

# Planning Healthy Menus for School

School food providers play a key role in the development of healthy menus that appeal to students. Providing healthy menus helps create a healthy school food environment, which is an important part of the learning environment.

The Provincial School Food Guidelines (SFG) help to support the development of healthy menus. The SFG **apply to all foods and beverages served and/or sold at school.**



## Planning Healthy Menus

- Provide foods from [Canada's Food Guide](#);
- Provide healthy beverages such as water and milk;
- Limit **highly processed foods** that are sources of excess sodium, sugars and/or saturated fat;
- Prepare recipes from scratch when possible;
- Use **healthy fats** as spreads and when cooking and baking; and,
- Engage students and the school community in menu development whenever possible.

## Using the SFG as a Guide to Menu Development

- The SFG categorize foods and beverages using the food groupings from Canada's Food Guide:
  - vegetables and fruits
  - whole grain foods
  - protein foods
- There is also a category for mixed dishes, which use foods from multiple groupings to make up one dish.
- In each category, there is a list of the healthiest choices to offer at school as well as a list of foods and beverages that cannot be sold and/or served at school.
- For those foods that do not fit in either of these categories there is nutrient criteria provided.
- There is also information on ingredients, condiments, beverages and other products that can and cannot be sold or served at school.

## Sample School Menu

In the SFG pilot, school food providers tried some new menu items\*, suggested by students. These meals and snacks are well received and increase students' access to healthy foods and beverages at school. Some ideas for lunchtime menu items and snacks are outlined below.

Meal	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	BBQ chicken or veggie flatbread** Garden salad Canned pears and milk	Soft beef tacos Corn and bean salsa Fresh fruit and milk	Grilled chicken burger Caesar salad Canned mandarin orange sections and milk	Chili with a roll Apple slices and milk	Chicken apple & cranberry salad sandwich with carrot sticks Canned peaches and milk
Week 2	Chicken or veggie rice bowl Canned pears and milk	Beef or veggie burger with carrot sticks Fresh fruit salad and milk	BBQ chicken, roasted potatoes and mixed vegetables with a roll Canned mandarin orange sections and milk	Honey garlic veggie or pork stir fry with pasta Apple slices and milk	Chicken or veggie quesadilla Mexican rice Canned peaches and milk

### Healthy Recess Snack Ideas:

- Fresh or canned fruit with yogurt
- Smoothies (made with fruit, milk, yogurt)
- Whole grain English muffins or bagels with hard cheese
- Homemade trail mix - popcorn, wholegrain cereal and dried fruit
- Whole grain crackers with hummus or cheese
- Whole grain cereal with milk
- Raw veggies with hummus
- Hard boiled eggs and whole grain toast
- Yogurt, yogurt tubes, yogurt drinks
- Whole grain muffins or loaves and milk

School Health Promotion Liaison Consultants can support school food providers and link them with Regional Nutritionists to help with the development of healthy menus.

\*All foods and beverages sold or served at school need to align with the SFG.

\*\*All grains on the menu, e.g., flatbreads, rice, pasta, burger buns, rolls, tortillas etc., should be wholegrain or whole wheat when available.