



Australian Government

Department of Health and Ageing



Healthy School Canteens

Pocket Guide



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National Healthy School Canteens Pocket Guide

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Healthy kids need healthy canteens!

ALWAYS ON THE CANTEEN MENU

Encourage and promote these foods and drinks

These foods and drinks:

- are the best choices for a healthy school canteen
- should be available every day and be the main choices on the canteen menu
- contain a wide range of nutrients
- are generally low in saturated fat and/or sugar and/or sodium (salt).



SELECT CAREFULLY

Do not let these foods and drinks take over the menu and keep serve sizes small

These foods and drinks:

- contain some valuable nutrients
- contain moderate amounts of saturated fat and/or sugar and/or sodium (salt)
- if eaten in large amounts, may increase the amount of energy (kilojoules) being consumed.



NOT RECOMMENDED ON THE CANTEEN MENU

These foods and drinks should not be sold in a healthy school canteen

These foods and drinks:

- may contain excess energy (kilojoules) and/or
- saturated fat and/or sodium (salt) and/or
- sugar are low in nutritional value.



Introduction

Scope of the National Healthy School Canteens *Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens*

- The National Healthy School Canteens (NHSC) *Guidelines* and resources have been developed for use in school canteens across Australia, drawing from The *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* and the *2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines**. The NHSC *Guidelines* are designed to assist canteen managers to make healthy menu choices for the school canteen. While the NHSC *Guidelines* have been designed specifically for use in school canteens, their use in the broader school setting would positively reinforce and support the healthy food message. For example, schools may choose to apply the NHSC *Guidelines* to foods and drinks provided outside the school canteen, such as for fundraising purposes, class parties, school camps, school fetes, sporting carnivals and school dances.
- The NHSC *Guidelines* are not designed for use in settings outside the school environment.
- The NHSC *Guidelines* do not provide endorsement of any specific food or drink products.

Differences between States and Territories

- Foods and drinks categorised as **GREEN** or **AMBER** according to the NHSC criteria may be included on the school canteen menu, but will not necessarily be available on every school canteen menu. The sale of these foods and drinks may be further restricted by local arrangements. For example, where there is a 'no caffeine' or 'nut free' policy in place, foods containing these ingredients may not be sold.
- Local arrangements should not be used to allow foods and drinks categorised as **RED** to be on the school canteen menu.

*Note

The *Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens* is based on the *2013 Australian Dietary Guidelines* and the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* which are part of the Australian Government's Eat for Health program. www.eatforhealth.gov.au

Foreword

The National Healthy School Canteens guidelines were developed to assist canteen managers to select foods and drinks for sale in the school canteen that encourage and promote a healthy eating pattern.

This pocket guide provides basic information about the National Healthy School Canteens guidelines. For more detailed information, please refer to the *Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens*.

Foods and drinks have been categorised according to the amount of nutrients they provide and are based on the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*.

GREEN	High in nutrients
AMBER	Some valuable nutrients, but may also be high in energy, and/or saturated fat and/or sodium (salt)
RED	Low in nutrients and may be too high in energy, and/or saturated fat and/or sodium (salt)

Foods and drinks categorised as **GREEN** and **AMBER** may be sold through the school canteen. Think of these foods and drinks as sitting on a spectrum. The aim is for all foods and drinks sold in the school canteen to be as close to the '**GREEN**' end of the spectrum as possible. For example, a ham sandwich on white bread could be '**GREENed**' up by replacing the white bread with wholemeal bread and adding tomato, lettuce, shredded carrot and cucumber. Each additional vegetable moves the sandwich closer to the '**GREEN**' end of the spectrum.

Foods and drinks categorised as **RED** should not be on the school canteen menu.

ALWAYS ON THE CANTEEN MENU

The **GREEN** category

Foods and drinks categorised as **GREEN** are high in nutrients and should be provided every day the school canteen is open.

- Bread, wholegrain cereals, rice, pasta and noodles
- Vegetables (fresh, frozen or canned)
- Fruit (fresh, frozen or canned)
- Milk, yoghurt, custard and cheese – low or reduced-fat
- Lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs and legumes (dried and canned)
- Plain water

Providing children with a variety of foods and drinks from each of these groups means they are more likely to get all the nutrients they need for good health.

