

PACKING LUNCHES: A PAIN-POINT FOR PARENTS BUT SIMPLE SWAPS ARE KEY

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- The Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council, together with Nutrition Australia and Healthy Kids Association are proud to announce Bring Back the Sandwich 2020, running 28 January to 7 February.
- The campaign encourages parents to 'bring back the sandwich' to maximise nutrition, but keep lunchbox stress to a minimum, whether packed at home or purchased via the school canteen.

Back to school is upon us, and while ticking off school shoes, backpacks, stationery and uniforms is a once or twice a year task, packing lunches is seemingly relentless once school starts. Children's nutrition is often in the spotlight, and the lunchbox is under the microscope.

'Bring Back the Sandwich helps parents make packing the lunchbox a simpler task, while shining light on the benefits of the humble sandwich, as a convenient and tasty source of good nutrition' says Dr Sara Grafenauer of the Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council.

A simple swap to wholemeal bread may be the easiest way to improve kids' nutrition at lunchtime. In the Australian diet, we know that grain foods already provide seven key nutrients, iron, folate, thiamine, iodine, dietary fibre, magnesium and carbohydrates<sup>1</sup>. But choosing wholemeal - a whole grain choice - is known to be more protective for overall health. Shadia Djakovic, Accredited Practising Dietitian from Healthy Kids Association says 'parents can influence their child's nutrition by guiding choices at the school canteen too'.

Starting children on whole grain foods early in life may be the best choice parents can make but especially when selecting foods for the lunchbox. As a single food, just two slices of bread as a sandwich can meet both the whole grain target and boost dietary fibre intakes. Global evidence suggests that swapping to whole grain comes second to lowering dietary salt in providing real health benefits for all ages<sup>2</sup>.

'Well chosen lunchbox snacks can help parents pack a tasty, nutritious lunch, helping to meet at least a third of kids nutrition requirements' says Leanne Elliston, Accredited Practising Dietitian at Nutrition Australia. At the top of the list sits unsalted, air-popped popcorn, a small serve of whole grain, high fibre breakfast cereal, whole grain crackers, or muesli bars with a Health Star Rating of 4 or more. Combined with cherry tomatoes, sliced salad vegetables and fruit, a boiled egg, a slice of cheese or small tub of yoghurt, there are plenty of options for hungry tummies.

For a stress free, balanced sandwich, simply follow our four easy steps...

1. **Choose your base** - whether you choose a roll, wrap or good old sliced bread, use whole grain, wholemeal or high fibre varieties where possible. If you have a picky eater on your hands try using a high fibre white bread.
2. **Add flavour** - use vegemite, hummus or avocado to add a pop of flavour, colour and nutrients. Or mix things up with a bright beetroot hummus.
3. **Add your veggies** - use a handful of salad or any other raw or cooked vegetables you have at home. This is the perfect time to use up last night's leftover roast pumpkin or zucchini!
4. **Finally, choose your protein power** - quick and easy sources of protein like cheese, tuna, boiled egg, mashed beans or leftover poached chicken are great for sandwiches.

For more sandwich and lunchbox ideas for all ages, check out the Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council website [here](#) or follow us on social media for our lunchbox planner and other handy tips.

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## ENDS

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## Background:

Bring Back the Sandwich is an initiative of the Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council which supports and inspires parents to pack stress free healthy lunchboxes for their children.

## About the Grains & Legumes Nutrition Council (GLNC):

As the independent authority on the nutrition and health benefits of grains and legumes, GLNCs mission is to promote grains and legumes nutrition as part of a balanced diet through evidence-based information. Visit the GLNC Website for recipes, factsheets and up-to-date information on the latest evidence around grains and legumes, and connect with GLNC on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram via [@GrainsLegumesNC](#)

## References

1. National Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey 2011-2012
2. **Lancet.** 2018 Nov 10;392(10159):1923-1994. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(18)32225-6. Epub 2018 Nov 8.