

December 2003

Issue 1

This newsletter is for circulation to -

- Principals
- Canteen managers and volunteers
- Students (SRC)
- Food manufacturers
- Distributors
- Lessees and catering companies
- Teachers
- Parents & Carers
- P&C Association

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Special points of interest:

- Healthier Schools - part of the NSW Government Action plan to tackle obesity in children and young people.
- *Fresh Tastes* @ school an Australian first.
- Target date for implementation Term 1 2005.



@ School

NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy

A Joint Initiative of the NSW Department of Education & Training and the



NSW Department of Health



Welcome to the first edition of the *Fresh Tastes* newsletter.

Fresh Tastes is a logo we hope will become familiar to you. It will allow you to identify materials that will be sent to schools to support the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

Fresh Tastes materials will be prepared as a joint initiative of NSW Health and the NSW Department of Education and Training.

The goal of *Fresh Tastes* is to ensure all schools are supported as they seek to

provide a healthy and nutritious canteen food service consistent with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents*.

This newsletter aims to inform all those involved with canteens of the changes that will impact on school canteens in the near future.

The *Fresh Tastes* healthy canteen strategy sits within the 'Healthier Schools' priority area of the *NSW Government Action Plan for the Prevention of Obesity in Children and Young People 2003-2007*.



This was launched by The Hon. Robert Carr - NSW Premier on October 23rd 2003.

This strategy heralds a move beyond nutrition guidelines for canteens to a government endorsed approach to the types and frequency of foods that are available for sale in school canteens in NSW.

The *Fresh Tastes* approach to school canteens is an Australian first. NSW is leading the way to healthier canteens and better nutrition for our children and young people .

Over the past few weeks, the *Fresh Tastes* team have spoken to many people about the approach.

A number of frequently asked questions (FAQs) have been noted regarding various aspects of the implementation of the approach.

In this newsletter we will answer those FAQs and introduce you to the *Fresh Tastes* approach.

The team would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a relaxing and rejuvenating holiday break.

We look forward to working with you during next year to make school canteens in NSW the healthiest in Australia.

Regards
The *Fresh Tastes* Team
Renee Andrews
Rhonda Matthews (NSW Health)
Project Coordinators



What does the *Fresh Tastes* approach require of schools?

This approach requires schools to provide healthier food choices in line with the Australian Dietary Guidelines and The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE).

These foods are low in nutritional value and high in energy (kJ), saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt .

Consistency is required in schools across all areas of food provision including over the counter sales, contractors, special events (fundraising), classroom rewards and the sale of foods in vending machines.

Some examples include:

- soft drinks & sports drinks
- lollies
- chocolate bars
- high fat cakes
- most sweet biscuits
- high fat, sweet and savoury pastry-based foods
- deep-fried foods
- high fat ice creams

Detailed information will be provided in the form of a Support Kit. See page 3.

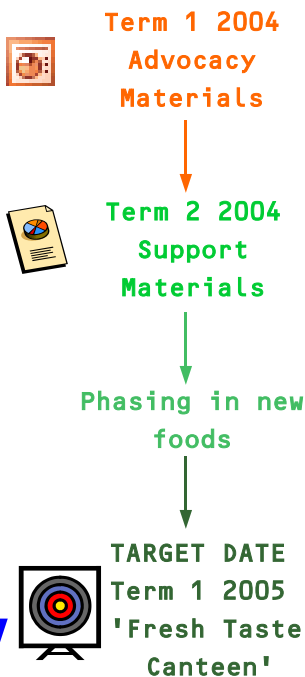
Foods that are regarded in the AGHE as 'extras' can only be sold on two occasions per term.

Further information will be available in the advocacy materials. Examples are outlined in the next column.

"A health promoting school canteen has a broader role than food sales. It offers and promotes a variety of nutritious foods—encouraging children to make healthier food choices."

Timeline

How long will schools have to implement the changes?



A TARGET DATE of Term 1 2005

What's happening between now and then?

This date has been set for all Government schools to be operating a healthy school canteen food service.

Non-government schools will also be encouraged to meet this target date.

- Schools will receive advocacy materials early in Term 1, 2004.

- A set of support materials will arrive in schools early in Term 2 of 2004.
- Schools will then have the remainder of 2004 to make any changes that are needed.





What materials will schools receive to help them make these changes?

The project team is currently developing a **Fresh Tastes Support Kit** that will be sent to schools in Term 2, 2004.

The kit will assist Canteen Committees to plan, manage and implement changes in the school canteen during 2004. The kit will contain a range of practical user-friendly resources.

- Contents of the Kit**
- Self assessment tool- how does your canteen shape up?
 - Food spectrum- a guide to food selection.
 - Action planner- a tool to help you plan for and phase in changes in your canteen.
 - Sample menus and promotional ideas.
 - Guidelines on how to negotiate a healthy leased canteen.

