

FOOD PARCEL MEAL IDEAS

FAQs

SIMPLE IDEAS TO GET YOU
COOKING GOOD FOOD FAST



FOOD
ACT!VE

INTRODUCTION

Have a question about the contents of your food parcel, how to store certain ingredients, how much of certain types of food you should be eating or specific dietary requirements?

Look no further.

In this document, Healthy Stadia's nutrition partner, Food Active, has answered some common questions relating to food, cooking, storage and more!



HEALTHY EATING

How can I get my five portions of fruit and veg a day?

Getting your five-a-day through your food parcel doesn't have to be difficult. Below are some tips and ideas on how you get boost the fruit and veg content of your meals and snacks across the day, to help you reach five portions.

- Feeling peckish? A portion of fruit, such as an orange, apple, pear or bowl of tinned fruit is an ideal snack to tie you over to your next meal
- Carrot, cucumber and celery sticks are also a tasty and healthy snack.
- Only 30g of dried fruit counts as one of your five-a-day, as it contains lots of sugar. Try to consume at mealtimes to reduce the risk of tooth decay.
- Only 150ml unsweetened fruit juice counts towards one of your-five-a-day, as it contains lots of sugar. Try to consume at mealtimes to reduce the risk of tooth decay.
- We all like pudding – and whilst many puddings can be high in sugar or fat, you can make them more nutritious by adding a portion of fresh, tinned or frozen fruit. Tinned peach slices are delicious swirled into rice pudding.
- Try to include at least one portion of fruit or vegetables in each meal – that way you are way over half your way to meeting your five-a-day. Here are some ideas:

Breakfast: Add a 150ml glass of orange juice, portion of baked beans or some mushrooms and tomatoes to your dish.

Lunch: Soup is an easy way to consume a portion of vegetables, but you can also add salad, cucumber, sliced tomato and/or sliced celery to your sandwich too. A portion of fruit with your lunch is also an easy way to incorporate more fruit into your meals.

Dinner: Try to always serve a portion of vegetables whether it be fresh, frozen or tinned with every evening meal. Stews, soups, casseroles and tomato pasta sauces are a great way to incorporate lots of vegetables and use up any odd ends you have in the fridge, adds another flavour and texture, not to mention help you on your way towards your five-a- day.

I prefer white bread, rice and pasta. Why are brown versions better for me?

Wholegrain varieties contain more fibre, and usually more vitamins and minerals than white varieties, they also keep you fuller for longer. You can mix half white pasta with half brown pasta to start if you don't like the taste or texture, however many people say they can't tell the difference most of the time. You can't do this for rice as brown rice usually takes longer than white rice to cook, but perhaps try swapping to brown - you may even prefer it!

What drinks are good options for me?

It's easy to overlook, but choosing healthier drinks is a key part of getting a balanced diet. Many soft drinks, such as fizzy pop, juices and instant powdered drinks are high in sugar which, if consumed regularly, can be bad for our teeth and cause us to consume too many calories. Keeping hydrated is essential for bodily functions and can help to control our appetite, We should aim to drink 6 to 8 glasses of fluid a day. Tap water, lower fat milk and sugar-free drinks, including tea and coffee, all count.

What are pulses and lentils?

Pulses, such as beans, lentils and peas, are some of the cheapest foods on the supermarket shelf. These pulses are low in calories and fat but packed with fibre, vitamins and minerals, and count towards your 5-a-Day. Use them in dishes to replace some of the chicken or meat, such as a chilli con carne with kidney beans or a chicken curry with chickpeas. White beans such as butter beans or cannellini beans also make a great alternative to mashed potato.

KEEPING MEALS INTERESTING

I am getting bored of eating the same meals. What can I do to spice things up?

If you have herbs and spices in the cupboard then now is a great time to start using them a little more. Start by adding herbs to stews and tomato based sauces, you can add spices such as cumin, paprika and chilli powder to tomato based sauces to make a tasty alternative to serve with pasta or rice. Jazz up baked beans with a sprinkle of curry or chilli powder, or with a grating of cheese. As a rule of thumb, try not to eat the same meal more than once or twice a week - try and mix things up, even if it's adding sliced cucumber to your sandwich instead of tomato. Every little helps!

Try different ways of cooking your ingredients, if you have the equipment available. Try roasting vegetables rather than boiling them, you could even try a tray bake with a portion of meat, potatoes and vegetables tossed in some oil and cooked in the oven. Adding salad to a sandwich can really make a difference to the taste and texture and trying a different type of pasta with your meal can also change things up a little.

You can also look for more meal ideas and inspiration online. BBC Good Food has a great selection of tried-and tested recipes to suit a range of taste, budget and ability. Take a look through any old magazines or papers lying about which may also have some recipes under the Lifestyle section.

LEFTOVERS AND FOOD WASTE

I only cook for myself and have a small appetite. Is there much point in cooking a meal?

Don't be worried about cooking too much food and it going to waste. You can always use any leftovers for meals the next day and this will make a quick and easy lunch or dinner option for you to choose. Store any leftovers in a resealable container for up to two days in the fridge, and when reheating ensure the food is piping hot before serving. You can store any leftover tinned food in the fridge ready to be used for another meal – just make sure you transfer into a resealable container or bowl and cover with clingfilm, foil or a plate and make sure you consume within two days.

What can I do to stop throwing away fresh ingredients that I haven't used?

Some fresh vegetables can be easily frozen and stored in the freezer until you need them next, if you have access to one. Hardy vegetables like carrots, green beans, broccoli and cauliflower freeze well for up to 2 months and can be boiled straight from frozen. You can also freeze some types of fruit and use to make a smoothie or a tasty topping for your cereal or yogurt another day. For example, browning bananas for example can be sliced, stored in a zip lock bag and frozen for up to 2 months. Leave out to defrost for 15 minutes and top with your cereal, porridge or yogurt, or blend with skimmed or semi skimmed milk to create a nutritious smoothie.

GROW YOUR OWN!

I'd like to start growing some vegetables, but I don't have a garden. What can I do?

You don't need to have a garden to grow your own produce. A little bit of space on a windowsill will work just fine for small things like herbs, lettuce and cress, and you can grow smaller veg like tomatoes in plant pots in the kitchen. If you do you have room for planting outside on your balcony however, a hanging basket can give you aboveground growing space. Either way, growing your own produce can be a satisfying, handy and cost-effective way of always making sure you have fruit, vegetables and/or herbs to hand, which can be used for all different types of meals and snacks. Flowers can also be grown too, which can help to brighten up the room.

If you're growing indoors, you'll need some pots, seeds and good quality soil, but that really is about it. There's loads of great veg you can grow on your windowsill including herbs (basil, parsley, chives and more), salad leaves, chillies, peppers, celery, tomatoes, onions and much more. Choose your windowsill that gets the most sun - ideally around 5 hours a day but be careful not to overcrowd.