

Menu planning

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Vitamin A

Vitamin A comes in two forms: retinol, which is found in animal foods and carotene, which is the yellow and orange pigment found in fruit and vegetables. Carotene is converted into retinol by the body. Retinol is essential for the substance in the eye that allows night vision. Vitamin A also plays an important role in maintaining a healthy immune system and is often referred to as the anti-infection vitamin. Vitamin A is also essential for growth that is why children have higher requirements than adults.

A recent national survey of preschool children showed that nearly 50% of all children had intakes below the Reference Nutrient Intake and about 8% of children had very low intakes.

Possible reasons, food sources of vitamin A are limited and many children are low consumers of vegetables.

How much vitamin A do children need?

Reference Nutrient Intakes for vitamin A	
Children aged 1-3 years	400 µg per day
Children aged 4-6 years	500 µg per day

Sources of vitamin A

Retinol:

- Butter, margarines (may be fortified)
- Cheese and eggs (very small amounts)
- Milk and dairy products provide up to about a third of daily vitamin A intakes in young children.
- Liver and liver pate (don't offer more than once a week)

Carotene:

- Carrots, sweet potato, red pepper, tomatoes, green leafy vegetables
- Mango, melon, apricots

Although vitamin A intake is low amongst children there is a risk of excess vitamin A. Therefore children should not be offered liver or liver pate more than once a week (these contain a lot of vitamin A) and supplements should be taken with caution. Healthy Start Vitamin drops are suitable.

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This section provides some practical guidelines on how to encourage the under-5's in child care to eat well. One of the basic principles of healthy eating is to eat a variety of foods. That way it is easier to get all the vitamins and minerals needed for good health! Children under five often have monotonous diets, which can be based on only a few foods, which could make it difficult to achieve adequate amounts of all the nutrients. Exposing children to a good variety from early days is a good way of ensuring a good healthy diet in later life. This is also an opportunity not only to contribute to the child's diet but also to the rest of the family through the child's influence.

Young children enjoy a variety of foods, presented in a fun and interesting way. They eat smaller portions than adults due to a smaller capacity and therefore need small frequent meals or snacks. Their focus on food and perceptions of food are also different to adults. It is important to offer nutritious snacks between meals to ensure that children have the opportunity to regularly refuel.

Children's diets differ from adult 'Healthy Eating Guidelines' in many ways:

- Less strict on fats
- Low fat diets for children under 5 may not provide enough calories
- Their diets should contain less fibre
- High fibre diets for children under five may not provide enough calories (due to the bulking effect of fibre), may cause indigestion and poor absorption of certain minerals
- They require regular meals and snacks – every 2-3 hours
- Vitamin drops should be available and promoted
- Don't add salt or sugar to foods for young children
- Too much sugar results in tooth decay, may fill up the child and develop a sweet tooth which could contribute to obesity.
- Too much salt has been associated with processed food and can cause an imbalance which may affect body systems

Menus should be fun and cater for children from various cultural backgrounds. Include dishes from different cultures in the menu. This will:

- Celebrate diversity
- Celebrate our own culture
- Promote awareness and understanding
- Meet curriculum requirements
- Enrich children's experiences
- Enable children to try new foods
- Parents and grandparents may also be able to become more involved and share recipes

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach

Bread, Other Cereals and potatoes	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
<p>All types of breads, other cereals, such as breakfast cereal, oats/ oatcakes, rice, pasta, noodles, couscous, maize meal), potato and starchy root crops (e.g. sweet potato, yam)</p>	<p>Every meal and most snacks should contain a portion or portions of food from this food group.</p> <p>Foods from this group should make up about a third of the food served each day.</p>	
<p>Bread</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a variety of breads, including whole-grain, brown, white, bread-based snacks (yeast-type buns, scones, pancakes). • Wholegrain bread, wholegrain cereals (such as wheat biscuits, mini wheats, porridge), pasta, brown rice as well as white varieties should be incorporated in the diet. • These should be available daily as part of a meal/snack • Crusty bread, naan bread, pitta bread, quarters of bread rolls and buns are popular 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose bread and bread rolls which contain: • The Food Standards Agency's target salt level for bread is 1.1g per 100g
<p>Breakfast Cereals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer at breakfast or at snack time. A variety of low-sugar breakfast cereals (see list), e.g. porridge, cornflakes and rice snaps) should be available. Breakfast cereals should contain <15% (<15g/100g of product of added sugar) • Fibre enriched cereals (i.e. breakfast cereals with added bran) should not be offered to children under 2 years. See list of cereals attached. • High sugar breakfast cereals should not be offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The most suitable cereals are: Ready Brek, Weetabix, Cornflakes, Rice Krispies and Shreddies, plain oats porridge, puffed wheat • See list of Cereals on page x

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach continued...

