

### Media statement

16 January 2019

#### Get creative with back to school lunches

Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service (SCHHS) paediatric dietitian Tanzia Butterfield has some expert advice on healthy lunch boxes, with top tips for food that are quick, easy to prepare and nutritious.

Ms Butterfield said good nutrition is vital for growing bodies, and preparing healthy and fun school lunch can be easier than we think.

“Many of us are time poor and this may lead to parents resorting to highly processed food that can be high in added saturated fat, salt and sugar and low in vital nutrients,” Ms Butterfield said.

“With a bit of planning/pre week preparation and freezing ahead of time, it makes it easier to fill up your child’s lunch box with healthy food and avoid less healthy, highly processed food. This will also ensure children are getting the recommended two serves of fruit and five serves of vegetables per day.”

The following lunch box ideas can get kids off to a healthy start to the school year:

- Sandwiches on wholegrain bread/wraps. Some options are boiled egg and low-fat mayonnaise; skinless chicken and avocado and spinach leaves; reduced fat grated cheese and carrot and tomato; black beans, salsa, avocado and low fat sour cream; tuna/salmon and avocado; leftover sliced meat with salad filling.
- Deconstructed wraps. Older children can make their own, so that the wrap/bread doesn’t go soggy.
- Skinless chicken and roasted vegetables pesto pasta (from leftovers).
- Mini pizza. Top a wholegrain pocket bread or sandwich thin with tomato paste/cream cheese, ham, pineapple, capsicum and onion. Sprinkle with reduced fat cheese and grill until golden – serve cold in lunch box.
- Frittatas containing lots of veggies (can be made beforehand and frozen).
- Corn on the cob.
- Air popped popcorn (from seeds, NOT the packaged microwave popcorn bags).
- Piece of fruit/cut up fruit salad.
- Snack box. Combine a selection of meat, reduced fat cheese/cottage cheese/hummus, boiled egg, vegetable sticks.

Ms Butterfield also recommends that parents take the following food safety precautions when preparing lunches:

### Media statement

- Include a frozen water bottle or small freezer brick in your child's lunch box.
- Pack lunches in a cooler bag or insulated lunch box.
- Ensure rockmelon is consumed within two hours of cutting and remains in a cool place due to food safety risk.
- Freeze yoghurt or milk to keep at a safe temperature.
- Clean lunch boxes daily.
- Make sure school bags containing lunch boxes are stored in the shade.
- Wash hands before preparing and eating food.

Ms Butterfield said eating habits were generally formed in early childhood, so it was important to give your child the best start by role modelling at home and school.

“By being good role models, parents can send a powerful message to their children in regard to healthy eating.”

#### **ENDS**

#### **Media Opportunity:**

Tanzia Butterfield available for interviews on request.

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