To make even healthier choices within these groups:

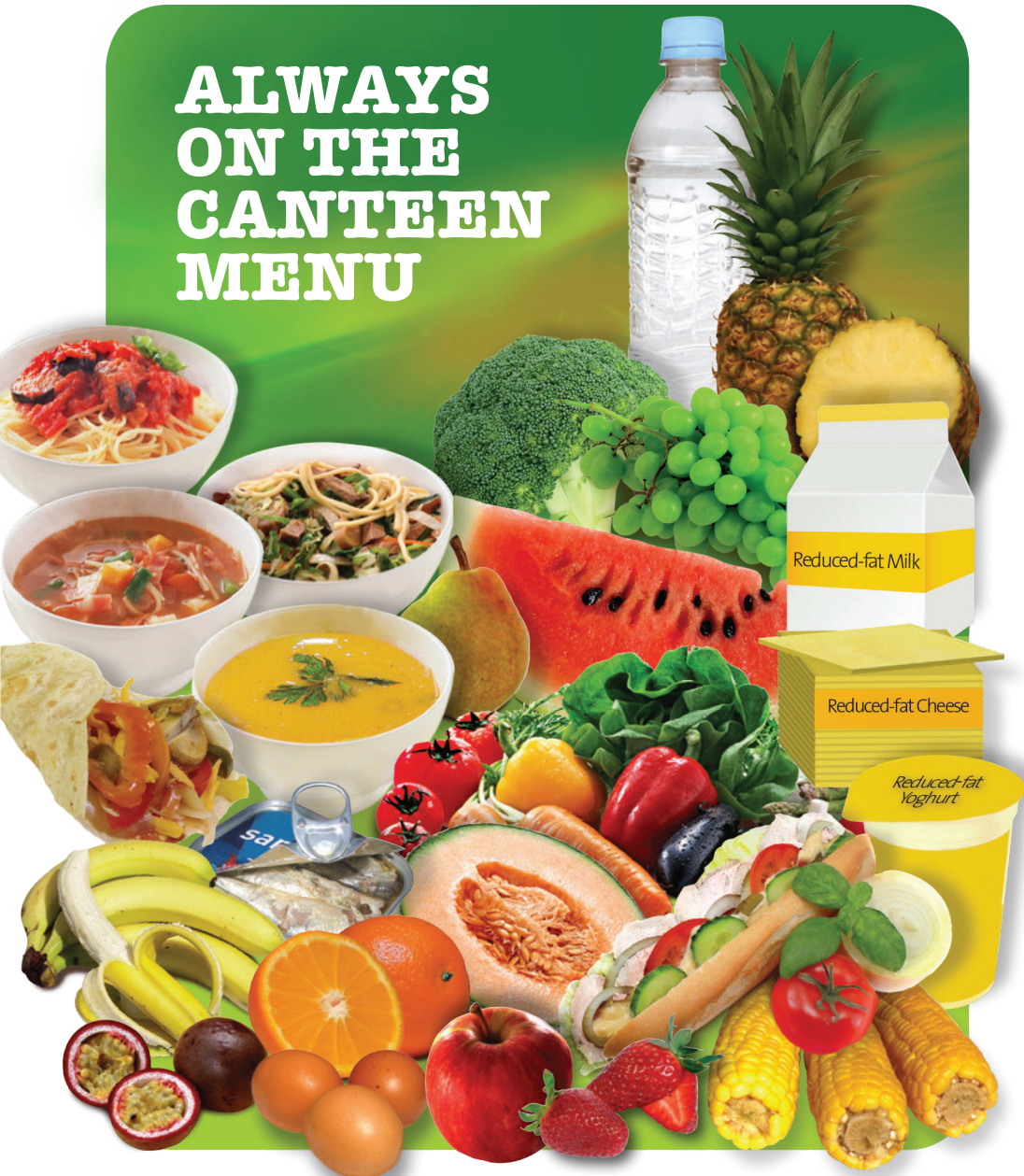
- choose breads and cereals made from whole grains
- leave the skin on fruit – for extra vitamins and fibre
- drink plain water, as it is the best drink to quench thirst.

