Food for the Brain Information Sheet – HEALTHY MEAL AND SNACK IDEAS

Some simple rules to follow when devising nutritious meals for your child...

AVOID

- **Foods and drinks containing sugar**: Look for ingredients such as sucrose, fructose, glucose, syrup, honey
- **Refined foods**: White bread, white rice, biscuits, cakes, processed breakfast cereals
- **Artificial additives and preservatives**: Commonly used in sweets, crisps, biscuits, ready meals, soft drinks
- **Caffeine**: Tea, coffee, cola, and energy drinks

INCREASE

- **Fresh fruit and vegetables**: Ensure a wide and colourful selection each day
- **Whole grains**: Such as wholemeal bread, oats, brown rice, wholemeal pasta
- **Whole foods**: Look for foods that have had little added or taken away!
- **Lean sources of protein**: Fish, poultry or vegetable sources such as legumes and pulses

To help balance the effect food has on your child's blood sugar levels; simply make sure they have a small serving of protein when consuming carbohydrates to slow down digestion and the release of sugar into their blood.

Lunch ideas – *Ideally should consist of one quarter protein, one quarter carbohydrate and half non starchy veg*:

- Sandwiches made with heavy grainy bread/rye bread (look for a brand with no added sugar in the ingredients list) – chicken lettuce and tomato/egg and cress/houmous, red pepper and salad/tuna, avocado and cucumber, eaten alongside some raw veg, eg. Carrot, baby sweetcorn. Cucumber celery, cherry tomatoes (for gluten-free try 100% corn tortilla wraps)
- Cold salad made with a spelt/rice/quinoa/corn/wholewheat/chickpea pasta, or brown rice – add tuna and natural yogurt or houmous/chicken and tomato and red pepper sauce
- Chickpea/butter bean/kidney bean salad – mix with flaked fish, avocado, beetroot, cucumber, spring onion, chopped tomatoes and sweetcorn
- If you choose to give your child something sweet opt for low GL fresh (details below) and a few seeds to eat alongside, homemade cupcakes – these could be made with flour alternatives such as ground almond, coconut flour, buckwheat flour, a sweetener of apple puree, or a little xylitol (NB. Recipes for all for these can easily be found online)

NB. *If your child eats school meals we recommend you find out what is on offer. Most school caterers have a three-week rotating menu and should provide you with a copy. Work through the menu to help your child make the best possible choices; if their choices are guided by someone at the school speak to them also. If the menu doesn’t impress get involved!*

Snacks – *Children need snacks to keep their blood sugar levels even and their energy up. Ideally plan one for mid-morning and one for after school (as most schools operate a nut-free environment due to allergy risk nuts would be best to be eaten as the afternoon snack when off school grounds)*:

- Oatcakes spread with houmous, soft cheese or nut butter
- Fruit eaten with a small handful of nuts/seeds, a chunk of cheddar cheese, or mixed in with natural plain yogurt
- Chickpea and spinach falafel
- Good quality ham rolled up and cucumber sticks
- Handful of cherry tomatoes and sugar snap peas, include an optional bean dip/houmous/tzatziki
- Homemade protein ball (simply blend nuts/seeds, oats and banana, roll into balls and chill – you can add desiccated coconut, vanilla protein powder, raw cacao – play around with the flavours your child enjoys)
Dinners – As with lunches, ideally should consist of one quarter protein, one quarter carbohydrate and half non starchy veg. Leftover dinners can be easily served cold as lunch the next day:

- Baked sweet potato with salad and homemade baked beans (or a low sugar and salt shop bought version)/tuna ‘mayo’ with natural plain yogurt/houmous or homemade chili
- Brown rice/quinoa kedgeree with hard-boiled egg, mackerel or flaked salmon and salad
- Homemade meatballs with brown rice and steamed vegetables
- Homemade lentil an vegetable burgers served with mashed sweet potato and peas
- Chicken/prawn and vegetable stir fry (use coconut oil or avocado oil for cooking at high temperatures) with buckwheat/brown rice/wholewheat noodles or serve with brown rice/quinoa
- Homemade shepherd’s pie with sweet potato and carrot mash topping, serve with steamed veg

Glycemic Load and Diet: Glycemic Loads in Favorite Foods

Initially it can be a bit of a challenge to figure out if a food has a high or a low GL, but as a general guideline, the more fibre a food has the better, and if tastes sweet it probable has a high GI. To start off below we have a handy list of high and low GL food:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low GL</th>
<th>High GL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breads</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pumpernickel, rye, sourdough, soya and linseed, barley and sunflower, granary, seeded breads and pitta breads (moderate GL), oatcakes, rye crackers (moderate GL)</td>
<td>White, wholemeal, French stick, rice cakes, cream crackers, bread sticks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cereal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole oats, no added sugar muesli, bran sticks, semolina, quinoa, buckwheat</td>
<td>Sweetened cereals, rice based cereals, bran flakes, wheat biscuits, shredded wheat</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pasta</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Egg-based pasta, mung bean noodles, spelt pasta, kamut pasta</td>
<td>Overcooked pasta and pasta ready-meals requiring re-heating</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rice</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basmati rice, red Camargue rice, brown rice (moderate GL), bulgur or cracked wheat, couscous, pearl barley</td>
<td>Short grain, sticky white rice</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Potatoes</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baby new potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, celeriac, swede</td>
<td>Large floury white potatoes, French fries, mashed potato</td>
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**Low GL fruit and vegetables**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruits</th>
<th>Vegetables</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhubarb, grapes, limes, passion fruit, lemons, grapefruit, avocados, strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants, cherries, nectarines, melons, blackberries, apples pears, gooseberries, plums, satsumas, clementine’es, cranberries, mandarins, tangerines, pears, pomegranates</td>
<td>Leeks, cabbage, watercress, new potatoes, spinach, aubergines, radishes, rocket, spring greens, asparagus, baby carrots, fresh peas, tomatoes, runner beans, lettuce, cucumber, courgettes, peppers, mangetout, pumpkin, onions, fennel, wild mushrooms, squash, turnips, red cabbage, celeriac, swede, Brussels sprouts, chicory, cauliflower, kale, celery, mushrooms, purple sprouting broccoli</td>
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**Legumes** are also great low GL foods, for example, lentils, beans (eg. butter, haricot, cannellini, kidney, soya)