Bread, Other Cereals and potatoes	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
<p>Potatoes, sweet potatoes, yam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve freshly cooked potatoes in different ways, mashed, boiled, oven-baked and roast potatoes. If any oil is used, use olive or rapeseed oil • Any high fat processed potato products should be served a maximum of twice a week: e.g. smiley faces, chips, croquettes and waffles 	
<p>Rice, pasta, noodles, couscous</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good alternatives to bread and/or potatoes. Serve as part of hot or cold dishes, purees and in soups. Vegetables are easily combined with these. • Use both brown and white rice • Other grains such as couscous, wheat, maize and polenta are just as versatile 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid dried or canned ready prepared pasta in sauce as these are very salty • If any canned spaghetti and similar products are used, low salt varieties should be used • Avoid fried rice or flavoured dried rice in packets • Couscous is a good store cupboard ingredient as it quick and easy to prepare

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach continued...

Fruits and vegetables	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
<p>Fresh, frozen, canned and dried varieties of fruit and vegetable, and fruit juices</p>	<p>NB Every meal and snack combination, whether hot or cold or a packed lunch should contain a minimum of two child-sized portions from this group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The snack and meal combinations should provide a variety of vegetables and fruit. Children may prefer raw vegetables e.g. cucumber, tomato, carrots, celery They may find them easier to eat if served cut up into small portions e.g. chopped apple, Satsuma segments. Repeat exposure may improve acceptance 	<p>Aim for each day's menu to offer: 1-2 types of fruit and 2-3 types of vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children in full-day care should have the opportunity to try 4-5 different fruits and vegetables each day Children often dislike vegetables and fruit and special attention should be given to this problem. Introduce a better variety by clever menu planning and fun activities in the class It is better for the child to have 'tastes' of a few different types, than a large portion of one fruit or vegetable
<p>Vegetables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve in an appealing and easy to eat way. They may be eaten cold, raw, as finger foods, served with fruit in salad or incorporated into main dishes Also fresh soups with vegetables provide the opportunity to add pulses and a range of vegetables in a meal. Dried and tinned soups may be very high in salt and some are low in vegetables and will exceed standards for salt. There should be a minimum of one portion of vegetables in one serving of soup. Baked beans are nutritious—choose the lower salt versions. Canned spaghetti and similar products e.g. spaghetti hoops pasta shapes and ketchup are not vegetables and do not count as a portion. 	

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach continued...

Fruits and vegetables	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
<p>Fruit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit should be offered with every meal and snack combination. • Fruit-based dessert should contain a minimum of one portion of fruit per serving. • Most fruit yoghurts provide less than one portion of fruit and therefore fruit should be offered in addition to these. • Dried fruit should be offered as part of a meal and not on its own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note that no fruit juice should be offered as a drink at SACC, but could be used in recipes.

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach continued...

Milk and dairy foods	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
<p>All milk and dairy foods, yoghurts and milk based desserts</p>	<p>NB: All meals and snack combinations should contain a portion or portion of food from this group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain drinking milk should be available as an option every day. • After 1 year of age whole cows milk should be the main drink. • After age 2, semi-skimmed milk can be introduced gradually as a main drink, being the child is eating well and has a varied diet. • Skimmed milk is not suitable as a main drink for children under 5 years. • Drinking milk should be an accompaniment to meals and snacks and not a meal replacement. 	<p>Foods from this group should be offered at 2-3 meals and snacks each day</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been suggested that only full cream milk should be used in child care settings to optimize the diets of all children • Plain rather than flavoured milks should be encouraged, as flavoured milks are high in sugar
<p>Yoghurt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoghurt is popular with children and there is a huge variety of flavoured yoghurts to choose from (see yoghurt list on page 41) • Whole plain natural yoghurts and greek yoghurts and plain fromage frais do not have any sugar added and are the ideal option and can be served with, pureed fruit, frozen fruit, stewed fruit and chopped fresh fruit. • Choose from whole milk fruit yoghurts/ fromage frais that have lower added sugar content, aiming for about 5% of added sugar. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoghurt should be available at the Children’s Centre as pudding and snack options • Choose yoghurt with the least additives. Starch is often added as a filler and/or a thickener • Note that yoghurt is higher in calcium than fromage frais • If the sugar content on a yoghurt or fromage fris label says it has more than 15g of sugar per 100g, it is a high sugar option. It is preferable to add fresh fruit to natural yoghurt or fromage frais