- NSW School Canteen Association Buyers Guide of registered products.
- Healthy fundraising ideas.
- Basic nutrition facts- what children and adolescents need and why.
- Canteen policy development hints and tips.
- Recipe development criteria.
- Case studies on primary and secondary healthy canteens.



Making a positive start!

What should schools do in Term 1, 2004 to prepare for the *Fresh Tastes* approach?

STEP 1
Inform your school community that changes are going to be taking place during the course of the year and encourage interested people to get involved.

Use the materials that will be emailed to all schools in Term 1, 2004.

- The materials will cover:
- the reasons behind the strategy
 - facts about what children and young people are eating
 - the role the school canteen can play
 - an outline of the steps in the change process.

STEP 2
Ensure your school has a functioning Canteen Committee.

Many schools already have a Canteen Committee (often a sub committee of the P&C) and will not need to establish a new committee. These schools can strengthen their existing committee.

Those that don't are strongly encouraged to establish a Canteen Committee to plan, manage and implement the changes during 2004.

The Canteen Committee should have broad membership including representation from the students, teachers, parents, canteen manager, volunteers and the school executive. It might be a good time to call for new members. Refer to the P&C Federation- Canteen Manual.

STEP 3
Get connected and seek out additional help and resources.

Attend network meetings for canteen managers and volunteers. These established networks meet 3-4 times per year to exchange ideas, assist and support each other and arrange for guest speakers to present on a range of topics.

Area Health Service staff involved with public health nutrition, health promotion or community health may be able to lend assistance if canteen networks (primary and secondary) do not exist in your Area.

The P&C Federation is a key partner in the *Fresh Tastes* approach and is gathering positive school canteen case studies. Updated information is provided in the P&C journal each term, on their website and in the updated P&C Canteen Manual. Phone advice is provided to all public schools.

Positive Steps

1. Engage the school community.
2. Consolidate your committee.
3. Get connected— seek out resources to help you.

The **NSW School Canteen Association** is also a key partner in the *Fresh Tastes* approach.



They provide a broad range of support including:

- a Canteen Buyers Guide listing hundreds of healthy products
- newsletters
- fact sheets
- food expos
- phone assistance
- Healthy Canteen Awards and much more.

Their new Adolescent Health Worker is focusing her attentions on the secondary school sector.



The project team is currently developing a menu-planning tool for school canteens that includes the whole spectrum of foods from most to least healthy.

In earlier correspondence, we had referred to this tool as the 'Traffic Light Guide to Food Selection in School Canteens'.

We have since refined our model and now refer to it as a



This better describes the continuum along which canteen menus are planned and food selections are made. It also defines the foods that cannot be sold more than twice per term.

The *Fresh Tastes* Canteen Menu Planning Spectrum, complete with criteria for 'occasional' foods that fall into the RED end of the spectrum, will be included in the materials that schools will receive in Term 1, 2004.

This information will also be included in the Support Kit.

Food manufacturers, distributors and lessees will be sent information about the model in the early months of 2004.



How will canteens continue to make a profit when RED foods are limited to twice per term?

This is often the first question asked by those involved with canteens that are currently selling a number of occasional foods every day. It is tied to a perception that students won't like the healthier choices or that there will be very few foods to sell.

From surveys of students we know that the most important things that will keep them coming back to the canteen are the **taste and appearance** of foods.

The good news is that there are many tasty, appealing, healthier food choices available to replace the **RED** foods.

The NSW School Canteen Association has a list of over 200 products registered with them that meet their nutrient criteria.

These foods largely fit into the **AMBER** section of the food spectrum.

In the **GREEN** section are many more fresh and healthy choices including fruit, vegetables, whole-grain breads and cereals, reduced fat milk products and lean meats that can form the basis of some simple and delicious meals and snacks.

HINTS

Some helpful hints for making a healthy profit.

- Promote new food items on the menu.
- Involve students and gain their feedback.
- Present food attractively and price it to sell.
- Phase in changes over time.
- Make sure you link with the classroom curriculum.

More information on being a healthy and profitable canteen will be included in the Support Kit . Practical examples of schools that have achieved this (both primary and secondary) will be part of the case studies.

The NSW School Canteen Association and P&C Federation also provide lots of ideas through their newsletters, journals and fact sheets.



The Student Representative Councils (SRCs)



have been very supportive of the strategy and are keen to be involved in the planning, evaluation and promotion of new foods. Talk to the SRC in your school and ensure they are involved from the start.

CONTACT US



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WEBLINKS

For more information about the strategy go to:
The NSW Health web site: www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity

For Case Studies and other helpful information visit:
The NSW P&C Federation: Ph: 9360 2481 www.pandc.org.au.
The NSW School Canteen Association: Ph: 9876 1300 www.schoolcanteens.org.au (available Term 2, 2004)