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## Healthy lunchboxes help children thrive at school

Start the school year off on a healthy note with a well-balanced lunch box, including a variety of nutritious foods to give youngsters the energy they need to learn and play.

South Western Sydney Local Health District Health Promotion Officer Katie Trinh said lunch boxes should contain water and a variety of foods from the core food groups.

“Children need a mix of grain, protein, dairy, fruit and vegetables to thrive each day,” Ms Trinh said.

“We know it can be a little daunting putting together a balanced lunch box, particularly for parents of children starting kindergarten.

“The Growing Healthy Kids website has plenty of resources to help you plan a well-balanced lunch box and you can even get the kids involved.

“When you get children involved in choosing and packing their own lunches, they will be more likely to eat it all.”

Packing lunch the night before can save stress in the mornings.

“Instead of cutting a vegetable into sticks, try circles or using a peeler to make ribbons,” Ms Trinh said.

“This can help get your child more excited about vegetables and eating their five serves a day. Add some hummus or tzatziki as a dip for even more flavour.”

Extra tips for a healthy lunchbox:

- Tins of tuna, baked beans or rice cakes are great when your child wants something different for lunch. They also last a long time in your pantry.
- Leftovers mixed with noodles or pasta can be kept cold and still taste great.
- Finger foods like rice paper rolls.

Don't forget during the summer months to use an ice brick or frozen drink bottle to keep food chilled.

Visit [www.growinghealthykids.com.au](http://www.growinghealthykids.com.au) for more information.