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach continued...

Milk and dairy foods	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese can be served as the main protein item instead of meat, fish, chicken or pulses. • A suitable portion is around 15-25g. • Cheese can be served as cheese and biscuits, cheese and fruit, in a salad or in a filling of sandwiches and baked potatoes, or sprinkled on potatoes or into soup. • Vegetarian cheese should be available for vegan children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caution should be taken for vegetarian dishes containing too much cheese, it is preferable that other food iron sources are used as source of protein and not just cheese • Avoid unpasteurised cheese and mould-ripened cheese (blue-vein)
Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, pulses	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
	NB: Every meal should contain a portion or portions of food from this group	
Pork, Lamb and Poultry	<p>NB: Red meat based meals should be served a minimum of twice a week</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean meat (fat trimmed off) should be used in dishes containing meat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food in this group are high in iron and zinc and can also be usefully served as part of snacks – for example in sandwich fillings
Processed meat products and pies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processed meat products i.e. hot dogs, frankfurters, sausages, beef-burgers, meatballs, nuggets, pastry topped pies and other pastry product should be served a maximum of once a week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some meat products such as sausages are popular with under-5s. Choose good quality versions if you serve these foods, and serve them no more than once a week
Composite dishes	<p>These dishes. e.g. Lasagne, moussaka, macaroni cheese, spaghetti bolognese, tuna pasta bake, ravioli and other composite dishes (containing cheese) should contain lean meats, small amounts of cheese and plenty of vegetables. The vegetable content should be increased where possible by serving additional vegetables</p>	

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach continued...

Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, pulses	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish in addition to canned tuna, should appear on the menu once a week. Oily fish – sardines, kippers, salmon, mackerel and fresh tuna (excluding tinned tuna) – should be served once a week. Processed fish products e.g. fish fingers and shaped fish products may be high in salt and should be served a maximum of once a week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure fish dishes are free from bones If you are buying fish from a supermarket, look for the blue and white logo of the Marine Stewardship Council, which guarantees sustainability
Nuts and Seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nut free zone, no nuts are allowed at the Children's Centre. Seeds 	
Vegetarian sources of protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable protein sources include: pulses, peas, seeds, eggs, cheese, yoghurt, tofu, soya mince, these should be varied through the week. Soya mince, textured vegetable protein, quorn and tofu can substitute mince and chicken in main composite dishes, e.g. spaghetti bolognese, casseroles, stir fries. Processed vegetarian products resemble meat products e.g. sausages and veggie burgers and should be served a maximum of once per week. Check all vegetarian products for protein, iron and salt content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quorn and tofu are both low in protein and fat and should therefore not be used as a sole source of meat substitute, but could be offered in a varied diet Examples of high fat and salt processed vegetarian foods

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach continued...

Foods high in fat and foods high in NIMES	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
<p>Desserts: puddings, cakes, biscuits, jam, jelly and ice cream</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where there is no choice, all desserts on offer should be fruit and/or milk-based (including yoghurt and ice-cream) Caterers are encouraged to review home baking recipes to lower fats and sugars and include nutrient-rich, whole food ingredients e.g. dried fruit/fresh fruits. Home baking products can be provided in mini-portions (e.g. 25-35g) as an accompaniment to fruit as a dessert. 	
<p>Butter and spreads</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only butter or spreads rich in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats and oils should be used e.g. sunflower, rapeseed, safflower, olive oil. These can be spread on breads and used in baking. Cooking margarines high in hydrogenated fats are not recommended 	<p>Use margarine fortified with vitamin D for baking and as a fat spread examples:</p>
<p>Cooking fats and oils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils should be used, such as rapeseed oil and olive oil 	
<p>Savoury potato snacks, crisps and corn snacks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No crisps or other savoury snacks will be provided at the Children's Centre unless it is part of a therapeutic programme and authorized and ordered by the Speech and Language Therapist 	<p>Crisps can be offered as part of snack or meal option as an alternative texture and taste e.g. beside a filled sandwich or salad dish. However they should not be provided as main staple of the meal and should not be included more than twice a week. For young children this would be a small portion (e.g. 15 – 20g)</p>

