

## Canteen, Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy

### Newsletter Inserts

#### **Canteen, Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy**

The National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines have provided the NT Canteen, Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy with a succinct, easy to use food category system with opportunities for innovative, educational training.

These guidelines are based on a national system whereby foods are categorised to determine their suitability for a school environment.

#### **GREEN** ALWAYS ON THE MENU

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

#### **AMBER** SELECT CAREFULLY

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

Foods and drinks in this category should be assessed 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.

#### **RED** NOT ON THE MENU

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

#### **What is in the Canteen, Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy?**

The NT Canteen, Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy identifies the categories of food and drink items that will or will not be sold or provided in schools

Children will have access to a variety of healthy foods and their choices will include products with fresh ingredients such as sandwiches and home cooked meals with vegetables, fruit, dairy and other core foods.

Foods in the **RED** NOT ON THE MENU category will no longer be sold or provided in NT schools.

These contain excess energy (kilojoules) and / or saturated fat and / or salt and / or sugar and are low in nutritional value. Examples are soft drinks, confectionery and any fruit juice item less than 99% juice.

Purpose of the Canteen, Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy:

- To provide criteria around what foods should and shouldn't be available to students.
- To promote nutrition education through the NT Curriculum Framework. Teachers are encouraged to provide quality nutrition programs based on the NT Curriculum Frameworks. (The Physical Education and Health National Curriculum is yet to be finalised, so the NT Frameworks are currently being utilised.)
- To provide guidelines for classroom rewards, healthy fundraising, excursions and other school activities

Fundraising must also comply with the updated NT Canteen, Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy. Sausage sizzles will still be allowed if Heart Smart or Tick Approved meats are used. Schools are able to access ideas for fundraising from the DoE website.

### **Using Food as a Reward**

We often use food as a reward for good behaviour, or as a persuasive tool. Although in the short term this may work, in the long term it can have negative consequences, as unhealthy foods are often used as the reward, which sends contradictory messages to a child. Children need to hear consistent messages from adults.

This is why non-food reward ideas often work better. For example, try:

- Attention, praise, hugs, a gift: book, skipping rope, colouring pencils.
- A special day out with a parent

*Reference: The Heart Foundation. For more information on healthy lifestyles and heart health use the website: [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)*

### **Physical Activity**

Physical activity is important for the growth and development of the body. It reduces the risk of children developing diseases like cardiovascular disease and diabetes in the future. Children who exercise regularly also tend to have a more positive body image and higher self-esteem. It also improves social skills and hand eye coordination.

Current research recommends children to take part in physical activity for at least 60 minutes a day. It is mandatory in the NT for students from Foundation to Year 10 participate in 2 hours of Physical Education per week. You can encourage your child to exercise more by walking to the shops instead of driving in the car, walking the dog, going bike riding or swimming. Teaching your child basic skills like throwing, jumping and catching will help develop their confidence. It will also make them more likely to find team based activities enjoyable and rewarding.

*Reference: The Heart Foundation. For more information on healthy lifestyles and heart health use the website: [www.heartfoundation.org.au](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au)*

### **Role Modelling**

Children learn from watching what others do, particularly parents and friends. Eating healthily and being active are good habits to learn from a young age, and you can encourage them in your children by doing them yourself. You won't just be benefiting your child, but you will be improving your health through positive role modelling.

Other ways you can set the example to children for good eating habits are:

- Having structured mealtimes where the family sits down together without distractions, such as the TV
- Try new foods, to encourage your child to be curious about new tastes
- Involve children in shopping, food preparation and cooking. This is a great way to discuss healthy foods and their importance for growing bodies with children

### **Alternatives to chips & muesli bars**

Snack size potato chip packets and muesli bars are convenient options for lunch boxes; however they are not nutrient rich foods. Chips are high in fat and salt, while muesli bars are high in sugar. Instead try one of our suggested alternatives for healthier eating:

- Rice cakes or crackers
- Pretzels
- Prawn crackers (cooked in microwave)
- Mini toasts
- Pappadums (cooked in microwave)
- Pita chips
- Bread sticks
- Wholegrain crackers with low or reduced fat cheese
- Unsalted popcorn
- Dried fruit
- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Small tins of corn
- Small bag of breakfast cereals eg. Fruity Bites, Fruity-Bix

*Reference: Tasmanian Community Nutrition Unit, 'The Great Aussie Lunchbox Dilemma'*

### **Put the 'snazz' back into the simple sandwich!!**

Some of the following ideas can help make sandwiches more exciting!

- Triple deckers – use three slices of bread and two fillings
- Cut pita bread in half to make pockets and add filling
- Use whole wheat sandwich-size crackers instead of bread

Or try one of the following filling ideas:

- Chicken, avocado and lettuce
- Apple and cream cheese
- Egg and lettuce

Or try these websites for new and easy ideas to spruce up the school lunchbox

<http://www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au/parents-carers/healthy-eating-and-drinking/lunch-box-ideas.aspx>

[http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/asset/1/upload/School\\_Lunch\\_Box\\_Ideas.pdf](http://www.sportsdietitians.com.au/asset/1/upload/School_Lunch_Box_Ideas.pdf)

<http://www.mydietitian.com.au/articles/lunchbox.html>

### **My child won't eat vegetables**

Here are a few suggestions to try at home, which may encourage your child to enjoy fruit and vegetables:

**Growing** - learning where food comes from and growing a few easy plants like tomato or zucchini may raise a child's enthusiasm. If space is a problem try growing herbs or seedlings in pots.

