

Food Matters @ School

Information for Parents



New and exciting things are happening in school canteens across NSW, as schools take on the State Government's initiative *Fresh Tastes @ School*. Healthy, delicious foods and drinks are filling canteen counters, lunch orders and vending machines. Foods with little nutritional content are taking a back seat.

Why a healthy canteen?

The canteen plays an important role in promoting good nutrition because it can:

- give students a taste for healthy foods
- support nutrition messages taught in class
- show students better choices for lunches and snacks.

What's missing in the diets of many children and young people?

- **Fruit and vegetables** – many consume very low amounts of these foods.
- **A healthy breakfast** – skipping breakfast often leads to snacking on sugary and fatty foods later in the day.
- **Dairy products** – many young people aren't getting 2-3 daily serves of milk, cheese or yoghurt to provide their calcium needs.
- **Drinking enough water** – water is the best thirst quencher!

What's being eaten instead?

- **Too many fatty, sugary and salty foods** e.g. crisps, hot chips, cakes, pastries, biscuits, donuts, lollies, chocolates and fizzy drinks, often in **large portion sizes**. These provide too many kilojoules and very little nutrition.
- A poor diet robs young people of their vitality and makes it hard for them to concentrate and do their best at school.
- Too many high kilojoule foods combined with little physical activity can lead to overweight and obesity.

Benefits of healthy eating

Good food gives children and adolescents all the nutrients they need to:

- grow and develop
- concentrate and learn well at school
- stay healthy through childhood and in adult life.

CANTEEN MENU PLANNER

'OCCASIONALLY'

Do not sell these foods on more than two occasions per term

- These foods:
- lack adequate nutritional value
 - are high in saturated fat and/or added sugar and/or salt
 - can contribute excess energy (kJ)

'SELECT CAREFULLY'

Do not let these foods dominate the menu. Avoid large serving sizes.

- These foods:
- have some nutritional value
 - have moderate levels of saturated fat and/or added sugar and/or salt
 - can, in large serve sizes, contribute excess energy (kJ)

Encourage and promote these foods

- These foods:
- are good sources of nutrients
 - contain less saturated fat and/or added sugar and/or salt
 - help to avoid an intake of excess energy (kJ)

The *Fresh Tastes* Strategy is changing canteens by limiting the sale of foods and drinks of poor nutritional value to two occasions per term. These foods fit into the RED segment of the *Canteen Menu Planner*. School canteens are encouraged to include as many choices as possible from the GREEN segment and to 'Select carefully' the menu choices from the AMBER segment.



The NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy is a partnership between the NSW Department of Education and Training, the NSW Department of Health, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools.

Sample healthy canteen menus

Fresh CANTEEN MENU

Lunch choices

- Sandwiches/wraps/ focaccias and rolls – lots of them with yummy healthy fillings including plenty of salad
- Hot baked potatoes with a range of fillings
- Reduced fat burgers and kebabs with salad
- Reduced fat/salt pies
- Delicious soups served with crusty rolls
- Salad boxes
- Sushi
- Reduced fat/salt lasagne and other pasta dishes
- Noodle and rice dishes
- Fresh fruit tubs served with reduced fat yoghurt
- Milks, juices and water
- Reduced fat ice creams

Fresh CANTEEN MENU

Recess/Playlunch

- Cheese with wheat crackers
- Dried fruit packs
- Fruit buns
- Fruit salad cups with custard
- Frozen fruit pieces
- Pikelets and scones
- Flavoured air-popped popcorn
- Salad bags with cherry tomatoes, celery and carrot sticks & cheese
- Muffin based mini pizzas
- Small fruit muffins
- Toasted jaffles



Good food and plenty of physical activity now will help provide a healthy future for our children!

Support your healthy school canteen by:

- talking about the importance of healthy food choices with your children and adolescents
- sending healthy food in lunchboxes and only providing treat foods occasionally
- providing feedback and ideas to your school canteen
- volunteering to help in the canteen or on the committee, if you can
- joining in healthy fundraising activities in your school.

Looking for ideas?
 Visit www.schoolcanteens.org.au for healthy menu ideas, fact sheets, recipes, successful canteen case studies, healthy fundraising ideas and lots more.

Helpful resources

A *Fresh Tastes* package consisting of the *Canteen Menu Planning Guide* and the *Fresh Tastes Tool Kit* was sent to all NSW schools in 2004. This CD includes a PowerPoint presentation on the *Fresh Tastes Strategy*. You may find this interesting to look at or to show to parents at your school.



Look for these resources in your school or download them from the DET, AIS or NSW Health web sites.

For more information visit these websites:

- NSW Health**
- www.health.nsw.gov.au/obesity
 - *Easy Lunch and Snack Ideas for Children:* <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/pubs/2004/easylunch.html>
- Department of Education and Training**
- <http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/schoolcanteen/index.php>
- Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing**
- www.health.gov.au/pubhlth/strateg/food/guide
 - *Food for Health – Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.*
 - *The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating.*
- Catholic Education Commission**
- www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au
- Association of Independent Schools**
- www.studentnet.edu.au/aispd

For 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
- Sydney Markets Limited
www.freshforkids.com.au

Photos courtesy New South Wales School Canteen Association.

