



Newfoundland and Labrador

# Provincial School Food Guidelines

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Edition  
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# Acknowledgements

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador appreciates the collaboration of the following groups on the revision of the Provincial School Food Guidelines (SFG):

- Conseil scolaire francophone provincial de TNL
- Food First NL
- Kids Eat Smart Foundation NL
- Newfoundland and Labrador English School District
- Regional Health Authorities
- School Lunch Association

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- Memorial University of Newfoundland
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- School Food Providers
- Principals
- Teachers
- Parents and Caregivers
- Students

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- Beachy Cove Elementary, Portugal Cove-St. Philip's
- J.R. Smallwood Middle School, Wabush
- Main River Academy, Pollard's Point
- Mount Pearl Intermediate, Mount Pearl
- Riverwood Academy, Wing's Point
- Roncalli Central High, Avondale
- Sacred Heart Elementary, Corner Brook
- St. Paul's Intermediate School, Gander
- Stella Maris Academy, Trepassey
- Stephenville High, Stephenville

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Finally, we would like to acknowledge support from colleagues in other Provincial and Territorial Governments. We appreciate their engagement in dialogues on how to integrate the new Canada's Food Guide into guidance related to school food. Particularly, we would like to thank the Government of New Brunswick for sharing their Healthy School Food Environment policy and its food and beverage requirements. We have used this policy and its requirements as a foundational approach in the development of the Provincial SFG.

For more information on the Provincial SFG, or if you have questions on implementation please contact your Regional School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant – see Appendix A for contact information.

# Table of Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>4</b>
Development of School Food Guidelines .....	4
Healthy School Food Environment .....	5
Canada’s Food Guide .....	7
<b>Implementation of School Food Guidelines .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Support lifelong healthy eating .....	8
Cultural Considerations .....	9
Menu Development.....	9
Collaboration and Communication .....	10
Implementation Committee.....	10
Student Engagement.....	11
Supporting Healthy Eating at Home.....	11
Funding .....	11
Accountability .....	12
Food Allergies .....	12
<b>Using the Provincial School Food Guidelines.....</b>	<b>13</b>
How to assess a food or beverage .....	13
Vegetables and fruits.....	15
Whole grain foods .....	16
Protein foods.....	18
Mixed Dishes .....	20
Label Reading.....	21
Ingredients.....	23
Condiments .....	23
Beverages .....	24
Other products .....	25
Non-sugar Sweeteners .....	25
Safe Food Handling .....	26
<b>Appendixes.....</b>	<b>27</b>
Environmental Health Officers .....	27
Appendix B - Healthy Eating Resources .....	28
Appendix C - Other Implementation Supports .....	29

# Introduction

## Development of School Food Guidelines

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has worked closely with the school districts, Regional Health Authorities, and relevant non-profit and private sector partners to help create healthy school environments across the province.

In 2006, School Food Guidelines for Caterers and Administrators were released, as part of Healthy Students Healthy Schools, to assist school food providers and school administrators to provide healthy food and beverage options in schools. In 2009, these guidelines were updated for school food providers and reflected new recommendations from the revised Canada's Food Guide (2007). In addition, nutrition criteria were developed to guide the sales and service of foods and beverages at school.

School food guidelines have been used to inform the development of policies at school, regional and district levels, as well as by school food providers. Supplementary documents and resources were also created and shared, and tailored assistance has been provided to schools and school food providers by Regional Nutritionists and School Health Promotion Liaison Consultants, among others, to support adoption of school food guidelines.

With the launch of the newest evolution of Canada's Food Guide in 2019, the school food guidelines in use in Newfoundland and Labrador and any supporting resources needed an update to reflect the newest national healthy eating recommendations. The time was right to bring together stakeholders to reflect on the successes, strengths and challenges in implementing school food guidelines and to develop a plan for the future of healthy eating in NL's schools.

A thorough assessment of the 2009 School Food Guidelines was completed with representation from a broad group of school food stakeholders. The results of this assessment and the new Canada's Food Guide informed the development of new draft School Food Guidelines which were piloted in the 2019-20 school year. Learnings from this pilot and the recommendations from the formal pilot evaluation informed these final 2021 Provincial SFG.