Present foods and drinks in this category in attractive and interesting ways and promote them as tasty, good value choices.

Foods and drinks from the **GREEN** category should make up most of the choices on the menu. Promote them, make sure they look good and are served at the correct temperature and the taste will keep them coming back for more.

- Choose fruit and vegetables in-season for better flavour and value.
- Serve fruit in different ways to add interest (for example: fruit kebabs, grapes in a cup, frozen pineapple rings).
- Provide a variety of breads (for example: wraps, rolls, pita bread).
- Always add fresh salad vegetables to sandwiches and rolls.
- Vary the type of salads on the canteen menu (for example: Asian style salads, roast vegetable salad, Greek salad).
- Foods and drinks categorised as **GREEN** should be the focus of meal deals.

ALWAYS ON THE CANTEEN MENU



SELECT CAREFULLY

The AMBER category

Foods and drinks categorised as **AMBER** contain some valuable nutrients, but may also be high in energy, and/or saturated fat and/or sodium (salt). Select and **assess** these foods and drinks carefully against the criteria* to make sure that:

- the healthiest choices from this category are selected
- these foods and drinks do not take over the canteen menu
- the serve size is kept small.

Foods and drinks that may be categorised as **AMBER** include:

- some cereals with added sugar and lower in fibre
- ready-to-eat pasta, rice or noodle dishes
- savoury pastry products and oven-baked potato products
- dried fruit, fruit and vegetable juice, 99% fruit ice blocks
- full-fat milk, yoghurt, custard and cheese
- lean processed meats
- sauces, gravies, mayonnaise, dressings and spreads
- sweet and savoury snack foods
- low or reduced-fat ice creams, milk-based ices and dairy desserts
- some un-iced cakes, muffins and sweet pastries.

Every opportunity should be taken to move foods and drinks closer to the 'GREEN' end of the spectrum. Some examples of how to 'GREEN' the menu are listed on page 5 of this booklet.



*Nutrient Criteria Tables are on the back of this booklet. For more detailed information regarding criteria, refer to the *Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens*.

‘GREENING’ THE MENU

Foods and drinks categorised as **GREEN** and **AMBER** may be sold through the school canteen. Think of these foods as sitting on a spectrum. The aim is for all foods and drinks sold in the school canteen to be as close to the ‘**GREEN**’ end of the spectrum as possible.

Making food in the canteen ‘from scratch’	Make sure most of the ingredients come from the list of foods categorised as GREEN .
Criteria	Compare products that meet the criteria. Choose the one with the least amount of saturated fat, sodium and energy, and the greatest amount of fibre.
Promotion	Foods categorised as GREEN should be the focus of meal deals. Foods that are promoted and are presented in an attractive way, at the correct temperature, are more likely to be purchased and eaten.
Serve size	Keep the serve size small, especially those foods categorised as AMBER .
Sandwiches, rolls, wraps, burgers	Choose wholegrain, wholemeal or multigrain bread. Add salad vegetables to sandwiches (for example: tomato, lettuce, shredded carrot). Each additional vegetable pushes the sandwich closer towards the ‘ GREEN ’ end of the spectrum. Choose low or reduced-fat cheese.
Cheese	Choose low or reduced-fat cheese in the canteen. Low or reduced-fat cheese may still be high in saturated fat and/or salt. Use sparingly.
Pasta	Fresh tomato or vegetable-based sauces are the best choice with plenty of added vegetables. Choose low or reduced-fat cheese.
Pizza	Use pita bread as a base and top with lean meat and plenty of vegetables. Choose low or reduced-fat cheese.
Muffins	Reduce the amount of sugar used. Replace with pureed apple, mashed banana or berries. Replace half the flour with wholemeal flour.
Milk drinks	Choose low or reduced-fat milk when making up milkshakes and smoothies. Add low or reduced-fat yoghurt and/or fruit.
Soups	Choose low or reduced-salt stock. Flavour with herbs and spices instead of salt. Add plenty of vegetables and serve with plain wholemeal or wholegrain bread.
Flavour	Use herbs and spices instead of salt.
Sauces, mayonnaises	Choose products that are low or reduced-fat, low or reduced-salt or ‘no added salt’, and use sparingly.
Breakfast cereal	Serve with low or reduced-fat milk.