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Table 9: Practical guidelines for menu planning: a food group approach continued...

Foods high in fat and foods high in NMES	Specific Guidance for Children age 1-5	Other important notes
<p>Table salt, bottled sauces, relishes and pickles</p>	<p>No table salt should be used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottled sauces e.g. ketchup are popular with children and may be high in salt and sugar and can be given in small portions e.g. 5-10g occasionally 	

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Menu checklist

Use this checklist to help you plan and once you have drafted out your menu, use it to see whether your menu meets the guidelines. You could add more items to the checklist.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Are foods from the bread/cereal/starches available at each meal?					
Are children offered 3-4 portions of fruit/vegetables a day?					
Are foods from the milk group available at least twice a day?					
Is there at least 1 item from the meat group on the daily menu?					
Is fish on the menu at least once a week?					
Are main dishes home made?					
Are there a variety of flavours and textures?					
Do puddings contain fruit and/or dairy					
Is there a variety of cultural variations offered to all?					
Are menus low in sugar?					
Are menus low in salt?					

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Table 10: Portion size guide for the under fives

	1-3 years	3-5 years
Breakfast options		
porridge	110g	140g
Cereals	20g	30g
Milk with cereal	50 ml	50 ml
Bread and starches		
Bread	Half a slice 15g	Small slice 25g
Pitta bread	Small pitta 35 g	Small pitta 35 g
Pasta		
Rice	90g boiled	100g boiled
Couscous		
Boiled potatoes	100g	100g
Baked potatoes	75g	100g
Wholemeal roll	50g	60g
Mashed potatoes		120g
Plain scone	25g	25g
Ciabatta bread	35g	50g
Mini scotch pancake		
Composite meals		
Spaghetti Bolognese	180g	275g
Chicken Korma	90g	100g
Risotto	150g	180g
Vegetable lasagne	160g	180g
Beef stew	90g	105g
Dairy foods		
Cheese cubes		
Fromage frais & yoghurt	60g	125g
Rice pudding	100g	150g
Cheese as a snack	10g	15g
Cheese with a main meal	30g	45g
Custard	60g	100g

Menu planning

Table 10: Portion size guide for the under fives continued

	1—3 years	3—5 years
Protein foods		
Baked Beans	80g	80g
Minced beef		150g
Pork and beef sausage	40g	55g
Grilled bacon	25g	25g
Turkey or chicken slices for a sandwich	25g	45g
Boiled egg	50g	50g
Grilled salmon	50g	75g
Puddings		
Rice pudding	100g	150g
Milk jelly	70g	110g
Topped with diced peaches	40g	70g
Custard	60g	100g
With bananas	50g	50g
Apple crumble	60g	95g
Served with custard	40g	60g
Vanilla ice cream with fruit	40g	50g
Fat sources		
Margarine on a sandwich	5g	10g

Suggested fruits and vegetables for mealtimes

- Vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned) 50g, 2 tablespoons
- Pulses 50g, 1-2 heaped tablespoons
- Salad half a cereal bowlful/one small hand full
- Vegetables in composites, such as vegetable chili: 50g, 2 tablespoons per portion of the recipe
- ¼ - ½ sweet potato
- 1 small Banana: 60 – 80g
- Very large fruit, such as melon: small slice approx 60g
- Large fruit such as grapefruit quarter a fruit
- Medium fruit, such as apples or oranges, 50g, half a fruit
- Small fruit, such as plum, 40g-60g, 1 fruit
- Very small fruit such as berries: child's handful
- Dried fruit: ½ tablespoon, as a snack: 15 g dried apricots, 15g raisins
- Fruit in composite dishes, such as stewed fruit in apple pie: 60g

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Snacks

Children require nutritious snacks between meals because they may have small appetites and need all the nutrients they require for growth and development. This is not always achievable through the 3 main meals. The best snacks are those without low in sugar (to prevent tooth decay) and as nutritious as possible but which offer a range of other nutrients.