# Healthy School Food Environment

A healthy school food environment is an important part of an optimal learning environment. Healthy eating is an integral component of a student's overall health, both in the short and long term. Schools are an ideal setting for children and youth to have the opportunity to make healthy choices. Offering children and youth healthy foods and beverages at school helps nourish them to be ready to learn and to build a foundation for life-long healthy eating.

Healthy eating should be considered in all aspects of the school environment. As part of a Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach, the Provincial SFG support all four inter-related components of the school environment to create a strong foundation for healthy eating at school. Examples of how the Provincial SFG can be implemented through the components of Comprehensive School Health include:



**Social and Physical Environment** - providing healthy food and beverage options; ensuring sufficient time and comfortable environments to enjoy food with peers.

**Teaching and Learning** - meeting outcomes related to healthy eating in the curriculum

**Policy** - integrating nutrition or health policies and school food guidelines

**Partnerships and Services** - working with school food providers and community partners to provide healthy foods and beverages



Creating a healthy food environment helps students in many ways, including:

- increasing their access to healthy foods and beverages;
- limiting their exposure to highly processed foods and beverages;
- demonstrating healthy meals and snacks;
- providing opportunities to make healthy choices;
- creating connections with what they learn at school; and,
- supporting the development of life-long healthy eating practices which can contribute to prevention of chronic disease later in life.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is committed to improving access to healthy food in the province. Provincial SFG are a tool for schools and school food providers to support the creation of a healthier school food environment.

Some schools in rural and remote regions of the province report challenges related to food transportation and access. Government, school districts and the Regional Health Authorities work with schools, school food providers and other stakeholders to strategize and determine ways to overcome these challenges including innovative approaches to food purchasing, transportation and storage. Examples of initiatives that have proven successful include partnerships with local retailers and suppliers to bring in foods and beverages to be served at school.

If accessing foods that meet the guidelines is a challenge, schools and school food providers are encouraged to work with the Regional Nutritionist and School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant in their region to discuss these concerns and determine how to provide the healthiest available foods and beverages to students. See Appendix A for contact information for school health supports in your region.





# Canada's Food Guide

[Canada's Food Guide](#) is the foundation for healthy eating in Canada and the guiding document for the Provincial SFG. It is based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence and promotes healthy eating and overall nutritional well-being.

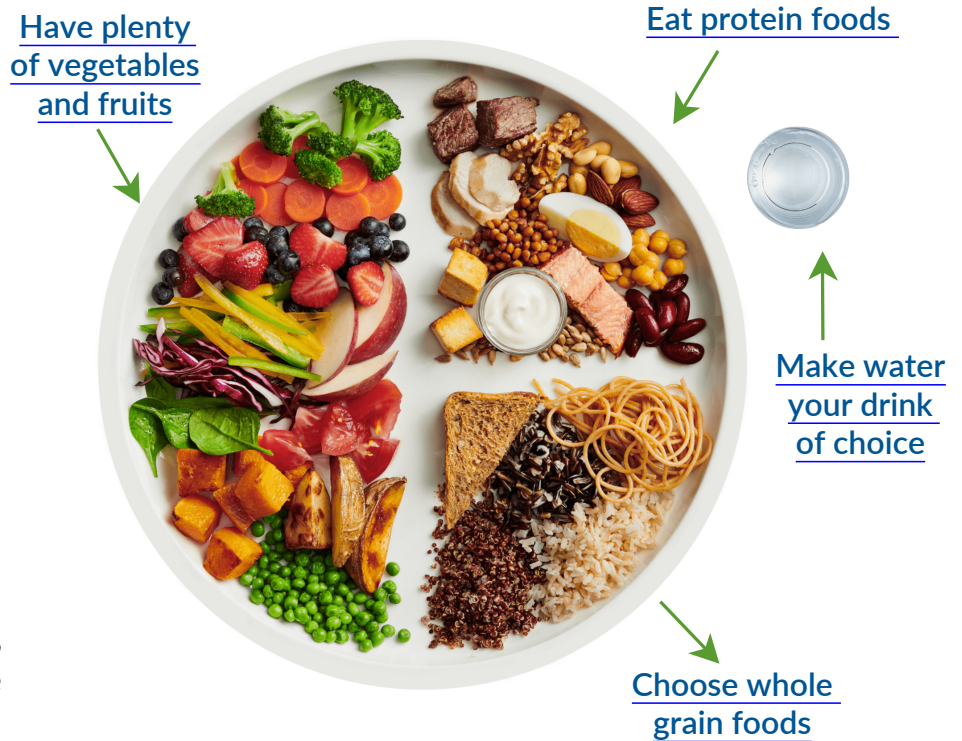
Canada's Food Guide supports improvements to the food environment. The food and beverage choices that are available at school impact what students choose to eat and drink. Students may eat half or more of their daily food intake while at school, so offering foods and beverages that are part of Canada's Food Guide is important.