For more detailed information regarding the NHSC criteria, please refer to the [Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens](#).

NOT RECOMMENDED ON THE CANTEEN MENU

The **RED** category

Foods and drinks categorised as **RED** are generally low in nutrients. Some may contain too much energy, and/or saturated fat and/or sodium (salt). These foods and drinks should not be on the school canteen menu.

Foods and drinks categorised as **RED** include:

- soft drinks, fruit drinks, iced tea, cordial, sports drinks, sports waters, flavoured mineral waters, energy drinks
- intense (artificially) sweetened foods and drinks, with the exception of milk, yoghurt and custard
- products containing guarana or added caffeine. Coffee-style milk drinks may be sold in secondary school. Maximum 375mL serve size.
- fruit/vegetable juice, less than 99% juice, added sugar and greater than 250mL serve size
- jelly desserts and ice crushes or slushies, less than 99% fruit juice, added sugar and greater than 200mL serve size
- icy-poles and fruit ice blocks, less than 99% fruit juice, added sugar and greater than 125mL serve size
- iced cakes and slices, doughnuts, Danishes, croissants, cream-filled buns/cakes
- all types: sold separately or added to products including; boiled lollies, carob, chocolate (including choc chips and chocolate-coated), chocolate spreads, cough lollies, 100s and 1000s, juice jellies, icing, liquorice, soft lollies, yoghurt/carob-coated.
- deep-fried foods
- cream, coconut cream, coconut milk, butter, copha, ghee, lard.

There are plenty of opportunities for children to consume these types of foods and drinks outside school hours at the discretion of their parents.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. In the bottom right corner, there is a small, stylized illustration of a green plant with several leaves, and next to it, a small blue object that looks like a pen or a pencil cap. The overall appearance is that of a clean, unused piece of stationery.



NUTRIENT CRITERIA TABLES

If the item being assessed has **less than or equal** to the numbers specified for energy, saturated fat or sodium, and **more than or equal** to the number specified for fibre, it is able to be on the school canteen menu.

If one of the criterion is not met the item is categorised as **RED** and should not be on the school canteen menu.

Table 1: Hot food items and processed meats assessed per 100g

Category	Nutrient Criteria		
	Energy (kJ) per 100g	Saturated fat (g) per 100g	Sodium (mg) per 100g
Savoury pastries, filled breads, pasta dishes, pizzas, oven-baked potato products, dim sims, spring rolls, rice and noodle dishes	1000kJ or less	5g or less	400mg or less
Meat products and alternatives crumbed and not-crumbed (burgers, patties, strips, balls or nuggets), sausages, frankfurts and saveloys, stews, casseroles and curries	1000kJ or less	5g or less	450mg or less
Processed luncheon meats (fritz, devon, chicken loaf, free flow chicken products) and cured meats (for example: ham, bacon)	1000kJ or less	3g or less	750mg or less

All types of confectionery are categorised as **RED**.

Table 2: Snack food items assessed per serve

Category	Nutrient Criteria			
	Energy (kJ) per serve	Saturated fat (g) per serve	Sodium (mg) per serve	Fibre (g) per serve
Sweet snack food, bars and biscuits	600kJ or less	3g or less	–	1g or more
Savoury snack food, biscuits, crispbreads and crisps	600kJ or less	2g or less	200mg or less	–
	-- (Energy must be 1800kJ or less per 100g) --			
Ice creams, milk-based ices and dairy desserts	600kJ or less	3g or less	–	–
	-- (Milk must be listed as first ingredient) --			
Un-iced cakes, muffins and sweet pastries	900kJ or less	3g or less	–	1.5g or more

All types of confectionery are categorised as **RED**.

For more detailed information regarding the NHSC criteria, please refer to the [Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens](#).