



PACKED WITH GOODNESS



Food & nutrition
guidelines for
school kids



Lunchbox ideas for busy parents and carers

Supported by



Department of Health
Department of Education



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	05
HEALTHY FOOD AND DRINK CHOICES AT SCHOOLS	06
Lunches that get eaten	07
Crunch&Sip®	09
Allergies	10
Additives and preservatives	11
CHOOSING PACKET FOODS	12
Reading food labels	12
Making healthier choices	14
HEALTHY EATING	16
How many serves do children need each day?	18
How many serves in a lunchbox?	19
What is one serve of each food group?	20
Healthy lunchboxes	22
RECIPES	28
Pizza scroll	28
Choose your own adventure muffins	30
Bean balls	32
Savoury pikelets	34
Muesli bar	36
MORE INFORMATION	38

INTRODUCTION

It's important for children to arrive at school well-fed and to have enough food for the day.

This means they can concentrate better and have enough energy to learn, play and grow. Many schools have a canteen where students can buy food at lunch or recess. Most children bring their lunch to school and this is usually a cheaper option. Packing lunches at home takes time. The last thing parents and carers want is for food to come home uneaten. This booklet provides information on how to make a safe, healthy and affordable lunchbox that children will want to eat.

Involving your kids in packing their own lunchbox can be fun and might make them more likely to eat it!

Asking children to bring home any of the foods they don't eat means carers can get an idea of how much they're having and what they don't like.

Having a healthy lunchbox helps children to develop healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime.

i If your child is not finishing their lunch at school, ask them why. You might be surprised by the answer! It could be because they don't like the food, it doesn't travel well in a lunchbox, or they didn't have time.

Pack these every day

- Food for recess
- Food for lunch
- Refillable water bottle
- Crunch&Sip® (see page 09)



HEALTHY FOOD AND DRINK CHOICES AT SCHOOLS

In 2007 the WA Department of Education introduced the *Healthy Food and Drink* policy. The policy applies to the food and drinks in public school canteens/ food services as well as areas where the Principal is directly responsible for the

supply of food and drinks – for example classroom rewards, school camps and excursions.

A ‘traffic light’ system is used to categorise food and drinks as Green, Amber or Red. Try using this at home too!



GREEN – GO!

Fill your diet with a variety of ‘green’ foods’. *Fruits, vegetables, water, wholegrain cereals, reduced fat dairy products.*



AMBER – WAIT!

Select these foods carefully and try to **limit** how much you eat. *Some pre-packaged items and snack foods, muffins, biscuits, crackers.*



RED – STOP!

These foods and drinks are not required as part of a healthy diet. They are **off the menu** in school canteens. *Confectionery, deep fried foods, chocolates, pastries, slices, soft drinks, flavoured waters.*



LUNCHES THAT GET EATEN

Lunches brought from home are more likely to be eaten if they are appealing and kept at the right temperature. Sturdy lunchboxes and small containers stop food from getting squashed and bruised.

Take your child with you to buy containers and lunch bags for school and make sure they can easily open them.

Younger children may need practice opening containers, unwrapping food and opening drinks at home first before they head off to school.



Try cutting fruit, vegetables and sandwiches into small pieces. They are easier for children to eat.



i A little lemon or orange juice rubbed on cut apples and bananas will stop them from going brown.

KEEPING FOOD SAFE

Cold foods need to be kept cold.

Sandwiches, dairy, and meat are not only safer when kept cool but they taste better too. Anything you would keep in the fridge at home needs to be kept cool in a lunchbox.

In our hot climate, lunch boxes need ice bricks or frozen drinks. If school bags are kept outside, put the lunchbox in an insulated bag with another ice-brick outside the lunchbox.

- i** A frozen water bottle or milk box can also keep food cool until lunchtime.
- i** A frozen tub of yoghurt will keep cool for recess or longer with an ice brick.

Hot foods need to be kept hot.

An insulated flask can keep soup, pasta and meals hot.

- i** **Flask should be preheated by pouring in hot water then draining. Seal it quickly after adding the hot food.**
- i** **Do a trial run at home first to make sure the food is not too hot. This is very important for younger children.**



Use clean containers, plastic bags and sandwich wrap every day.

Throw out any food not eaten at school. It will no longer be safe (or nice) to eat by the time it gets home.

Healthy foods that don't need to be kept cold

- Fruit and vegetables
- Cans of tuna, chicken and salmon
- Bread, wraps and crackers.



