

healthy AT HOME

Dietician, chef and founder of Grub4Life, **Nigel Denby**, presents a nutritious menu, ideal for nursery days and domestic nights...



Healthy eating is an important aspect of every early years setting's provision. Each of the current EYFS's four themes contain references to children's health, and together with exercise and hygiene, the food children are offered, and which they are taught is good for them, while they are at nursery should be at the heart of practitioners' efforts to promote physical wellbeing.

Of course, to be truly effective, healthy eating can't be confined to the nursery, so encouraging parents to continue the good work at home is also important. Unfortunately, mums and dads can feel like feeding a family and keeping everyone happy is an impossibility, especially in these financially straitened times. It needn't be, and it doesn't have to break the bank either. Healthy eating menus can be simple and fit in with families' routines – including the time their children are at nursery.

Every family uses quick and easy meal recipes and some convenience products at some point during the week; this is not a sin. The trick is for parents to plan ahead, allowing them to keep an eye on their budget and take advantage of special offers and promotions. Why not make the following weekly menu available to get them started. Suitable for toddlers, school children and adults, it ticks all the healthy eating boxes, incorporating plenty of fruit and vegetables, oily fish once a week, white fish, pasta, legumes and pulses, and white meat. The meals, which are affordable and have a short preparation time, combine traditional family foods with new ideas, and can be swapped around from day to day as desired. They're also great for serving in nursery, so why not have a go with one of the recipes today!

Breakfast can be kept simple; during the week, most families need to get up and go! There are a wide range of cereals available, but it's best to choose a plain option such as Weetabix, Ready Brek or Porridge.



get COOKING!

Healthy recipes to try with your children...

Mini Falafels with Mint & Cucumber Yoghurt Dip

Falafels: ingredients (4-6 servings)

400g tinned chickpeas, rinsed and drained
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 clove garlic, peeled and chopped
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tbsp fresh coriander chopped
1 tsp ground coriander
2-4 tbsp flour
1-2 tbsp olive oil

■ Place the chick peas in a food processor with the onion, garlic, cumin and both types of coriander. Blend until you have a smooth puree. Let the mixture rest for at least 30 minutes.

■ Take walnut-size portions (bigger for adults) and shape them into small, flat rounds 1cm thick.

■ Roll the falafels lightly in the flour and chill for 15-30 minutes.

■ Heat the oil in a frying pan and fry the falafels over a medium heat for about 10 minutes, turning frequently.

■ Serve with Mint and Cucumber Yoghurt Dip and pita bread.

Dip: ingredients

150ml natural bio-yoghurt
1 clove garlic, peeled & crushed
2 tbsp mayonnaise



Winter warmers

TRY THESE
HEALTHY MEALS
FOR NURSERY
AND HOME...

	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	DINNER
SUNDAY	Porridge with apricots Roast chicken	Roast chicken Roast potatoes Glazed carrots Broccoli Baked apple and custard	Boiled egg and soldiers Fruit salad Yoghurt
MONDAY	Cereal / toast	Hummus and red pepper Granary rolls	Chicken and Leek Stroganoff Carrot and cucumber sticks
TUESDAY	Cereal / toast	Moroccan Vegetable stew with rice	Shepherd's pie Green salad Mixed Berry compote and crème fraiche
WEDNESDAY	Cereal / toast	Minestrone soup Bread Banana	Jacket potato baked beans and cheese Coleslaw
THURSDAY	Cereal / toast	Mini Falafels and pita bread Mint & cucumber yoghurt dip Dried fruit	Salmon Fish cakes and parsley sauce Mashed potato Mixed vegetables
FRIDAY	Cereal / toast	Chicken Guacamole sandwiches Fruit salad	Sausages & mash Homemade tomato and vegetables sauce
SATURDAY	Cereal / toast Fruit scones	Baked fish, potato wedges and vegetables	Pizza evening Ice cream

2 tsp chopped fresh mint (optional)
Juice of ½ lime
pinch salt
½ cucumber, chopped

■ Place the yoghurt, mayonnaise and lime juice in a bowl and whisk with a fork. Add the cucumber, garlic and mint, mix well, adding a pinch of salt to taste, if necessary. Cover and leave in the fridge for at least one hour before serving to allow the flavours to intensify.

Moroccan Vegetable Stew with Rice

Ingredients (4–6 servings)

1 aubergine, sliced thinly
1 red pepper, deseeded and halved
1 green pepper, deseeded and halved
2 tbsp oil
1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 teaspoon of mild chilli powder
1 teaspoon ground cumin
100g green lentils
225g can of chopped tomatoes
150ml vegetable stock or tomato juice
225g Greek yoghurt (22.5g per tbsp)
Rice

■ Place the aubergine in a colander and sprinkle with a little salt. Cover with a weighted plate and leave to stand for 15 minutes.

