



# Lunchbox Myths

## Commonly Confused ‘Healthy’ Lunchbox Snacks:

The supermarket shelves are filled with lunchbox snacks, conveniently packaged ready to be popped straight into your child’s lunchbox. However, clever packaging, marketing and health claims make it hard to know which snacks are healthy and which ones are better left on the supermarket shelves.

Here are some of the common claims to be aware of:

### 1. FOOD PACKAGING WITH PHOTOS OF FRESH FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND WHOLEGRAINS.

Companies often use photos of fresh fruit, vegetables and wholegrains on their packaging to make us assume these ingredients make up the majority of the product. However, this is often not the case. Don’t be fooled by the images on the front. Instead, read the [nutrition information panel](#) to find out the ingredients.

Did you know that ingredients must be listed in order from largest to smallest by weight?

### 2. FOOD LABELLING

Food companies often display words such as ‘wholesome’, ‘superfoods’ or ‘all natural’ to grab our attention and make us think these foods must be a healthy choice. It’s important not to rely on the catchy words used on the front of the packet to determine if a food is a healthy choice, and instead use the [nutrition information panel](#).

### 3. ‘FAT FREE’ OR ‘SUGAR FREE’

Be careful when products claim to be ‘free’ of a certain nutrient. Companies often make these claims even when it is irrelevant, e.g. fruit juice will always be fat free, yet stating this makes their product sound healthier. It is important to use the [ingredients list and nutrition information panel](#) to help check if the food is a good choice rather than using claims such as ‘fat free’ or ‘sugar free’.

### 4. GLUTEN FREE

Gluten free does not necessarily make for a healthier product. Unless your child is diagnosed with coeliac disease or a gluten intolerance, there’s no benefit in buying gluten free options. These are usually more expensive and can be lacking in vitamins and minerals.

### 5. MADE WITH REAL FRUIT

Many products claim to be ‘made with real fruit’. However, they may contain very little or be very highly processed (e.g. a fruit leather or fruit string). Look at the [nutrition information panel](#) to check if fruit is one of the first listed ingredients. If not, the chance of the food providing any nutrition benefits is low.



# Commonly Mistaken ‘Everyday’ Products:

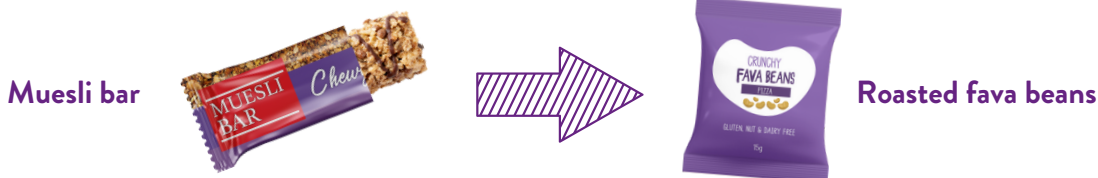
See our list below of foods that are commonly mistaken to be ‘everyday’ foods. We have included easy healthy swaps that you can make in your child’s lunchbox instead.

## MUESLI BARS

Muesli bars are often labelled as health bars, superfood bars, oat bars and nut bars. Whilst muesli bars usually contain healthy ingredients such as oats, nuts and seeds, it is the added ingredients that make for an unhealthy snack, high in added sugar and saturated fat.

Swap from muesli bars to fresh fruit, raw unsalted nuts\*, sunflower/pumpkin seeds, roasted fava beans or reduced fat yoghurt.

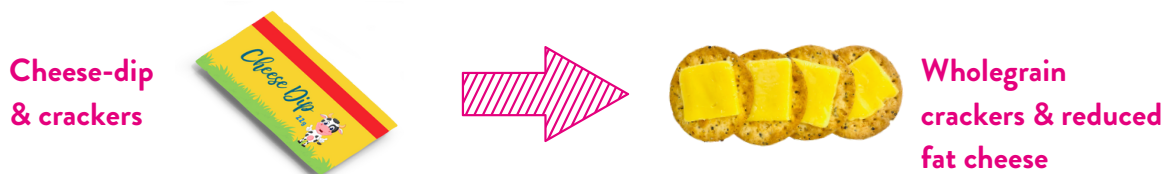
\*Before packing nuts, remember to check if your school has a ‘nut-free policy’.



