

- ✚ 3rd term already!
- ✚ Are you struggling for lunch box ideas?
- ✚ What can you give your kids that is interesting for them, healthy and not a major task for you?

When I look at children's lunchboxes, I often find that while they definitely meet the requirements for carbohydrates, protein needs are really not being met sufficiently.

Kids need protein for growth, brain & muscle development and sustained energy. Protein foods provide essential amino acids which cannot be made by the body so, when kids miss out on protein, they can suffer in a variety of ways.

Ideas for boosting protein in school lunches:

- ✚ Protein is found in dairy products, meat & fish, eggs, beans & pulses, nuts & seeds as well as in whole grains.

If you can manage to keep lunchboxes cold:

- ✚ Plain yoghurt with cut up fruit to dip
- ✚ Hommus with crackers or carrot sticks
- ✚ Cream cheese dip with vegetable sticks or crackers
- ✚ Homemade brown rice pudding (use leftover brown rice mixed with a simple custard recipe)

If you can get the school canteen to heat things brought from home:

- ✚ Homemade meat pies (follow an easy shepherd's pie recipe for filling, place circles of puff pastry in muffin tins and top with another circle of pastry, bake until golden, send to school canteen cold and they can pop in the pie warmer or microwave ready for lunchtime)
- ✚ Homemade pizza with meat & veg toppings, (preferably spelt or wholemeal base)
- ✚ Homemade fried rice with vegies & egg or tofu

If neither of the above are options, try:

- ✚ cheese on sandwiches switching white bread to wholemeal or grain bread
- ✚ A cold boiled egg
- ✚ Slices of cheese & biscuits
- ✚ Roasted chickpeas, lightly salted if preferred
- ✚ Most schools now have a no nut policy, however if yours does not and there are no children with nut allergies at the school, nuts are a great convenient way to get a protein hit.

Remember to try and keep the **sugar content** of lunchboxes **as low as possible** so that kids do not end up on an energy roller coaster with blood sugar levels going up and down.

Also, while potato chips are fine for a snack sometimes, they are best left as a sometimes or treat food as they do not provide the body with a lot of usable energy and are full of nasty fats as well as flavourings and at times additives you would probably prefer your child not to be eating!

Good Luck with the rest of the school year, I hope it is a good one for parents & children alike!

Lucy

See you next Month!

Lucy - Nutritionist, Yoga teacher and Mum of three ©
E: lucysporne@yahoo.com.au