- Fruit – mouth size chunks, cubes or slices of apple, pear, Satsuma, orange, banana, kiwi, melon, strawberries, grapes, peaches and plums
- Raw vegetables – carrot, pepper, celery, cucumber, cherry tomato, red cabbage, turnip, radish, courgette, broccoli
- Toast, breads, rolls, baps, French bread with a small amount of spread.
- Please note that a variety of breads should be used, including white, brown, wholegrain etc
- Choose bread and bread rolls which contain less than 0.25g salt (0.1g sodium) per 100g
- Mini Sandwiches with marmite, cheese, tuna, or thin slices of meat. Other suitable fillings: cold roast meats, chicken, ham, corned beef, meat paste, cottage cheese, fish paste, mashed pilchards or sardines, egg, roast vegetables, banana, salad or combinations of these. Pita pockets cut into small slices, plain or with spread
- Bread sticks – on their own or with a dip or soft cheeses, home-made pizza triangles
- Oatcakes, rice cakes, crackers, crisp breads, melba toast, plain or with spread
- Full cream natural yoghurt with fruit is the gold-standard yoghurt option. Fromage frais and fruit yoghurts are also available. Yoghurt can be eaten on it's own or as a dip. See list of yoghurts on page 41.
- Muffins, plain, potato, or cheese scones, crumpets, pancake, plain buns, plain popcorn, low sugar breakfast cereal (see breakfast cereal list), bagels
- Choose snacks which have less than 0.5g sodium per 100g where possible (savoury snacks are packed with salt)

Guide to spotting salty snacks

Check the nutritional information per 100g

High is more than 1.5g salt (or 0.6g sodium) per 100g

Medium is >0.3g salt (0.1g sodium) and <1.5g salt (0.6g sodium) per 100g

Low is 0.3g salt (0.1g sodium) or less per 100g

The Food Standards Agency's target salt level for bread is 1.1g per 100g (according to a recent survey, most of the Sainsbury's bread comply to the Food Standards Agency's targets).

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Ideas for snacks

All snacks should be offered with 100-120 ml of milk (full cream milk for all the under 3's and semi-skimmed milk for the over 3's)

- Canned peaches in juice and whole milk yoghurt
- Vanilla yoghurt with banana
- Selection of grapes, celery sticks and red pepper
- Wholemeal savoury pancakes with spread and apple chunks
- Fromage frais with pineapple
- Popcorn with sliced pear
- Cucumber and carrot sticks with small pita bread and mint and cucumber dip
- Wholemeal toast fingers with margarine and apple
- Cheese chunks, crackers and orange segments
- Breadsticks with houmous dip and cherry tomatoes
- Mini white bread fingers with tuna pate
- Wholemeal toast with soft cheese and grape slices
- Chocolate bars, sweets, cereal bars and sweet biscuits should be saved for after mealtimes and as treats rather than offered between meals.
- Crisps or corn snacks, e.g. Quavers, Golden Lights, Wheat Crunchies or Twiglets could be offered as part of a snack or meal option as an alternative texture and taste, e.g. to accompany a filled sandwich or salad dish. They are high in salt and fat and young children should only be given a small portion (e.g. 15-20g) about twice in the week.
- Snacks containing sugar should not contain more than 11% of the % food energy (% of calories consumed).

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Specific foods of importance

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Cereals

Type of Cereal per 100g	Fat	Sugar	Salt	Calcium	Iron
Ready Brek	8.7	1.0	,0.1	1333.0	11.9
Oats	8	1.1	trace		
Rice Krispies	1	10	1.65		8
Corn Flakes	0.9	8	1.8		8
All Bran		16.2	0.47		11.6
Shredded Wheat		1			
Shreddies	1.9	15.5		0.7	7.8
Weetabix	2	4.4	0.65		11.9
Cheerios	3.9	21.6	1.2	450	11.9
Bran Flakes	2	22	1.3		11.6
Coco Pops	3	36	1.15	456	8
Frosties	0.6	37	1.15	456	8
Special K	1.5	17	1.15		11.6
Golden Nuggets	1.1	35.8	1.2		11.9
Sainsbury High Bran	3.5	16.2	1.7	340	15

Cereals are very popular amongst preschool children. Cereals are highly nutritious, providing energy and protein and many cereals are now fortified with vitamins and minerals. Breakfast cereal is a golden opportunity to provide infants and preschool children with so many vital nutrients.

