

News release

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For immediate release

Healthy options as children go back to school

Parents in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland are being given tips to make their kids lunch box healthier.

A new school term is well underway and the NHS in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland is handing out advice on how to make kids lunch boxes healthy as well as fun, to beat hunger and improve concentration throughout the school day.

With the majority of children taking packed lunches to school its important lunch boxes are kept fun and healthy to avoid children snacking between meals.

Gulshinder Johal, senior dietician speaking on behalf of the trusts, said: "Many kids will have started school for the first time while others will be returning for another year and after a while lunchboxes can become quite boring.

"We are asking parents to be imaginative with their child's lunch box and include lots of healthy snacks such as dried fruit and vegetable sticks. Foods which release energy slowly such as wholegrain or pitta bread will help them stay alert all day. Involve children in the preparation of their lunchbox, this will get them excited about eating what's inside.

"Foods high in sugar and fat, such as chocolate bars and crisps will make children feel lethargic and soon they'll be feeling hungry again."

Gulshinder's five top tips for a healthy lunchbox are:

- include plenty of dried or fresh fruit
- use wholegrain bread for sandwiches or alternate with pitta bread
- pack up crisps only twice a week
- include a calcium packed yoghurt for healthy teeth and bones
- include milk or water instead of sugary drinks.

For more information on healthy snacks and meals for children log onto the Change4Life website at www.nhs.uk/change4life.

ENDS

For interviews or more information please contact senior media officer Caroline Higgs on 0116 295 7663 or caroline.higgs@lcr.nhs.uk or media officer Liz Thomas on 0116 295 4123 or liz.thomas@leicestercity.nhs.uk

Notes to editor:

NHS Leicester City is the operating name for Leicester City Primary Care Trust.

NHS Leicestershire County and Rutland is the operating name for Leicestershire County and Rutland Primary Care Trust (PCT).

Change4Life encourages families to eat well, move more and live longer. It aims to empower them to make small lifestyle changes to benefit their long term health. Change4Life is a national campaign to kickstart a lifestyle revolution for every family in order to reduce the levels of obesity in the city.