- i** **Use frozen bread for sandwiches to help keep them cool.**



CRUNCH&SIP®

Don't forget to pack items for Crunch&Sip® separately. Crunch&Sip® is a set break for your child to eat fruit or vegetables and drink water in the classroom. Check with your child's teacher if their class does Crunch&Sip®.

Crunch:

- Easy-to-eat fruit like apples, a container of strawberries, a mandarin or a banana
- Canned fruit in juice
- Vegetables like carrot, celery, cherry tomatoes or snow peas.

And Sip:

- A clean, clear water bottle filled with plain water.
- i** **Children often prefer their fruit cut for them.**
- i** **To avoid sticky hands pack a fork or spoon.**



ALLERGIES

Many people have food allergies. These can cause a mild reaction like a rash or upset stomach or can be severe. Anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe allergic reaction that causes multiple body systems to shut down at once. It can cause hospitalisation and even death.

Some people don't need to eat a food to get sick. Just touching it can cause an allergic reaction.

Schools have rules about allergy awareness to help keep people safe from things that will cause an allergic reaction.

Most schools ask that nuts and nut products (peanut butter, nut bars etc.) are not brought to school. Check with the teacher to see if someone in the class has a food allergy.

The most common foods people are allergic to are:

- Peanuts
- Tree nuts (most other nuts)
- Cow's milk (dairy)
- Eggs
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Sesame
- Soy
- Wheat

i Check your school's allergy rules before putting nuts in the lunchbox.



ADDITIVES AND PRESERVATIVES

Additives and preservatives are used to improve the taste, quality, shelf-life and appearance of many foods. Common additives include sugar, antioxidants like vitamin C, salt & food colouring.

Foods containing additives are safe for most people and there is no concern about eating them as part of a healthy, varied diet.

i The foods we should eat more of are not highly processed and usually don't have many additives.

The types of foods containing lots of additives are often highly processed. They can have high levels of fat, sugar and salt and should not be eaten often.

Some people are intolerant to some food additives.

This means they will have a bad reaction (like an upset stomach or headache) to the additives in the food. If you think this is happening, talk to a qualified health professional like a doctor, nurse or dietitian.

i If you're concerned about additives, fresh foods are the best choice.



CHOOSING PACKET FOODS

READING FOOD LABELS

It can be hard to tell if a food is healthy or not, especially if it says it is made for children or is found in the health food aisle of the supermarket. Reading food labels can help you see through the claims and know what is really in those lunchbox snacks.

Serving size

The serving information tells you how many serves are in the packet, and how big a serve is. The serve size is set by each food company and may not be what you would normally give your child to eat, or be a healthy amount for a child.

Compare per 100g

To compare two or more foods, use the “per 100g” column, and for drinks the “per 100ml” column.

Choose packet foods with the lowest fat, saturated fat, sugar and sodium (salt) per 100g.

When looking at foods for a special occasion, it is still possible to have a treat and make it a better choice.

- Check the ingredients list to see if a food is a healthy choice. All ingredients in a food product must be listed on the label in order by weight from most to least. So if the first 3 ingredients are fat, sugar or salt – you know it isn’t a healthy choice.**
- To help decide if a food really is a healthy choice, compare it with the guidelines below. If you can’t find a product that fits, choose a food or drink that is closest.**

Food	Per 100g
Total fat	less than 10g
Saturated fat	less than 3g
Sugar	less than 15g
Sodium	less than 400mg

* Look for 3g of fibre or more per serve.

Drinks & Soups	Per 100mL
Total fat	less than 5g
Saturated fat	less than 1.5g
Sugar	less than 7.5g
Sodium	less than 400mg

The cost of convenience

Some packet foods can be a healthy choice, but they aren’t the cheapest choice. Food processing and packaging adds to the cost of food. Products portioned in single serves tend to be even more expensive.

Where you can, buy larger packs and make your own portions using zip-lock bags or small containers.

To see the real cost of packet foods, look at the unit price (\$ per 100g or 1kg), not just the shelf price.

Potato crisps
\$20/kg



LCMs
\$30/kg



Fruit roll-up
\$40/kg



Home-made versions are usually much cheaper



Popcorn
\$30/kg



Popping corn
\$5/kg



Choc chip muesli bar
\$20/kg



Homemade muesli bar
\$8/kg



MAKING HEALTHIER CHOICES

While fresh, natural foods that don't come in packets are the ideal choice for lunchboxes, this is not always possible. Sometimes convenience is the priority.

