pitta bread.
- Choose a variety of breads such as wholemeal, granary, high fibre, white.
- Try and include potato or rice in the lunch.

Protein Foods (Add as a tasty filling)
(For growth and repair and also minerals such as iron)



Meat, chicken, fish and alternatives.

- Try to include lean meat, chicken, fish eggs, nuts, beans, dahls or pulses.
- Examples of foods to include with a starchy food are:
 - Chicken tikka and salad
 - Oily fish such as salmon, tuna (contain vitamin D)
 - Kebabs (grilled) and salad
 - Other finger foods such as chicken drumstick, grilled vegetable or chicken samosa or spring roll, lentil burger.

Fruit and vegetables (important to try and eat at least 5 portions a day)
(For vitamins, minerals and fibre)



- Fresh fruit – for example, apple, banana, nectarine, grapes, mango, melon, pineapple, pear plum.
- Dried fruit such as raisins, sultanas, dates.
- Tinned fruit in fruit juice, packed in a carton box.
- Chopped vegetables such as carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, sliced cucumber, slices of red, green peppers, salad.

Dairy Foods

(Provides minerals such as calcium and vitamin D which are important to keep teeth healthy and bones strong).



Try to choose low fat varieties for a healthy option.

- Low fat margarine spread
- Yoghurt (natural or fruit)
- Paneer, cheese
- Rice pudding
- Milk shake
- Semi-skimmed milk

Drinks



- Water
- Plain or flavoured milk
- Home-made lassi (made from low fat milk)
- Diluted fruit juice
- Low calorie squash

Added Treats



There is nothing wrong with a little treat occasionally. Try to choose healthier choices when you can.

- Reduced fat crisps
- Fruit cake, fairy bun, scone
- Plain popcorn
- Biscuits
- Unsalted nuts, Bombay mix
- Fun size chocolate bar

Practical Tips

- Try to make packed lunches tempting to eat by using food with different colours, textures and cut into easy to eat portions.
- Some fruits may need to be cut into smaller pieces and wrapped in cling film, for example, apples, oranges.
- Foods should be wrapped separately using plastic bags, tin foil.
- Remember to keep the lunch cool so do not store near a radiator or in the sun.
- Keep it in the fridge until the morning if made the night before.