Unfortunately the choice is endless and can leave many of us confused as to what is the best breakfast cereal. Many breakfast cereals have been used to lure parents and children in buying the – not so good options. What makes a cereal a good option?

Breakfast cereals are often **sweetened** with NMES (added sugar) and may contain a **high salt** content. Infants and children only need a very small amount of salt per day. Choosing packaged (of which breakfast cereals are one) and processed food could often mean very easily exceeding the salt requirements. Cereal products such as bread, breakfast cereals, biscuits and pastries currently is the main contributor to the salt intake of children.

The salt requirements for children:

Up to 6 months old: **less than 1g a day (0.4g sodium)**

7 to 12 months: **1 g a day (0.4g sodium)**

1 to 3 years: **2 g a day (0.8g sodium)**

4 to 6 years: **3 g a day (1.2g sodium)**

7 to 10 years: **5 g a day (2 g sodium)**

Over: **6 g a day (2.4g sodium)**

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To calculate salt from sodium, multiply sodium by 2.5

According to the Food Standard Agency's guide to food labelling (Table below) the above breakfast cereals, with a high salt and sugar content are highlighted in red.

Check how much fat, sugar and salt is in your food:

	Sugars	Fat	Saturates	Salt
What is HIGH per 100g	Over 15 g	Over 20g	Over 5g	Over 1.5g
What is MEDIUM Per 100g	Between 5g and 15g	Between 3g and 20g	Between 1.5g and 5g	Between 0.3g and 1.5g
What is LOW Per 100g	5g and below	3g and below	1.5g and below	0.3g and below

Using the above food-labelling guide identifies that most cereals are unsuitable for children because they are either/or high in salt and sugar.

It is worth remembering that preschool children will not be eating a 100 g of cereal per time. Portion sizes may vary between 10-25g.

Most of the cereals mentioned options are fortified with iron and some are fortified with calcium

The following cereals are most suitable for preschool children:
Weetabix, Ready Brek, porridge, Cornflakes, Rice Krispies.

Notes:

- **Cornflakes and Rice Krispies** are both low in sugar, but are high (of the highest) in salt and should be offered not more than once or twice a week.
- **Ready Brek** is one of the best breakfast options; the cereal is low in sugar and salt and is an excellent source of both calcium and iron.
- **Shreddies** is just high in sugar, but is relatively low in salt, but does contain some fibre, which in big portions is not advised for children. Offer Shreddies no more than once or twice a week. Shreddies could also be mixed in with other cereals.
- **Weetabix** is both low in salt and sugar
- **Porridge** (not instant) is very low in sugar and salt, although oats are not fortified with iron, oats do contain a small amount of naturally occurring iron. Oats could be offered as hot breakfast option and used in cooking and classroom activities.

