

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

We should offer each child three portions as a minimum each day.

A dessert containing at least 50% fruit should be offered, two or more times a week.

Why? Fruits and vegetables provide a wide range of vitamins, minerals, fibre and useful plant compounds to the diet. These can be vital for everything from growth of bones and teeth and healthy skin and a robust immune system and metabolism. Fresh, frozen, dried and fruits canned in natural juice all count. Try to serve a variety of colours to ensure a wide range of different nutrients. Most children currently do not reach their target of five a day in the UK.

STARCHY CARBOHYDRATES

Starchy carbohydrates such as pasta, bread and rice must be wholegrain.

We should be offering these wholegrain starchy carbohydrates a minimum of once a day.

We should be offering three or more different starchy carbs a week. For example this could be wholegrain pasta on one day, brown rice on another and quinoa on another.

Wholemeal bread should be served with no added fat or oil and must be available every day.

Starchy carbs that are cooked in oil such as potatoes and sweet potatoes should not be offered more than three times a week.

Why? Starchy foods need to make up around half of a children's diet to help provide them with energy, minerals like calcium and iron for strong bones and good concentration as well as vitamins B and E for healthy nerves and skin. Wholegrain carbs also provide a really great source of fibre, which most children fall short of in UK diets.

SOURCES OF PROTEIN

Oily fish such as salmon, sardines, herrings and mackerel should be served on our menus at least once a week. Tuna, whether fresh or canned, do not count as an oily fish because levels of omega 3 fats are very low in both.

Processed meat products such as bacon, ham, gammon and salami - sausages do not count if they contain no sodium nitrite or sodium nitrate, are restricted to no more than once a week in primary schools and twice a week in secondary schools.

We encourage our chefs to use a mixture of lentils, pulses and ingredients like Quorn across our menus daily for plant-based protein.

Why? Protein-rich foods need to be given to children at each meal. They provide them with essential amino acids to help all

body cells and tissues growth and develop normally. Protein rich foods are also filling and help children to feel satisfied and better able to focus until their next snack or meal. They are also great for minerals like selenium and zinc needed for a robust immune system and iron for helping energy levels, concentration and lowering stress.

MILK AND DAIRY

Milk, which can be lower fat once over the age of 5 years should be available as a drink everyday and included in recipes where appropriate.

If for medical, religious or ethical reasons a dairy alternative is requested then fortified soya milk is the next best alternative.

Rice and nut milks even when fortified lack the protein of dairy and soya milks and are not equivalent nutritionally. They are the next best choice however if a child is allergic to soya.

Plain natural yogurt (not fruit flavoured) should always offered as a dessert option at lunch.

Why? Dairy milk and fortified soya milks are rich in both the mineral calcium and protein needed for growth, development and a feeling of satiety after eating. Rice and nut milks fortified with calcium are good for this mineral as well.

FATS AND SALT

We will not serve more than one deep fried portion of protein-rich foods such as fish, chicken or tofu a week.

We will add only the minimum salt to food, when necessary, while cooking. Where some salt may be contained within products and condiments that may be included in recipes, these will be used minimally.

Why? It is important that we take care to control the fat and salt levels in children's meals and snacks. While we do not advocate 'low fat' eating for children, too much food cooked in fats is not recommended.

SUGAR, DESSERTS AND CONFECTIONERY

We have adopted the culture of reducing sugar in all pudding and cake recipes where possible. We serve water at main meals and where fruit juice is served, is available only in 150ml servings, which count towards one of child's fruit and vegetables for the day.

Why? We endeavour to help children age 4 – 6 to not exceed the government's limit of 19g (five teaspoons worth) of added sugar daily, for those aged 7 – 10 to not exceed 24g daily (six teaspoons worth) and for those aged 11 plus to have no more than 30g (seven teaspoons worth) of added sugars daily.