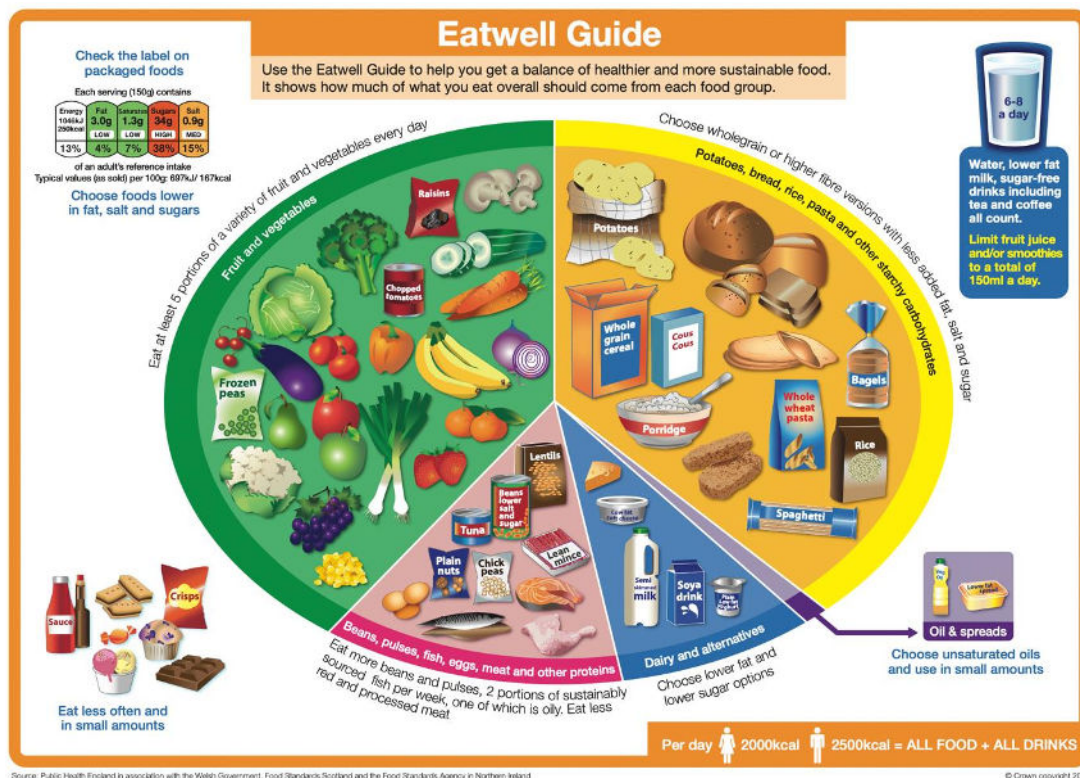


The London Acorn School.

Tips for a nutritionally balanced packed lunch:

Eating a wholesome lunch is vital for ensuring children have the right nutrients and enough energy to complete their school day. Providing a variety of foods ensures that nutritional needs are met throughout the week. Public Health England recommends that children aged 2 years and over transition into eating the same foods as adults. The guidelines for healthy eating are illustrated on the EatWell Guide below:



Printable version of the EatWell Guide:

<https://www.healthyweightgrampian.scot.nhs.uk/healthy-eating-and-drinking/eatwell-guide/eatwell-guide-printable/>

“The Eatwell Guide shows the proportions in which different types of foods are needed to have a well-balanced and healthy diet. The proportions shown are representative of your food consumption over the period of a day or even a week, not necessarily each mealtime.” (PHE, 2018)

The London Acorn School.

The Eatwell Guide shows the proportions of the main food groups that form a healthy, balanced diet:

- Aim for a minimum of 5 portions of various fruits and vegetables every day
- Base meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates; choosing wholegrain versions where possible
- Include some dairy or dairy alternatives (such as soya yogurts), choosing lower fat and lower sugar options
- Consume legumes (e.g. green beans, soybeans), pulses (e.g. beans, lentils, chickpeas, peas), fish, eggs, lean meat and other proteins (including 2 portions of fish every week, one of which should be oily such as salmon, mackerel and sardines)
- Choose unsaturated oils and spreads and eat in small amounts (unsaturated oils are those that do not become hard in cold temperature. For example, olive oil is unsaturated while butter and coconut oil are saturated fats).
- Drink 6-8 cups/glasses of fluid a day
- Try and keep consumption of foods and drinks high in saturated fat, salt or sugar to a minimum and in small amounts.

Using the EatWell Guide to pack a healthy lunch:

Thinking of what to include or not include in the lunch box can be broad and overwhelming, and to simplify, you can **use the formula below as a guide:**

CARBOHYDRATES (wholegrain where possible) + PROTEIN + VEGETABLES + FRUIT + DAIRY OR ALTERNATIVE (optional)

Sources of carbohydrates – Base of the meal

- Potatoes, bread, pasta, rice, couscous, wraps, pitta and chapatti bread. Choose wholegrain where possible or leave skin on potatoes.

Sources of protein – Include one portion

- Beans, lentils, chickpeas or other pulses, fish, eggs, chicken, lean meat, tofu, tempeh

The London Acorn School.