Here are some of the better packet foods. They meet our guidelines for sugar, fat and salt. See the previous page for information about how to read food labels and see if your packet food is a good choice – you might be surprised.

Food	Brand	Per 100g			
		Fat	Saturated Fat	Sugar	Sodium
 Muesli bar  AMBER	Freedom Foods Crunchola	8.9g	0.7g	14.3g	30mg
 Plain popping corn  GREEN	Riviana	5.8g	0.9g	1.0g	3mg
 Tuna and beans  GREEN	John West	4.5g	0.5g	1.0g	432mg*
 Baked beans  GREEN	Coles	0.4g	0.1g	5.8g	250mg
 Rice snacks  AMBER	Mr Munchies	9.8g	2.0g	1.0g	380mg
 Savoury snacks  AMBER	Special K Cracker Crisps	9.1g	1.3g	5.7g	480mg*
 Crackers  GREEN	Arnotts Vita Weat	7.2g	1.0g	1.8g	490mg*

* These packet foods are a little higher in salt than we usually recommend but are better than most snacks in this category.

HEALTHY EATING

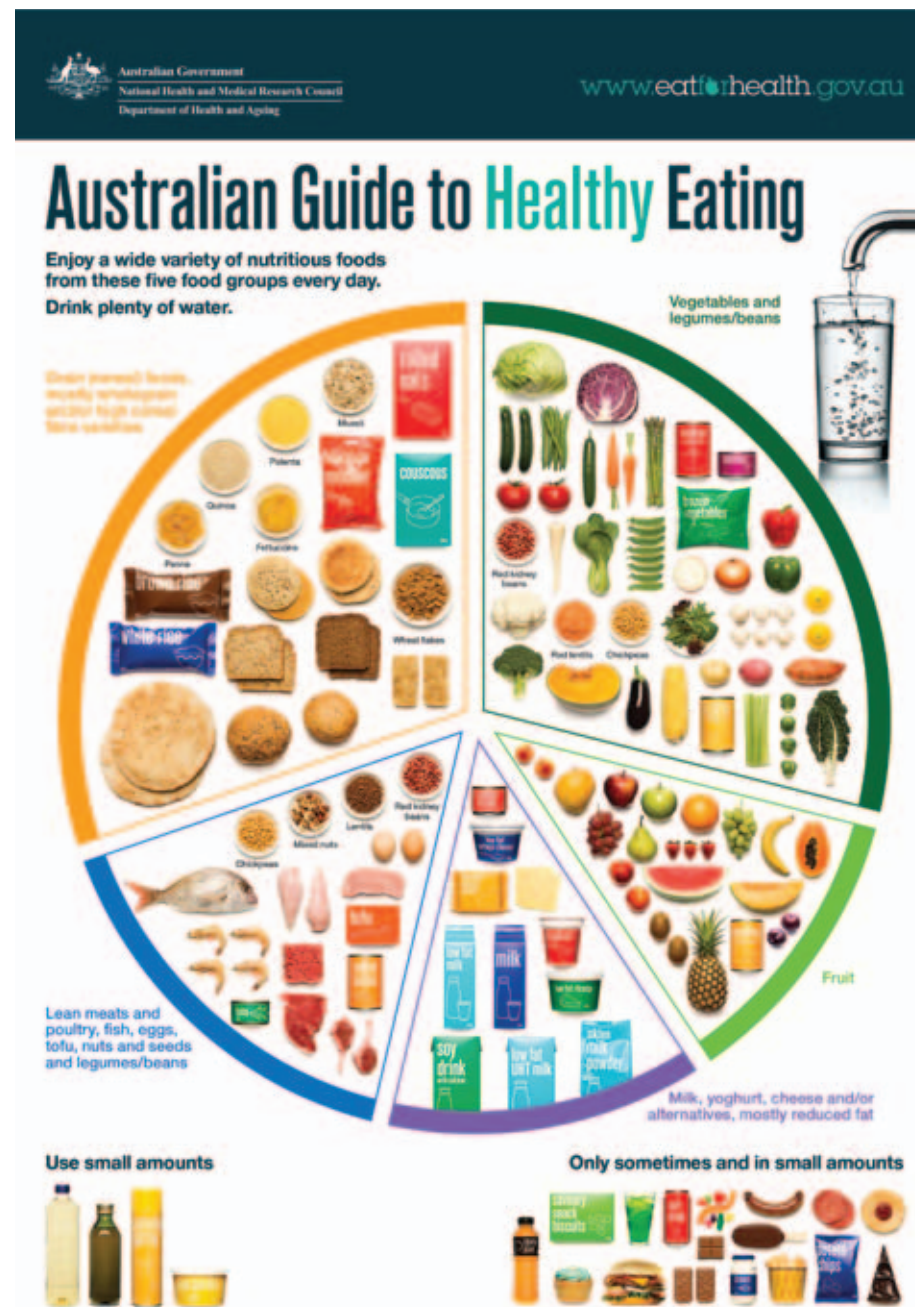
The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating shows the five food groups and the proportion of these that we should eat every day for good health.

