

Healthy lunch ideas

All too often lunch is a quick sandwich and bag of crisps which we eat at our desks between phone calls or appointments. Alternatively we nip to the chip shop or pub for an unhealthy meal with little nutritional content and everything we know we shouldn't eat! With a little planning, lunch can be tasty, exciting and give us at least one of our fruit or vegetable portions for the day. Here are a few ideas for you to try.

Sandwich Fillings

- Tuna (in brine) mixed with two sticks of finely chopped celery and two tablespoons of sweetcorn
- Sliced chicken breast with a whole sliced red pepper or watercress and spinach leaves.
- Salad special: Spinach, rocket, lettuce, peppers, grated carrot, sliced mushrooms. Take a slice of lemon with you and squeeze it over your salad just before you eat. It adds a bit of moisture, flavour and makes sure the sandwich doesn't go soggy!

Salads

-Make a big bowl of your favourite salad, but make sure you incorporate at least three of the following vegetables to ensure some nutritional value:

Spinach, rocket, tomato, peppers, carrot, mushrooms, celery, mange-tout, sweetcorn, beetroot, cabbage, red onion, spring onion.

-Add some seeds such as sunflower, pumpkin or pine nuts for texture & protein.

-Then for dressing choose some of the following for extra flavour:

- Balsamic vinegar
- Lemon juice or a big slice of lemon
- Mix the juice of a lemon with a teaspoon of honey, teaspoon of olive oil plus salt & pepper. Put it into a small a bottle and shake well before dressing your salad.

Take your dressing separately so the salad doesn't go soggy, pour it in at lunchtime, put the lid on your salad and shake it well to dress everything and get the best taste.

Snacks (anything is better than crisps!)

- A raw carrot
- Some celery sticks
- A piece of fruit
- A small handful of nuts or seeds

Mini meals

Mixer-Maxter (My Gran's recipe)

- Chop into chunks one apple, one carrot, 30g of cheese, two sticks of celery, ¼ cucumber.
- Add a small handful of sultanas and one pot of low-fat, low-sugar yoghurt. Mix well.

Couscous (serves two)

- Prepare a bowl of couscous as per the packet instructions. Allow to cool.
- Finely chop a red & green pepper, 3-4 mushrooms, one courgette. Stir-fry them very quickly in a teaspoon of olive oil for 3-4 minutes or until 'al dente'. Allow to cool.
- Mix couscous, vegetables, a teaspoon of cumin and a pinch of caraway seeds.

This recipe can be done with pasta. For pasta I recommend using finely chopped jalapeno chillies or Italian herbs for flavouring instead of cumin & caraway.