



# Living here parenting

WITH ALICE GORMAN [gormana@goldcoast.com.au](mailto:gormana@goldcoast.com.au)

## Keep diet simple

PACKING school lunches is a chore most parents would happily hand over, but a Gold Coast dietitian says we make it too complex.

Amanda Clark, author of *Portion Perfection* – a visual weight control plan – says most children will survive a day at school with just a sandwich and a piece of fruit.

She says parents often send their children to school with much more. “The ideal lunchbox should contain a morning snack and full lunch, which equates to 450 or 550 calories in total,” says the Coolangatta-based dietitian.

“A sandwich with some spread, protein and salad will usually contain about 350 calories, so that leaves 100 to 200 calories for snacks.

“When I went to school all I got was a tuna sandwich and an apple and that is all you need. I have looked at lunchboxes at childcare centres and there have been five different types of biscuits. We’re time poor and through our unfocused bleary eyes we’re sticking things in lunchboxes which shouldn’t be there.”

Amanda says that while pre-packaged, well-marketed snack foods are convenient, often they provide children with little or no nutritional benefit.

Portion control is also important and is an area where many parents fail. She says many of us overfeed our children and the consequences can be dire.

She says the school lunchbox is the perfect opportunity for parents to offer their children a model healthy diet because children have little choice but to eat what is in their lunchbox.

“At school they’re stuck with what’s in their lunchbox – pester power will not work,” she says.

“The ideal lunchbox should contain a sandwich, a piece of fruit or a tub of yoghurt and a bottle of water.

“Kids who are aiming to trim down should just have a sandwich. It should have some protein and salad. The protein could be ham, chicken, egg or cheese.

“A lot of parents say they don’t like to put salad on the sandwich because it goes soggy but now there are non-juicy tomatoes. Lettuce doesn’t leach and it can often



David Hill prepares lunch boxes for his two boys Alexander and Nicholas before kindy every day



be a barrier for vegetables that do. “Morning tea should be a piece of fruit or something dairy based. Maybe some vegetables – carrot sticks, celery, mushrooms.”

Amanda says parents should read the labels on the pre-packaged foods they buy.

They should aim to buy foods that are high in fibre, low in fat and with low to moderate sugar levels. Water should be offered instead of juice which is high in sugar and calories.

“If your child eats a healthy, nutritious lunch, they won’t be ravenous when they get home from school and will be able to do with a small snack to tide them over until dinner,” Amanda says.

“Often we overfeed children to the point that they may not be hungry enough for dinner.”

Biggera Waters mum Yoka Hill says her sons Alexander, 4, and Nicholas, 3, go to Southport Kindergarten with gourmet lunches.

### Amanda’s guide for parents

#### 6-8 year olds require 1300 calories/day

Breakfast	300 Cals
Morning tea	100 Cals
Lunch	350 Cals
Afternoon tea	100 Cals
Dinner	350 Cals
Supper	100 Cals

#### 9-12 year olds require 1600 calories/day

Breakfast	400 Cals
Morning tea	100 Cals
Lunch	450 Cals
Afternoon tea	100 Cals
Dinner	450 Cals
Supper	100 Cals

Her builder husband David packs the lunchboxes and gives his sons a wide variety of nutritious snacks. She says the lunchboxes always come home empty.

“Sometimes David makes vegemite and cheese sandwiches but on some days the boys get smoked salmon and cream cheese sandwiches which they love,” Yoka says.

“Other days it’s a homemade wrap or some sushi. David will also include some roma tomatoes, gherkins and olives, cubes of cheese and some fruit cut up.

“He does shapes and patterns. They’ll usually also have some sort of cake, whatever we have made that week – banana cake or something similar. David has always

loved food and he just loves making their lunches.”

Yoka says it has given her sons a healthy appreciation for all kinds of food.

**Amanda is offering two Bulletin readers a copy of her *Portion Perfection* book, a visual weight control plan with pictures of the right portions for everyone from children to adults. It retails for \$34.95. For your chance to win, email [gormana@goldcoast.com.au](mailto:gormana@goldcoast.com.au) and tell us what you pack in your child’s lunchbox. Entries close at 5pm tomorrow. Go to [www.greatideas.net.au](http://www.greatideas.net.au) for more information**



### Dinner in 20 minutes

Time poor? Never fear. Each day we will include a fast, simple recipe guaranteed to be a hit with the kids and most importantly it will only take 20 minutes (or less) to whip it up

#### Sizzling garlic beef with broccolini



#### Ingredients (serves 4)

- 500g topside beef, thinly sliced
- 1 tbs soy sauce;
- 3 tsp cornflour
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 tsp cracked black pepper
- 2 tbs peanut oil
- 1 brown onion, cut into thin wedges
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- ½ cup coarsely chopped fresh chives
- 1 bunch broccolini, cut into 4cm bits
- 160ml (⅔ cup) vegetable stock
- 2 tbs kecap manis
- Steamed rice, to serve

#### Method

Combine the beef, soy sauce, cornflour, sesame oil and pepper in a large bowl. Heat 3 tsp of the peanut oil in a wok until just smoking. Add half the beef mixture and stir-fry for 1-2 minutes. Transfer to a heatproof bowl. Repeat with 3 tsp of the remaining oil and the remaining beef mixture, reheating wok between batches. Heat the remaining oil in the wok over medium-high heat until just smoking. Add the onion and stir-fry for 2 minutes. Add the garlic and half the chives and stir-fry for 1 minute or until aromatic. Add broccolini and stock and stir-fry for 3 minutes or until broccolini is bright green and tender crisp. Return beef to the wok along with the kecap manis and remaining chives and stir-fry for 1 minute. Serve with steamed rice.

Source: [www.taste.com.au](http://www.taste.com.au)  
Send recipes to [editorial@goldcoast.com.au](mailto:editorial@goldcoast.com.au)

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