Choose foods from all five food groups every day.

i Use the 'serve size' and the 'serves per day' information on the next pages to figure out how much of each food group should be eaten each day.



This section is based on material provided by the National Health and Medical Research Council. For more information visit www.eatforhealth.com.au



HOW MANY SERVES DO CHILDREN NEED EACH DAY?

Age	Vegetables	Fruit	Grains and cereals	Meat and alternatives	Dairy and alternatives
4 – 8 years old	4 ½	1 ½	4	1 ½	2
9 – 11 years old	5	2	5	1 ½	2 ½
12 – 18 years old	5 – 5 ½	2	5 – 7	2 ½	3 ½

For the number of serves that adults should be eating visit www.eatforhealth.com.au



HOW MANY SERVES IN A LUNCHBOX?

A lunchbox should contain about one-third of a child's food for the day. Start with this as a rough guide. If your child is very active, or says they're hungry at school, add extra serves of these core foods.

Remember to pack a Crunch&Sip® snack (pg 09) and a water bottle every day. This adds an extra serve of fruit of vegetables to the day!

Age	Vegetables	Fruit	Grains and cereals	Meat and alternatives	Dairy and alternatives
Early childhood 4 – 5 years old	1 ½	½	1	½	½
Lower primary 6 – 8 years old	1 ½	½	1 ½	½	½
Upper primary 9 – 11 years old	1 ½	1	1 ½	½	1
Middle/High school 12 – 18 years old	2	1	2	1	1

WHAT IS ONE SERVE OF EACH FOOD GROUP?

Vegetables



1/2 cup
cooked
75g



1/2 cup
beans,
peas or
lentils
75g

1 cup
raw
75g



Fruit



1 medium
piece
150g



1 cup
chopped or
canned
150g



2 small
pieces
150g

Grains and cereals



1/2 cup
cooked



1 slice



3 crisp
breads



1/2 wrap

Meat and alternatives



2 eggs



65g
deck of
cards



80g
half a
breast



100g



1 cup
beans,
peas or
lentils

Dairy and alternatives



1 cup
250ml

2 slices
40g



200g

HEALTHY LUNCHBOXES

Early childhood lunchbox 4 – 5 years old

Example 1



- Cheese and lettuce wrap
- Carrot and capsicum sticks with hummus
- Honeydew melon
- Strawberries (Crunch&Sip®)

Example 2



- 1/2 chicken, carrot and avocado sandwich
- Plum
- Grapes
- 200ml LUHT milk
- Cherry tomatoes (Crunch&Sip®)

Lower primary lunchbox 6 – 8 years old

Example 1



- Celery and capsicum sticks
- Orange
- Rice cake with jam
- Toasted English muffin with tomato paste, capsicum, pressed chicken and cheese
- Banana (Crunch&Sip®)

Example 2



- 1/2 roast beef, lettuce, carrot, cucumber and beetroot roll
- Small yoghurt
- 1/2 Apple
- 2 veggie pikelets (recipe pg 34)
- Capsicum sticks (Crunch&Sip®)

Upper primary lunchbox 9 – 11 years old

Example 1



- Rice salad with corn, green capsicum, tomato and 3 bean mix
- Carrot slices
- Cream cheese
- Banana
- Carrot slices and celery sticks (Crunch&Sip®)

Example 2



- Bean ball (recipe pg 32) pita with lettuce, carrot, cucumber and cheese
- Fruit salad
- Carrot sticks
- Apple (Crunch&Sip®)

Middle school lunchbox 12 – 18 years old

Example 1



- Pasta salad with a boiled egg, peas, corn and capsicum
- Tub yoghurt
- Pizza scroll (recipe pg 28)
- Chopped honeydew melon

Example 2



- Can tuna
- Crackers
- Sliced tomato
- Carrot cut into chunks
- Celery cut into chunks
- Cream cheese
- Mini muffin
- Apple

Most high schools don't have a Crunch&Sip® break, but feel free to include more fruit and vegetables if your teenager asks for more food!