■ In the meantime peel and chop potatoes for boiling. Cover with water and place on the heat.

■ Place the peppers in a hot oven or under the grill until the skin begins to char and blister. Place the halves in a plastic bag and leave to cool.

■ In a large pan heat the oil, add the onion, garlic, chilli powder and ground cumin, and cook for 1–2 minutes.

■ Rinse the aubergine slices and cut in half, add to the pan along with the lentils.

■ After 1–2 minutes add the tomatoes and stock or tomato juice. Bring to the boil and simmer for 20–25 minutes.

■ Meanwhile, peel the skins from the peppers and cut into small pieces.

■ Add the peppers to the stew.

■ Serve with rice and top with ½ a tablespoon of Greek yoghurt.

Chicken and Leek Stroganoff

Ingredients (4 servings)

Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
150g long-grain or basmati rice
1 large leek
A big handful of chestnut or oyster mushrooms
2 chicken breasts
A knob of butter
A glass of white wine
A bunch of fresh parsley
285ml single cream
1 lemon

■ Pour boiling water from the kettle into a large pan, place on a high heat and add a pinch of salt.

■ Add your rice, bring back to the boil, then turn the heat down slightly. Cook for the length

of time given in the packet instructions.

■ Cut both ends off the leek, quarter lengthways, slice across thinly, then wash well under running water. Slice the mushrooms. Slice the chicken pieces into little-finger-size pieces.

■ Put a large frying pan on a high heat and add a good lug of olive oil and a knob of butter.

■ Add the leek to the pan with the white wine, a small glass of water and a good pinch of salt and pepper. Let it bubble away for 5 minutes, covered loosely with a piece of foil.

■ Meanwhile finely chop the parsley, stalks and all.

■ Remove the foil and add the chicken strips, most of the parsley, the cream and the mushrooms. Stir, bring back to the boil, then turn the heat down to medium and simmer for 10 minutes.

■ Drain your rice. Just before serving, cut your lemon in half and squeeze the juice of one half into the stroganoff.

Salmon fishcakes with parsley sauce and green vegetables

Fishcakes: ingredients
(4–6 servings)

1 large can of tuna or salmon in spring water, 170–180g drained weight
1 onion, finely chopped
8–10 medium potatoes
1 egg, beaten
250ml milk
100g oats or crushed cornflakes
Frozen peas (50g each)
Oil

■ Pre-heat oven to 180C/350F, Gas 4

■ Peel and dice potatoes for mashing, boil until tender and mash. Add the onion and fish to the mash, season with a little pepper. Mix well.

■ Divide the mixture into 12, and shape into patties(fishcakes).

■ Mix the beaten egg and milk in a bowl.

■ Place the oats/cornflakes in a large flat dish.

■ Dip each fishcake in the egg wash, then into the oats or cornflakes, evenly coat the fishcake.

■ Place the oat covered fishcake onto a greased oven tray.

■ Before baking, brush the top of each fishcake with a little oil, bake for 15–20 minutes, or until the oats are golden brown.

■ Add boiling water to the frozen peas and cook for approx. 4 mins.

■ Serve.

Parsley sauce: ingredients (4–6 servings)

30g cornflour
660ml milk
Flat leaf parsley

■ Make a paste with a little of the cold milk and cornflour.

■ Bring the rest of the milk to the boil.

■ Stir in the paste until the sauce thickens up. Take off the heat and stir in the chopped parsley.

■ Serve.

Baked fish with potato wedges

Fish: ingredients (4–6 servings)

400g skinless white fish hake, whiting, plaice coley or cod
400g skinless, boneless salmon fillets
1 large onion finely diced
A little garlic puree
2 carrots peeled and grated
1 red pepper
4oz mushrooms
1x 400g can tomatoes
2 tbsp tomato puree
3oz grated cheese
Pinch of mixed herbs
4x courgettes thinly sliced
50g each broccoli and cauliflower

■ Pre-heat the oven to 190C/375F, Gas 5

■ Fry onions, garlic, mixed herbs, mushrooms and peppers until soft

■ Add tomato puree and tomatoes

■ Put fish in the bottom of serving tins

■ Cover with the thinly sliced courgettes

■ Cover with the tomato mixture

■ Sprinkle with cheese

■ Cook for 25–35 mins or until cooked

Wedges: ingredients

5 large baking potatoes, 160g
2 tbsp oil for basting

■ Pre-heat a different oven to 220C/425F, Gas 7

■ Cut the potatoes into 10 wedges each.

■ Part boil the wedges for 6–7 mins.

■ Place onto a baking sheet and brush with oil, season and put into the oven. Cook for 20 mins or until golden brown.

The
Denby Report

For more great
recipes, many of
which have been
tried, tested and

approved by over 40,000 children. Go to grub4life.org.uk. It's free to become a member and gives you access to a wide range of recipes, resources and support for healthy nutrition.