

## 99% Junk in Kids' Packed Lunches

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By EMMA MORTON <br />Health Editor </p><p align="justify">Published: 12 Jan 2010</p><p align="justify"><br />JUST one per cent of primary kids' lunchboxes meet nutritional standards set for school dinners, a study has revealed.<br />Despite an overhaul of the schools catering system spearheaded by chef Jamie Oliver and a £20million "Change4Life" Government campaign, children still eat junk.</p><p align="justify">Half of all youngsters bring in their own meals - 5.5billion lunches a year.</p><p align="justify">But many contain crisps, sweets, sugary drinks and sandwiches with barely any protein, the survey of almost 2,000 lunchboxes by Leeds University dieticians showed. </p> There were also jam or marmite rolls, sandwiches and cakes. <p align="justify">Fewer than half met the Government's 2008 nutrient standards, which must include levels of vitamin A, folate, iron and zinc. And just one per cent were deemed healthy and matched school meals in terms of nutritional values.</p><p align="justify">Researchers, who studied meals at 89 primary schools, blamed peer pressure for pupils demanding mums and dads provide unhealthy snacks and treats.</p><p align="justify">New rules for local authorities in 2006 said school dinners must be protein rich, low fat, with veg, fruit and dairy products containing calcium for kids' bones.</p><p align="justify">Tough Government standards on the energy, fat, salt, vitamin and nutrient content for meals were introduced in 2008.</p><p align="justify">Standards are regularly checked by inspectors and local councils face disciplinary action if they breach the guidelines.</p><p align="justify">Sweets and savoury snacks like crisps are banned.</p><p align="justify">And artificially sweetened drinks have also been scrapped, in favour of water, milk and pure fruit juices.</p><p align="justify">But no such rules exist for packed lunches, although some schools encourage parents to provide healthier options. The new study could lead to nationwide box content checks at schools. Study leader Charlotte Evans said: "The quality of food in packed lunches is poor. Few contained all five healthy food groups, but most lunches contained restricted foods."</p><p align="justify">Janet Cade, professor of nutritional epidemiology at Leeds University, said: "Schools could help by saying that they don't want children to bring in sweets and sweetened drinks."</p><p align="justify"><br />Source: <a href="http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/2803955/Just-1-of-primary-kids-packed-lunches-meet-nutritional-standards.html">http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/news/2803955/Just-1-of-primary-kids-packed-lunches-meet-nutritional-standards.html</a></p>