Table 11. Yoghurts and Fromage frais for children

Brand	Price Per 100g	Ingredients	Kcal	CHO (g)	Sugars (g)	FAT (g)
Little Rachel's Organic	41.4p	Yoghurt, apple juice concentrate (10%) strawberries (10%), rice starch, lemon juice	97	13.7	13	3.1
Muller Fromage Fraiss	22.1p	Fromage Fraiss, strawberry sauce 15% (water, fructose syrup, strawberry puree, modified maize starch, <i>flavourings</i> , vegetable extract, vitamin E, Thiamine, Vitamin B6 (Riboflavin), sugar, <i>flavourings</i>)				
Nestle Much Bunch	27.3p	Fromage Fraiss (74.5%), sugar (10%) whipped cream, strawberry puree (4.9%), milk mineral concentrate, modified starch, <i>stabiliser</i> – locust bean gum, <i>flavouring</i> , <i>acidity regulators</i> – citric acid, <i>trisodium citrate</i> , <i>colour-beetroot red</i>	109	13.8	13.6	2.9
Noddy Organic	37.5p	Yoghurt (88%), sugar, puree (5%), lemon, tapioca starch, natural <i>flavouring</i>	99	12		3.7
Sainsbury's Kids Thick and Creamy	27p	Yoghurt, cream (16%), strawberry puree (8%) sugar, modified starch, natural <i>flavouring</i> , lemon juice, colour, anthocyanins	152	14.6	14	8.8
St. Ivel Tweenies	27.5p	Yoghurt, sugar, fructose, maize starch, <i>flavouring</i> , colour, lemon juice	86	10.3	9.9	3
Tesco Kids	22.7p	Low fat soft cheese, sugar syrup, cream, strawberry puree (6.5%), sugar, cornflour, calcium lactate, <i>natural flavouring</i> , <i>concentrated purple carrot juice</i> , vitamin D	110	12.8	12.1	3.1
Yeo Organic Fruit Tube	37.3p	Yoghurt (84%) strawberries, (9%), sugar tapioca starch, vanilla, lemon, <i>flavouring</i>	114	13.2	12.9	4.5
Yoplait Petit Filous	41.4p	Fromage fraiss, sugar, strawberry puree, fructose, aronia juice, <i>flavourings</i> , milk calcium complex, <i>stabilisers</i> (5), <i>lactic acid</i>	104	12.7	12.3	2.9
Yoplait Thomas	29.7p	Fromage fraiss, strawberry puree (6.6%), sugar, fructose syrup, <i>thickeners</i> (3) <i>flavourings</i> , <i>cochineal</i> , Vitamin D				
Yoplait Wildlife whole milk yoghurt	21.5p	Fromage fraiss, strawberry puree (6.6%), sugar, fructose, glucose-fructose syrup, <i>thickeners</i> (3), <i>flavourings</i> , <i>colour</i> – <i>cochineal</i> , Vitamin D	93	13.2		1.3

Menu planning

Special diets

Menu planning

Vegetarian

Vegetarians don't eat fish, red meat and chicken. There are vegetarians, however who do eat fish! **Please check with parents to what level they avoid animal products.**

- Partial vegetarian – some parents may ask for their child not to have red meat – but still eat poultry and/or fish
- Lacto-ovo vegetarians – eat milk and eggs, but not meat, poultry or fish
- Lacto-vegetarians – eat dairy foods but not eggs
- Vegans – do not eat any animal products at all

Vegetarian diets are well recognized and should be based on healthy eating guidelines. It is important to include foods from the five main food groups every day. As meat is one of the main sources of iron it is important that vegetarian and vegan children eat a variety of other iron rich foods such as:

Non-meat sources of iron

- Wholemeal bread
- Fortified breakfast cereals, such as Ready Brek, Shreddies, Weetabix
- Beans, peas and pulses
- Dried fruit
- Dark green vegetables
- Tinned sweetcorn and baked sweet potato

Here are some vegetarian protein alternatives:

- Eggs (check if eaten)
- Soya products such as tofu and soya mince (sometimes called TVP)
- Lentils and chickpeas, including houmous
- Beans including baked beans
- Meat substitutes such as Quorn

In order to optimize the nutritional intake for vegetarian diets:

- Include dried fruit and leafy green vegetables daily
- Choose lower sugar and salt breakfast cereals fortified with iron and vitamin B12, such as Ready Brek, Weetabix and Shreddies
- If soya or rice milk is used, make sure the milk is fortified with calcium
- Include at least one serving of eggs (if eaten), beans, lentils, chickpeas, textured vegetable protein, quorn, tofu or tempeh daily
- Serve vegetarian foods with foods containing vitamin C e.g. fruit, salad or fruit juice such as blackcurrant and citrus juice, which enhances iron absorption.

Menu planning

Vegetarian meal ideas

- Use TVP or Quorn mince in lasagne, burgers, chilli and bolognese
- Use veggie sausages/burgers in a bun with mash and baked beans
- Make kebabs from marinated tofu
- Make falafels – chickpea patties
- Use a variety of beans and pulses in curries, soups and casseroles
- Either tinned beans and pulses (in water) or dried beans and pulses could be used
- Do not only have cheese as the protein source for a main meal, as cheese is low in iron. Combine cheese with the above.