

Packing a lunchbox with love

One of my longest and dearest friendships was sparked by the sharing of softball lunchbox. My mum was renowned for her fabulous lunchboxes. I am forever grateful as it was the sharing of a lunch box back in 1992 that cemented my long-standing friendship with Brooke.

Now that I am a mum and I am packing a lunchbox for my daughter Charli and son Mac, I am feeling the heat! Not only do I need to make sure that they have enough nutritious food and fluids, but it needs to be worthy of starting a lifelong friendship xx.

As parents, we are given the task to ensure that our little athletes have enough energy to sustain a full day of training or competition with very little training or guidance. However, nutrition is pivotal to performance and also recovery. So how do you access the correct information to make sure that you get a gold star for your child lunchbox?



My long standing friend Brooke. Brooke was originally from Wagga Wagga and would stay up at my house when we would rain for NSW teams. This was my long standing friendship that all started with sharing my lunchbox packed with love.

It is vital to follow reputable nutritionists who have an education background in nutrition and in particular, sports nutrition. Here are a few excellent references points for you to get you started:

1. <https://www.nswis.com.au/nutrition/>
2. <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/ais/nutrition>
3. <https://www.chloemcleod.com/>
4. <https://www.facebook.com/chloemcleoddietitian/>

Things to consider when packing for a day of sport:

- Make sure that your child has breakfast before playing. A healthy breakfast should include foods that have a low Glycemic Index (GI). Low GI foods include as weet-bix, or porridge, this will help them feel fuller for longer and sustain their energy release.

- Athletes need to consume carbohydrates, as this is the bodies best source of fuel. Carbohydrate containing foods include breads, breakfast cereal, rice, pasta, noodles, fruit, potato and starchy vegetables, corn, dried beans and lentils, sugar, milk and yoghurt.
- Protein aids in the repair of muscles – so a good recovery fuel is flavoured milk.
- Make sure that when you pack your lunch box, that it contains lots of colour (this doesn't include from processed food packaging), fruit, vegetables, rice crackers and protein bars etc.
- Ensure that they keep hydrated. Hydration should start on the way to the carnival. A good rule of thumb, if you are thirsty, you are already dehydrated, and this can affect your performance.

Remember, when packing your child's lunchbox. Be sure that there are lots of colours, but that it is packed with love as you never know what friendship can be sparked over a softball lunchbox.

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Some over greatest friends made through softball and sharing a snack out of my famous lunchbox!

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