

Tuesday, 31 January 2017

What's under the lid? *Healthy lunches for healthy kids*

It's back to school, which also means back to packing lunchboxes for the big school day ahead. Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD) is asking the question "what's under the lid?" to remind parents that a healthy lunchbox provides children with the fuel they need to learn and grow.

ISLHD Health Promotion Officer, Denise Chapman said the new school year is a perfect opportunity to leave behind any poor eating habits that may have crept in over the holidays and start making better choices for school lunches and snacks.

"It's important not to fall into the trap of pre-packaged convenience at the expense of healthy foods. Many pre-packaged foods are marketed to parents as being lunchbox friendly when many of them contain hidden sugar, salt and fat. This is why fresh foods are a great option - there is no misleading and confusing marketing hype behind them," Ms Chapman said.

Australian children between the ages of 2 -16 are, on average, getting 42% of their energy intake from 'sometimes' foods.

"Fresh foods, such as sandwiches and wraps, are always the best choice and ensure that fruit and vegetables also sneak their way in - try grated carrot or lettuce on a sandwich, or homemade muffins with fruit, carrot, zucchini, banana or pumpkin.

"If choosing processed foods, buy foods with a health star rating of 3 ½ or more to help you to make a healthier choice. Don't forget – a bottle of water is also the best drink to pack, instead of sugary drinks such as cordials, sports drinks, fruit drinks and soft drinks. Water is free, convenient and contains no sugar!" she said.

Principal of Cambewarra Public School, Susan Hilliar and founder of *The Lunchbox Project Cambewarra*, is also a passionate advocate for healthy food choices in the school setting. Cambewarra Public School is taking the lead to introduce the school community towards vegetable and fruit only snacks and where all children support one another to snack on fruit and vegetables throughout the day.

"Ensuring parents don't cave in to the pester power of children is the key. It has to be the norm to snack only on fruit and vegetables rather than a lunchbox packed with processed preservative snacks. Parents seem to start the New Year with good intentions but it is important that these healthy practices are continued past week 3 and for the rest of the school year," Principal Hilliar said.

For more information:

[Click here](#) for some great tips to creating a healthy lunchbox or find out more about '[Go4Fun](#)', a free and fun lifestyle project for children aged 7-13 years.

Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District

Media contact: Communications Unit on 4221 6861 or 0477 391 219

Afterhours 0422 003 764

www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au