Vegetables and fruits

- Include 1-2 portions of vegetables as well as a portion of fruit and vary these throughout the week
-

Dairy and alternatives

- This is not necessary to be added at every meal as chances are children have dairy or alternatives at breakfast or snacks throughout the day. If you wish to include a portion, you can include a yogurt (soy, coconut for non-dairy options) for dessert choosing unsweetened versions such as plain Greek yogurt and adding some chopped fresh fruit or frozen berries to add flavour

Staying hydrated

- Remind children to drink water at school

Bear in mind:

- Not every single lunchbox has to be perfect and the most important is that your **child gets the nutrients they need over the course of a few days or a week.**
- Whenever possible, **involve children in preparing their lunch boxes** as they are more likely to eat foods they helped prepare. This can be as simple as getting them to wash vegetables or choose which fruits they would like to eat the next day. Or they can help assemble their lunch box based on the EatWell Guide! (you can print it and stick it on the refrigerator for guidance).
- **Include at least one safe food** that you know your child will eat.
- Children may be sceptical by novelty foods in their lunch box, so always **try and introduce such foods at home first.**
- **Give your child a choice where possible:** ask them which food of a food group they would prefer, for example: bread or pasta? chicken or fish? tomatoes or peppers? - remember not to give younger children too many choices to avoid confusion.

The London Acorn School.

About sugar:

It is not easy to find a balance on the amount of sugar we “allow” our children to consume, so here are some guidelines:

Public health England recommends that less than 20g/day and 18g/day for boys and girls aged 4 to 6 years, respectively, should come from free sugars. The amount is slightly higher for boys and girls aged 7 to 10 years (24g/day and 23g/day, respectively). For example, an average glass of freshly squeezed orange juice (200ml) contains 16 grams of free sugars. Furthermore, many snacks targeted at children are loaded with free sugars (sugars that come from fruits and vegetables are also free sugars, unless they are eaten as the whole fruit or vegetable, unprocessed). For example, one portion of bear yoyo (picture bellow) has 8.4g of free sugars in 20 grams portion (a whopping 42g per 100g!). This is almost half of the whole portion and almost half of the recommended daily amount.

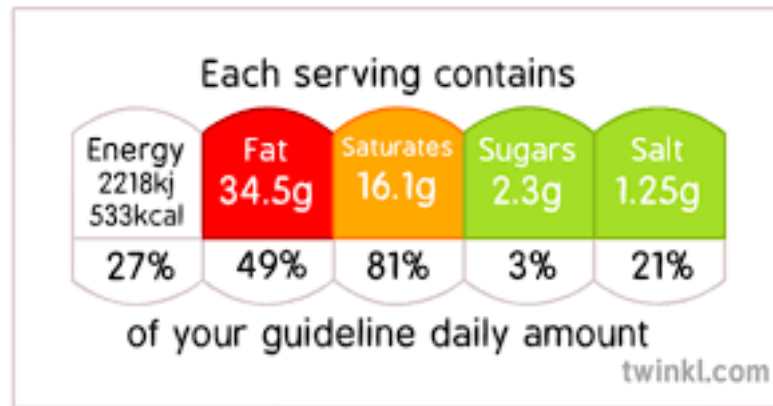


Description		Nutrition	
Down in the Big Cave Bear gently bakes strawberry yoyos. Delicious fruit & veg rolls with no added sugar and with fruit never from concentrates.			
1 of your 5 a day. Real scrumptious. No added sugar. High in fibre. Absolutely nothing else. Gluten free, Nut free, Vegan friendly, Kosher - KLB0			
Country of Origin			
UK			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Suitable for vegetarians			
Usage			
Brand details			
Typical Values	Per 100g	Per portion (20g)	
Energy	1170 kJ	234 kJ	56 kcal
	280 kcal		
Fat	0g	0g	
of which saturates	0g	0g	
Carbohydrate	63g	13g	
of which sugars*	42g	8.4g	
Fibre	10g	2.0g	
Protein	1.9g	0.4g	
Salt	0g	0g	
*Contains naturally occurring sugars			

Most of the children’s snacks on the market carry deceiving messages such as: “1 of 5 a day”, “just fruit” or “no added sugars” to make them look healthy and appeal to caregivers, however sugar occurring from fruits and vegetables that have been extracted from their matrix, have the same adverse health effects as added sugars (the powdered or syrup kind). Reading labels where possible and teaching children to do the same enables for informed decision making when purchasing products. The traffic light’s system used in the UK for example is an easy way to begin teaching children about nutrition labels.

The London Acorn School.

In this system, foods that are low in sugar (less than 5 grams per 100 grams) are shown in green:



Lastly, try to have fun with it and not put too much pressure on yourself. Aim for balance and progress instead of “perfection”.

For more tips and free resources including activities to help children learn about nutrition as well as recipes, visit:

<https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk>

For more information on understanding food labels, visit:

<https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/check-the-label#:~:text=The%20traffic%20light%20label%20is%20colour%20coded%20and%20shows%20that,often%20or%20eat%20smaller%20amounts.>

<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/putting-it-into-practice/food-labelling/looking-at-labels/>

For resources to help children learn about food labels visit:

<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/search?q=food+labels+traffic+light&c=244&r=parent>

The London Acorn School.

If you have any queries, please contact:

Daiana Primon,
Association for Nutrition (AFN) registered nutritionist
info@whitespacenutrition.com

Further references:

British Nutrition Foundation (2022). The EatWell Guide (explained).
<https://www.nutrition.org.uk/media/ayth4ma4/eatwel-1.pdf>

Food a fact of life (2023). <https://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk>

Food standards agency (2020 January 23). <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/check-the-label#:~:text=The%20traffic%20light%20label%20is%20colour%20coded%20and%20shows%20that,often%20or%20eat%20smaller%20amounts>

Public Health England (PHE) (2016). Government dietary recommendations.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/618167/government_dietary_recommendations.pdf

Public Health England (PHE) (2018). *The EatWell Guide*.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/742750/Eatwell_Guide_booklet_2018v4.pdf

Public Health England (PHE) (2018 March 16). <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/phe-publishes-latest-data-on-nations-diet>

Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) (2015). Carbohydrates and health. TSO.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445503/SACN_Carbohydrates_and_Health.pdf