

**Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.**

## Top tips: Sugar swaps

**Nearly a quarter of 5-year-olds in England have tooth decay, affecting on average 3 to 4 teeth. (The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities oral health survey of 5-year-old children (2022)). Free sugars are a leading factor in the development of tooth decay and obesity.**

Free sugars are described as any sugar added to a food or drink, or the sugar that is already in honey, syrup and fruit juice and they can be found in foods such as sweets, cakes, biscuits, chocolate, fizzy drinks and some juice drinks.

This week's top tips help you to consider ways to raise staff, children and parent awareness around nutritional food and drink choices and inspire them to make positive changes.



1. Review your food and drink policy and menus by calculating sugar consumption for every meal and snack, across each day, making sugar swaps where possible, to ensure children are provided with a balanced range of healthy options
2. Identify sugar swaps you are able to make e.g. a slice of malt loaf in place of biscuits, introducing wholemeal bread and porridge in place of high sugar cereals, swapping full fat version of foods to reduced sugar options, such as; sugar free jelly, low fat mince, low fat milks and sugar free drinks
3. Involve children in the preparation of snack or meals, inspiring them to try different nutritious foods and helping them to develop their understanding of healthy lifestyles
4. Make meal and snack times enjoyable and social occasions where staff sit with children to talk about healthy eating and scaffold their learning by discussing and considering food choices and how to keep their teeth healthy
5. Consider how you work with parents to promote healthy food choices. For example, set up a 'How much sugar' station or display in your setting showing the amount of sugar in particular foods and drinks using sugar cubes. This will provide children and their parents / carers with a visual to understand and raise awareness of sugar contents of everyday food and drinks
6. Engage children and their families in a 'How many sugar swaps can you make' challenge giving helpful suggestions such as swapping from juice to water or sugary cereal to porridge with fruit

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7. Plan and implement baking activities to actively demonstrate some sugar swaps. Talk to the children about healthier choices and share recipes with parents / carers
8. Share a range of books and stories with children and their families that include or focus on healthy food options. For example, 'Oliver's Vegetables' by Vivien French.

### **NDNA products to support you with these tips**

- [Healthy Body, Happy Me](#) – free resources
- [Healthy Eating](#) - factsheet
- [Baby-led Weaning](#) - factsheet
- [Millie's Mark](#) – paediatric first aid

**And more resources at [www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna](http://www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna)**