PIZZA SCROLL



- Preparation time:** 20 mins
- Cook time:** 30 mins
- Makes:** 12 scrolls
- 1 serve grains and cereals
- ½ serve vegetables per scroll

Ingredients

- 2 cups self-raising flour
- 1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour
- 3 tablespoons margarine
- 1 cup low-fat milk
- 1 cup low-fat cheese, grated
- 3 tablespoons tomato paste or tomato sauce
- 2 cups of finely chopped pizza toppings (choose from the ideas below or create your own!)

Suggested toppings

Tropical

- Pineapple
- Shredded cooked chicken
- Onion
- Zucchini

Veggie

- Mushroom
- Onion
- Zucchini
- Capsicum
- Olive
- Italian mixed herbs

Mexican

- 1 jar salsa (instead of tomato paste)
- Corn
- Capsicum
- Red onion
- Kidney beans

Method

1. Pre-heat the oven to 200°C and line a large tray with baking paper.
2. Add the flours to a large bowl. Use your fingers to rub the margarine into the flour until the mixture looks like fine breadcrumbs.
3. Add the milk and mix together to make a soft dough.
4. Sprinkle the bench-top with a little flour. Use a rolling pin to roll the dough out into a rectangle shape about 40 x 30 cm.
5. Spread the tomato paste over the dough and sprinkle the cheese and other toppings evenly over the dough.
6. Tightly roll up the dough (from the long side) into a log shape.
7. Cut the log into 12 slices and lay the slices flat on the tray.
8. Bake for 30 minutes until lightly golden.

Storage: Individually wrap in cling wrap and freeze for up to 3 months and pack in lunchboxes still frozen. They will be defrosted and ready to eat by recess time.

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE MUFFINS



Preparation time: 10 mins

Cook time: 25 mins

Makes: 12 muffins

$\frac{1}{2}$ serve grains and cereals per muffin

Ingredients

- Oil spray
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup wholemeal self-raising flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- 200g low-fat natural yoghurt
- 2 tablespoons oil
- 1 egg
- Mix-ins. Choose from the list or create your own!

Method

1. Preheat oven to 200°C. Lightly grease a 12-hole muffin tray with oil spray.
2. Mix the flours and sugar together in a large bowl.
3. In a separate bowl, mix the yoghurt, oil, egg and mix-ins
4. Add this wet mixture to the flour and sugar mixture and stir until just combined. Be careful not to over-mix.
5. Spoon into muffin tray and bake for 20-25 minutes, until lightly golden and a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean.

Note: This mixture will make 24 mini muffins. Smaller muffins will cook quicker so check them after 15 minutes.

Storage: Individually wrap in cling wrap and freeze for up to 3 months and place in lunchboxes still frozen. They will be defrosted by recess time.

Suggested mix-ins

Banana-rama

- 2 bananas, mashed
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup rolled oats

Halloween

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup pumpkin, grated
- 1 tablespoon allspice

Berry-licious

- 1 cup fresh or frozen mixed berries

Coco Jambo

- 1 small can crushed pineapple, well drained
- 2-3 tablespoons desiccated coconut

Apple-y ever after Tutti-fruity

- 1 apple, grated with skin on
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence
- 3 tablespoons of chopped dried fruit
- Try apple, apricot, cranberries, sultanas, papaya, mango, fig, date, or pineapple

BEAN BALLS



- Preparation time:** 15 mins
- Cook time:** 15 mins
- Makes:** 12-15 balls
- 1/2** serve vegetables per ball

Ingredients

- 400g can no-added salt chickpeas, drained
- 1/2 cup frozen peas, defrosted
- 1/2 cup grated vegetables e.g. carrot, zucchini, pumpkin
- 1/2 onion, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons wholemeal plain flour
- 1 tablespoon sweet chilli sauce
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander (optional)
- 1 tablespoon canola oil

Serving suggestion: use in a sandwich or wrap with salad and sweet chilli sauce.

Storage: Individually wrap in cling wrap and freeze for up to 3 months and place in lunchboxes still frozen. They will be defrosted by recess time.