The Provincial SFG uses the [Canada's Food Guide Plate](#) as a tool to help plan healthy meals and snacks. The plate is a reminder to focus on increasing the availability of vegetables and fruits at school, moving toward offering more whole grain foods, including protein foods and promoting water as the drink of choice. The Provincial SFG provide information on foods and beverages within and outside these groupings that can or cannot be sold or served at school.

As part of new dietary guidance in 2019, Health Canada also released [Canada's Dietary Guidelines](#) for health professionals and policy makers. This national policy document suggests that to create supportive environments for healthy eating, publicly funded institutions (e.g. schools) should offer healthy options that align with Canada's Food Guide and should limit the availability of highly processed foods and beverages, such as sugary drinks and confectioneries. The intent of the Provincial SFG is to bring the foods and beverages offered at schools in closer alignment with these Dietary Guidelines.

Highly processed foods and beverages can contribute excess sodium, sugars and saturated fat when consumed on a regular basis. This includes processed meat, deep-fried foods, sugary breakfast cereals, some baked goods, confectioneries, sugary drinks and many packaged dishes. This is a concern as the availability and consumption of these foods has increased significantly and is linked to risk of chronic disease. The Provincial SFG focus on reducing the availability of these highly processed foods and beverages at school.

Canada's Food Guide also notes that healthy eating is about more than the food offered and includes healthy eating habits such as eating with others, being mindful and enjoying food. It is important for this to be considered in meal and snack settings at school. Students should be provided with sufficient time to eat, as well as a comfortable environment to enjoy eating with their peers.



# Implementation of School Food Guidelines

The Provincial SFG apply to all foods and beverages served and/or sold at school. This includes foods and beverages available in cafeterias, canteens and vending machines, foods used for fundraising, as well as foods or beverages available at school-sponsored events (e.g., sports, drama events, etc.). See [Healthy Choices for Canteens](#) from Eat Great and Participate for healthy food and beverage ideas for these events. The Provincial SFG do not apply to foods and beverages brought to school by students and staff for their personal consumption.

## Support lifelong healthy eating

The Provincial SFG focus on increasing the amount of healthy foods and beverages that are available at school. It is recognized that by offering healthy foods and beverages, schools support students and other members of the school community in developing healthy eating practices for life.

All foods can be part of a healthy diet and it is what you eat on a regular basis that matters most for your health. Since students may consume a large portion of their daily food intake at school, the school environment should include access to the healthiest options available, and limit the availability of highly processed foods and beverages.

Implementing the Provincial SFG can help create healthier processes at your school as well, including planning school fundraisers that don't involve food such as theme days and activity events; celebrating birthdays and special events in the classroom with healthy foods and beverages; and offering non-food items for classroom rewards or prizes. When schools promote healthy food and beverage choices, including during special or celebration days in the school year, it supports the development of positive attitudes toward all foods and beverages.

School administrators may have some flexibility in providing foods or beverages that do not align with the Provincial SFG a few times in the school year. Refer to your nutrition or health policies for guidance. In all cases where food is sold or served in a school setting, student nutrition should be the priority. It is the health and well-being of students, not raising funds, that is the main purpose of selling or serving foods or beverages at school. All foods or beverages used for fundraising should align with the Provincial SFG.