## PRE-PACKAGED CHEESE-DIP AND CRACKERS

Cheese-dips and crackers can be easily mistaken as a healthy snack. Cheese-dips only contain 50% cheese, providing little calcium and a high amount of saturated fat.

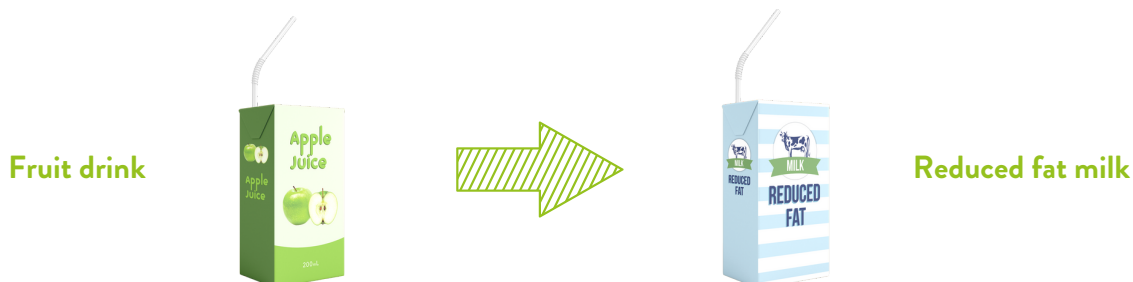
Swap from cheese dips to reduced fat cheese slices and wholegrain or rice crackers.



## PACKAGED FRUIT DRINKS / POPPERS

It’s easy to assume fruit drink is a healthy choice that just contains fruit. However, many fruit drinks contain very little real fruit and very small amounts of fibre. Instead they contain high amounts of processed juice and added sugar, resulting in large amounts of sugar per serving.

Swap from fruit drinks to plain water, water with fresh lemon/fruit and reduced fat plain milk poppers.



# Commonly Mistaken 'Everyday' Products:

See our list below of foods that are commonly mistaken to be 'everyday' foods. We have included easy healthy swaps that you can make in your child's lunchbox today.

## SAVOURY BISCUITS

Many savoury biscuits claim to be baked not fried, leading us to believe they are a healthier alternative. Did you know biscuits can still be baked in just as much fat or oil? Many savoury biscuits contain 20-25% fat and lots of salt. Swap from savoury biscuits to plain air-popped popcorn, rice crackers, rice cakes or roasted legume snacks.

Savoury Biscuits



Plain air-popped popcorn

## 'NATURAL' FRUIT STRINGS

Fruit strings and leathers are often advertised as a healthy 'natural' lunchbox snack. However, these fruit snacks have been highly processed to remove the water content, resulting in a higher concentration of sugar. They also contain added sugar and lack nutrients and vitamins that are found in whole fresh fruit. Swap from fruit strings to fresh vegetables and fruit or tinned fruit in natural juices.

Fruit string



Apple

## BREAKFAST BISCUITS

Breakfast biscuits or bars sound like a quick, healthy option for breakfast on the go or to add to the lunchbox. However, these biscuits have high amounts of added sugar, saturated fat and lower amounts of fibre, protein and vitamins and minerals.

Swap from breakfast biscuits to fruit buns, pikelets, fruit bread or a vegemite sandwich.

Breakfast Bar



Fruit Bread

## DAIRY DESSERTS

Dairy desserts such as chocolate custard, mousse and rice pudding are often placed next to the yoghurts in the supermarket aisle, making us believe they are also healthy. These desserts contain added sugar, saturated fat and limited amounts of calcium and protein.

Swap from dairy desserts to reduced fat yoghurt, reduced fat custard or reduced fat plain milk poppers.

Dairy Dessert



Reduced Fat Custard

