Healthy food and drink choices in schools

Information for parents and carers

The school day is often busy, filled with learning and involving concentration and physical activity. Food is fuel for our bodies and healthy food provides your children with the energy and nutrients they need to get through the day.

Food from home

We recommend these five simple steps to help your children get through the day:

✓ A healthy breakfast
✓ Plenty of fruit and vegetables
✓ Dairy products – two to three serves of milk, cheese or yoghurt to meet their daily calcium needs
✓ Water – the best thirst quencher
✓ Lunch and snacks like those to the right.

Tips for packing a lunchbox

What you pack in your child’s lunchbox is really important. Try to include as many healthy foods as possible – and definitely keep junk away from school.

Packing a frozen drink or an ice brick in your child’s lunchbox will help to keep food fresh and safe to eat.

Keeping your child’s lunchbox healthy and interesting can be a challenge, so it’s important to find food that will stay in the lunchbox and out of the bin!

When making lunches at home we encourage parents to choose a variety of foods.

Healthy lunch ideas

✓ sandwiches, rolls or wraps
✓ quiche
✓ mini pizza with cheese and vegetable toppings
✓ muffins made with corn or grated vegetables such as carrot or zucchini.

Healthy snack/recess ideas

✓ rice cakes and reduced fat cream cheese
✓ fresh fruit pieces and yoghurt dip
✓ plain popcorn
✓ small tub yoghurt
✓ reduced fat cheese stick or triangle
✓ muffins with fruit
✓ English muffin with reduced fat cheese
✓ fruit bread
✓ scone – plain or fruit or pumpkin
✓ pikelets
✓ small sandwich
✓ crispbreads and spread
✓ wholemeal crackers and reduced fat cheese.

Please don’t send these foods and drinks to school

✗ chips, crisps and similar snacks
✗ high fat savoury biscuits and snacks
✗ sweet biscuits and cereal bars
✗ lollies and chocolates
✗ fruit straps
✗ cream and chocolate biscuits
✗ iced cakes and buns
✗ soft drinks and artificially sweetened drinks.
Creative recipes for lunchboxes

Mac & Cheese Muffins
Recipe developed by The Dairy Kitchen at Dairy Australia
Makes: 18
Traffic Light Category: Green

Ingredients:
- ½ cup grated pumpkin
- ½ cup grated carrot
- 2 tablespoons water
- 2 cups elbow pasta or macaroni
- 2 tablespoons self raising flour
- ¼ cup milk
- 1 teaspoon dijon mustard
- 3 eggs
- 125g can corn kernels, drained and rinsed
- 2 cups grated reduced fat cheddar cheese
- 2 tablespoons finely grated parmesan cheese

Method:
1. Boil macaroni for 10 minutes or until al dente, drain well
2. Meanwhile, place pumpkin, carrot and water in a microwave safe steamer and steam on high for 3 minutes. Stand for 2 minutes before lightly mashing with a fork
3. Whisk flour, milk, mustard and eggs together in a large bowl, then mix in cheddar cheese, corn, mashed vegetables and macaroni until combined
4. Spoon mixture into paper case lined muffin pans and sprinkle with parmesan
5. Bake at 180°C for 20-25 minutes until golden brown. Cool for at least 15 minutes before serving. Muffins can be served warm, at room temperature or even cold.

Tip: This recipe is suitable to freeze.

Perfect Pikelets
Recipe from Canteen Cuisine
Makes: 25
Traffic Light Category: Green

Ingredients:
- 2 cups self raising flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 ½ cups reduced fat milk
- 1 tablespoon polyunsaturated margarine melted or poly-unsaturated oil

Method:
1. Sift dry ingredients into a large bowl
2. Combine wet ingredients in a jug
3. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients and stir until smooth
4. Heat a flat non-stick sandwich press or frypan – drop small tablespoons of pikelet batter onto the sandwich press or pan and turn when bubbles rise to the surface.

Tip: This recipe is suitable to freeze.

Fruity additions –
- 1 grated unpeeled apple and 1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
- 1 medium mashed banana or 1 grated pear
- 1 ½ cups fresh or frozen blueberries and 2 tea-spoons vanilla

Note: This recipe uses self raising flour and makes ‘fluffy’ pikelets. For a traditional ‘flat’ pikelet/pancake use plain flour.

At school
Schools have a vital role to play in helping reduce the worldwide epidemic of childhood obesity. It is important to reinforce messages being taught in the classroom by modelling healthy food and drink choices in canteens and tuck shops, with class treats, on school camps and excursions.

The traffic light menu
In Western Australia, public schools follow a traffic light system to ensure a wide range of foods that make up the majority of a healthy diet are on the menu. These easy to follow signals help to plan menus full of healthy, nutritious and affordable food for your children.