**Decision making** - involve children in shopping and choosing recipes - experiment with new recipes which feature fruit or vegetables.

**Food preparation** - children are more likely to be interested in tasting different foods if they have been involved in the preparation. Involvement in cooking is also an opportunity to talk about hand washing and food hygiene practices.

**Food presentation** - consider balancing the different colours, textures, arrangements and shapes of the fruits and vegetables to encourage a variety of intake.

**Tasting** - young children may need to try a new food several times before liking it. If at first the child rejects a food, be encouraged to offer the food again at a later meal or snack time.

**Role modelling** - young children are great imitators, so parents and care-givers who set good examples by enjoying a range of fruit and vegetables themselves are encouraging their children.

*From: The SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership "Food Matters" Newsletter*

### **Calcium for healthy bones and teeth**

Calcium helps build strong bones and teeth, and the best sources of it are in milk, cheese and yoghurt. These foods are also sources of energy, protein and essential vitamins riboflavin and vitamin A. To meet calcium requirements at least three serves of calcium a day is necessary.

**1 serve** (approx 300mg calcium)

= 250ml full cream milk or *calcium enriched* soy milk

= 200g tub yoghurt

= 200ml custard

= 45g cheese (2 slices)

### **Easy ways to increase calcium in your child's diet:**

- offer milk instead of cordial & fruit juice (if your child doesn't like plain milk try a Sippah straw with it)
- offer breakfast cereals with milk as a snack
- use custard, yoghurt or fromage frais for a healthy dessert
- try cheese sticks in the lunch box
- milkshakes and fruit smoothies (made with fresh fruit & milk or yoghurt) make a great snack

- use milk as much as possible in cooking (soups, sauces, mornays and milk based puddings)
- use lots of grated cheese on pasta and pizza or sprinkle on vegetables
- try toasted cheese sandwiches for lunch

*By Annabel Thomas, Senior Nutritionist, Women's and Children's Hospital  
From: The SA Child Care Nutrition Partnership "Food Matters" Newsletter*

## **LUNCH BOX CHECK LIST**

### **Does the Lunch Have a Healthy Wholesome Main?**

- Wholegrain or Wholemeal Sandwich, Roll, Bagel or Wrap filled with
  - Protein Source: i.e.; low or reduced-fat cheese, tuna, chicken, eggs, beans
  - Salad: avocado, cucumber, carrot, tomato, lettuce
  - Spread: peanut butter, avocado, hummus, cream cheese

### **Health Main Lunch Ideas**

- Tuna + corn + grated vegetables + sauce (salsa, chutney)
- Roast beef + salad
- Chicken + coleslaw (low or reduced fat dressing)
- Chicken + avocado + lettuce or alfalfa
- Leftover roast veggies, e.g. zucchini, pumpkin, capsicum or eggplant, + ricotta or low or reduced-fat cheese + pesto
- Grated carrot + sultanas + grated low fat cheese + alfalfa
- Low or reduced-fat cheese + salad + hummus
- Ricotta + banana + honey OR ricotta + sultanas + grated carrot
- English muffin with tomato and low or reduced-fat cheese
- Pita bread with tuna, lettuce and mayonnaise
- Turkey, cranberry and spinach in Turkish bread
- Vegetable soup with bread
- Leftover homemade muffin pizzas
- Pasta and tuna salad with vegetables

### **Does the Lunchbox Contain some Delicious Dairy? (Select at least one)**

- Plain Milk
- Flavoured Milk
- Yoghurt
- Fruche
- Creamed Rice
- Cheese and biscuits
- Cheese stick
- Drinking Yoghurt

### **Does the lunchbox have 2 Fruity Foods? (At least one fresh fruit option)**

- Fresh whole fruit; try to have different varieties
- Snack packs of tinned fruit
- Fruit salad
- Frozen oranges and frozen banana

### **Other Yummy Ideas:**

- Banana bread

- Air popped popcorn
- Mixed nuts and seeds
- Half fruit scone

#### **TIPS TO HELP PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING**

- Vary the fruit you buy each week for school lunches. Try to purchase fruits in season as they will often taste best.
- Vary the breads and sandwich fillings each week.
- The dairy products are particularly important. Yoghurt can be frozen and used to keep the rest of the lunch box cool. If lunch is being stored in a fridge at school, why not send a long a small bottle of milk?
- Involve your child in selecting foods for their lunch box. Giving them two options on a given day is plenty of choice to make them feel empowered.
- Get kids involved on the weekend in food preparation such as making some high fibre fruit muffins.
- Don't forget water is the best drink. Children should be encouraged to bring their own water bottle with them to school each day. Children should not bring sweet drinks such as juice, cordial or soft drink to school as these drinks may replace other more nutritious foods. Sweet drinks increase the risk of dental caries and are high in kilojoules.
- Get kids involved in planting some tomatoes or lettuce to be included in their lunch.

*For more tips and ideas refer to 'The Secret of Healthy Children'. The Secret of Healthy Children, produced with Nutrition Australia and published by Focus Publishing, 2003*