Method


1. Mash the chickpeas and peas together in a large bowl with a fork or potato masher.
2. With your hands, squeeze as much moisture as you can out of the grated vegetables and add them to the bowl.
3. Add all the other ingredients (except the oil) and mix well.
4. Take a big spoonful of the mixture and roll into a ball with your hands.
5. Flatten the ball and place on a plate. Repeat with the rest of the mixture.
6. Heat half the oil in a large, non-stick frying pan. Add about half the balls, being careful not to overcrowd the pan. Cook for 2-3 minutes, until golden brown, then flip over and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Place them on paper towel while you cook the rest of the balls.


Note: If you have a food processor or stick blender with a bowl attachment, add all the ingredients (except the oil) to the food processor and blitz until you get a chunky but sticky texture. Then continue from step 4.

SAVOURY PIKELETS



 **Preparation time:** 10 mins

 **Cook time:** 30 mins


 **Makes:** 20 pikelets



Ingredients

- 1 small zucchini, grated
- 1 carrot, grated
- 1 orange, juiced
- 1 cup wholemeal self-raising flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 egg
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup low-fat milk
- Oil spray

Method

1. Put the zucchini, carrot and orange juice in a small saucepan and cook until vegetables are soft, about 3 minutes.
 2. Sift flour into a bowl.
 3. Add the sugar, egg and milk and mix to make a smooth batter.
 4. Mix the cooked vegetables into the batter.
 5. Heat a frying pan and lightly spray with oil.
 6. Drop tablespoons of mixture into the frying pan and cook until bubbles appear, then flip over and cook for another 2-3 minutes.
-  **Storage:** store in an air-tight container in the fridge for up to 3 days.

 **Tip:** pikelets can be cooked on a flat, non-stick sandwich press.

MUESLI BAR



 **Preparation time:** 10 mins

 **Cook time:** 50 mins

 **Makes:** 12 bars


 $\frac{1}{2}$ serve grains and cereals per bar

Muesli bars from the shop are often loaded with sugar and fat and can be expensive. This recipe is healthier cheaper and fun to make. Get your children involved in making them too. Experiment with a mix of different seeds, cereals and fruits to find your favourite muesli bar.

Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons margarine
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups rolled oats
- 1 cup plain cereal e.g. wheat flakes, crushed Weet-bix, rice bubbles, bran
- 4 tablespoons seeds e.g. sunflower, pumpkin
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried fruit, chopped e.g. apple, apricot, cranberries, sultanas, mango, fig or pineapple
- 2 tablespoons desiccated coconut
- 1 egg white

Method

1. Preheat oven to 160°C and line a small tray or loaf tin with baking paper.
 2. Put the margarine, sugar and honey in a small microwave safe bowl and heat for 10 seconds at a time until margarine has melted.
 3. Mix all the ingredients together in a large bowl.
 4. Pour the mixture into the tray and press the mixture down as hard as you can with your hands or a large spoon. Rub a little oil on your hands/spoon to stop the mixture sticking. Spend a few minutes doing this really well as it will help hold the muesli bar together.
 5. Bake for 40-50 mins until golden. As soon as you take the pan out of the oven press the mixture down with the spoon again.
 6. Use a large knife the chop into 12 pieces while still a little warm. The mixture will get harder as it cools.
-  **Storage:** Store in an airtight container or zip-lock bag in the freezer for up to 3 months. They are ready to eat straight out of the freezer.

MORE INFORMATION

Healthy Food and Drink policy in schools

- **Department of Education**
www.det.wa.edu.au/healthyfoodanddrink
- **Western Australian School Canteen Association Inc**
www.waschoolcanteens.org.au

Allergies

- **Department of Health**
www.health.wa.gov.au/anaphylaxis
- **Anaphylaxis Australia**
www.allergyfacts.org.au

Additives and preservatives

- **Food Standards Australia New Zealand**
www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer

Cost of food

- **FOODcents**
www.foodcentsprogram.com.au

Healthy eating

- www.eatforhealth.gov.au

Crunch&Sip®

- www.crunchandsip.com.au

More healthy lunchbox ideas

- **Western Australian School Canteen Association Inc**
www.waschoolcanteens.org.au/parents

More healthy recipes for the whole family

- **LiveLighter**
www.livelighter.com.au

Photography: www.andrearussell.com.au and Nina Otranto, Illustrations
Thanks to all the parents and carers who gave feedback and helped make this resource

