

Get your kids involved in preparing a safe and healthy school lunch box

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As school starts to go back, the Food Safety Information Council is encouraging parents to get their children involved in preparing their school lunch and learning about food safety.

Cathy Moir, Council Chair, said that all parents have probably had the experience of finding an uneaten, dried out sandwich still in their child's lunch box at the end of the day.

Getting your [kids](#) involved in lunchbox preparation will help them learn about [food safety](#), it can also be a lot of fun involving kids in the kitchen. Here are some useful tips to get them involved:

1. Get your kids to help buy a lunchbox, choose ones that have room for a frozen drink or freezer block and are easy to clean and dry.
2. Before handling food always get your kids to wash their hands using soap for 20 seconds and to dry their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds. To help them understand how long 20 seconds is get them to sing "Happy Birthday to You"
3. Get them to help wash all fruits and vegetables under running water to remove any germs (they can catch the water in a bowl and put it on the garden but not on your veggie garden).
4. They can have fun baking items for their lunchboxes like healthy muffins or biscuits. Remember [raw eggs](#) and raw flour in unbaked bakery items can cause [food poisoning](#). It's best not to allow your kids to lick the spoon, instead teach them to wash their hands after handling raw eggs and flour.
5. Batches of sandwiches without vegetables can be made in advance and frozen.
6. Make sure lunchbox foods are always kept separated from raw foods in the refrigerator, particularly raw meats, chicken and eggs in their shells.
7. Once your kids have prepared their lunch get them to keep it cool in the fridge until you are ready to leave home, then put an ice brick in the lunch box. During [hot weather](#) you may want to consider providing safer lunchbox alternatives, such as hard or processed cheese, a can or vacuum packed package of tuna, or

spreads like peanut butter or vegemite.

"Finally, Health Authorities have recently warned of increase rates of gastro causing viruses such a rotavirus in children. Make sure your children regularly wash and dry their hands and don't send them to school if they have vomiting or diarrhea," Ms. Moir concluded.

Provided by Food Safety Information Council

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