

Healthy lunchboxes

Sandwiches are a popular and easy choice. The wide variety of breads available can make them more interesting – try ciabatta, granary, seeded, rolls, pitta bread, bagels, baguettes, wraps, and rye or soda bread. Choose wholegrain more often.

Wholegrain varieties are naturally rich in iron and B vitamins, these nutrients are found in the outer layers of grains and have to be added back to white flour. Bread is also a valuable source of calcium, the mineral essential for forming and maintaining healthy bones and teeth. Although white bread does not contain as much valuable fibre as wholegrain or wholemeal bread, it is still a healthy choice.

Sandwich fillings offer a great opportunity for adding in extra nutrients:

- Try specially formulated spreads such as Flora pro-activ or Benecol. These have been shown to reduce cholesterol by 10% as part of a diet low in saturated fat. They contain plant sterols* or stanol esters* – natural cholesterol-lowering ingredients. Alternatively use spreads high in polyunsaturated fats and monounsaturated fats instead of butter
- Dairy based foods, such as low fat cheese and cheese spreads are a great source of calcium. In addition, salad fillings such as tomatoes and peppers, can be used to increase the range of nutrients. Soft cheeses containing sterols* are also available
- Meat fillings such as chicken, turkey, roast beef or lean ham provide protein and iron
- Oily fish such as mackerel, salmon or sardines can be mashed into a fish paste to provide essential omega 3 fats, important for heart health

- Boiled eggs are an excellent source of protein and vitamins and are low in fat. Serve with mustard and cress, or watercress. For most people the cholesterol in eggs does not affect blood cholesterol levels. FH sufferers may be advised to limit eggs to around 2-3 per week
- The flesh of a ripe avocado is a rich source of vitamin E, potassium and of heart healthy monounsaturated fatty acids. Mash the flesh and serve with sliced tomatoes for a tasty sandwich filling
- Mash or slice bananas for instant sandwiches. They are a good source of potassium, important for healthy nerves, muscles and blood pressure. Add sliced figs or dates for taste and a little lemon juice to stop them going brown
- Low fat humous contains protein, iron and thiamin. Use to fill wraps, add grated carrot, salsa or roasted vegetables
- Prawns are low fat, don't raise cholesterol and taste great with salad
- Base your lunch around wholegrain pasta, brown rice, cous cous or bean salad. These starchy foods are a great source of fibre and B vitamins
- Strive for 5 or more a day and boost your intake of protective antioxidants. Include salad, fruits and vegetables to eat as snacks. For fruit choose from fresh, canned, dried, juiced and fruit smoothies
- High in healthy monounsaturated fats and proteins, try a handful of nuts or seeds as a satisfying between meal snack.

*2-2.5g daily of plant stanols or sterols have been shown to reduce blood cholesterol by 10% as part of a heart healthy diet and balanced lifestyle.

FH = Familial Hypercholesteroleamia