The table to the right provides examples of GREEN, AMBER and RED foods for public schools. Your school will also have a policy about nuts and nut spreads.

### Healthy food and drink choices in schools

#### GREEN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fill the menu</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breads</strong></td>
<td>A variety of bread types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cereal foods</strong></td>
<td>Wholegrain cereals; oats; pasta; noodles; rice; polenta; cous cous; quinoa; barley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetables</strong></td>
<td>Vegetables (fresh, frozen and tinned); salads (reduced fat dressing only); all salad mixtures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fruit</strong></td>
<td>Fresh; frozen; tinned (in natural juices)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Legumes</strong></td>
<td>Tinned (e.g. bean mix, kidney beans); cooked; baked beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduced fat dairy products and alternatives</strong></td>
<td>Yogurt (plain or fruit); cheese; liquid breakfast*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lean meat, poultry, fish and alternatives</strong></td>
<td>Lean meats (excluding ham); chicken (no skin) or registered meats*; fish (e.g. tuna, salmon, sardines); egg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sandwich fillings</strong></td>
<td>Lean meats (excluding ham); chicken (no skin); fish; creamed corn/curr kernels; egg; canned spaghetti (reduced salt); salads; baked beans; reduced fat cheese; hommus; vegemite; yeast spreads; fish spreads*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hot food</strong></td>
<td>Jaffles/hot rolls/toasted sandwiches (fillings as for sandwich fillings); baked potatoes; rice; soups; toast; English muffins; crumpets; raisin toast; meals meeting the criteria for registration such as curry and rice and pasta dishes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snacks</strong></td>
<td>Scones; raisin or fruit bread; pikelets; bread sticks; bruschetta; water crackers; rice crackers; rice cakes; popcorn (plain air-popped); seed packs; trail mix based on wholegrain breakfast cereals; reduced fat cheese/dip/ cracker packs*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drinks</strong></td>
<td>Water (including carbonated); reduced fat milk (plain) and their alternatives e.g. soy milk; no serve size restrictions; reduced fat milk (flavoured); maximum serve size 375mL; fresh fruit milkshakes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### AMBER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Select carefully and limit</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduced fat dairy products</strong></td>
<td>Dairy desserts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full fat dairy foods and alternatives</strong></td>
<td>Milk; soy; yoghurt (plain or fruit); custard; cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savoury commercial products#</strong></td>
<td>Registered products such as ovenable fish/chicken/potato portions should be chosen because they are lower in fat/salt*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Processed meats</strong></td>
<td>Lean ham; lean bacon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dried fruit</strong></td>
<td>Dried fruit (excluding fruit leathers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snack food bars</strong></td>
<td>Registered products such as breakfast bars; cereal bars; fruit bars*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savoury snacks</strong></td>
<td>Registered products such as oven baked vege chips; garlic or herb bread lightly spread*; lightly flavoured snacks such as crisps, crackers and popcorn*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cakes, muffins and sweet biscuits</strong></td>
<td>Registered products such as cakes; muffins and biscuits (reduced fat and/or sugar and based on wholemeal flour*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ice-creams, ice-blocks, fruit based icy-poles, slushies</strong></td>
<td>Registered ice-creams*: milk based ice confectionery; frozen yoghurts; rice cream; 99% fruit juice based icy-poles Reduced fat milk (flavoured); larger than 375mL; fruit juices; vegetable juices and mixed juices (including carbonated products); 99% and with no added sugar or sweeteners, maximum serve size 250mL of juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### RED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Off the menu:</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confectionery</strong></td>
<td>All types, caramelised pop corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pastery items</strong></td>
<td>All types that do not meet the criteria for registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sandwich meats</strong></td>
<td>High fat sandwich meats including polony (devon) and salami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deep fried foods</strong></td>
<td>All types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Savoury snacks</strong></td>
<td>Chips, chips and other similar products that do not meet the criteria for registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ice-creams</strong></td>
<td>Chocolate coated and premium ice-creams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sandwich fillings</strong></td>
<td>Honey; jam; chocolate spreads; confectionery sprinkles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cakes, muffins and sweet pastries</strong></td>
<td>Croissants; doughnuts; cream filled buns; iced cakes; sweet pastries; slices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drinks</strong></td>
<td>Soft drinks; artificial or intense sweetened soft drinks; energy drinks; cordials (including low joule); sports drinks; water: flavoured with fruit juice, sugar, artificial or intense sweetener (including carbonated products); high caffeine drinks (e.g. drinks containing guarana); fruit juices, vegetable juices and mixed juices (including carbonated products); with less than 99% juice and/or added sugar and/or sweeteners and/or larger than 250mL juice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Meets the criteria for Star Choice™ rosteration #To be offered a maximum of two occasions per week