Implementing the Provincial SFG also helps to ensure that school activities do not contribute to the confusion that can come with unhealthy foods and beverages being labelled as "treats" or used as rewards. Identifying foods and beverages in these ways may also give them "special status" which can make them more appealing to children.

## Cultural Considerations

Cultural practices and the traditional foods of the populations a school serves should be considered when menu planning and in school-based activities. Explore opportunities to offer traditional foods from various cultures in the school setting, in consultation and collaboration with people in the school community including Indigenous leaders and other cultural groups. Creating opportunities for sharing and learning about cultural food practices and traditions is encouraged to foster an inclusive, supportive food environment within the school setting. Traditionally relevant foods, provided as part of a cultural activity, do not need to fit within the Provincial SFG.

## Menu Development

School food providers have a key role to play in the development of healthy menus. Including foods and beverages from all food groupings in Canada's Food Guide daily is important. The [Planning Healthy Menus for School](#) resource (Appendix C) can help with this. Regional Nutritionists can also help support school food providers in developing innovative and healthy menus.

Schools in the pilot of the guidelines emphasized the importance of student input in determining how to best implement the guidelines and offer foods and beverages that appealed to students. School food providers are encouraged to involve students and the school community in menu development. In the pilot, school food providers, students and school administrators commented on the value of engagement in menu development and in the role taste testing new recipes can play in student uptake. The [Engaging Students in Menu Development](#) resource (Appendix C) can provide ideas for how to involve students.



## Collaboration and Communication

School administrators, school food providers and the school community work together to implement the guidelines. Communication with all involved is key to successful implementation. Schools that participated in the pilot of the guidelines reported it was important to engage all stakeholders. Involvement of parents and caregivers, teachers, students, school staff, school councils and school food providers, is crucial in a successful integration of the Provincial SFG and in creating a healthier school food environment. Communication tools are available in Appendix C to support sharing information with the school community on the implementation of the new guidelines. It is important that all stakeholders have a good understanding of the value of the guidelines and support the changes. Government of NL, the school districts and the Regional Health Authorities will work with schools to provide professional learning on the Provincial SFG, as well as provide ongoing support as schools transition to the use of the guidelines and work to improve the school food environment.

## Implementation Committee

To support schools in the implementation of the Provincial SFG, it is recommended that administrators look to their school development plans under the wellness and positive relationships determinant. During the pilot, school administrators reported the most success when a team or committee prioritized this work and was able to develop and facilitate a plan to promote and support implementation of the Provincial SFG in the school. These committees were noted as key in sustaining any changes in their schools. The committee may be an already existing group with the time and resources needed to focus on the school food environment.

[Implementing the Provincial SFG](#) – Support for School Committees (Appendix C) provides further information.

This committee can assess the school's current food environment and identify activities and partnerships that can support and maintain the implementation of the Provincial SFG. Some of these activities may include:

- raising awareness of the importance of a healthy food environment at school;
- seeking input from students;
- reviewing the menu (with support from the Regional Nutritionist);
- providing learning opportunities for the school staff and school food providers; and,
- determining the needs of the school regarding implementation (strengths, challenges).

Through the school development process, schools can also determine what partners or additional supports may need to be engaged. This may include the School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant, Regional Nutritionist, Public Health Nurse, parents and caregivers, students, school food providers, Kids Eat Smart staff etc., as needed. Families of schools are also encouraged to partner on strategies and ideas for implementation.



## Student Engagement

Providing students with the opportunity to participate in planning and decision-making in health initiatives has been reported to increase motivation, self-confidence, knowledge and awareness concerning health issues as well as to promote healthier lifestyles. This can also support social connections, encourage engagement and empowerment for students and have positive effects on the school environment.

## Supporting Healthy Eating at Home

Although the Provincial SFG do not apply to foods and beverages brought to school by students and staff for their personal consumption, there are resources in Appendix B and C that can be shared with parents and caregivers to support healthy eating at home and when packing lunches and snacks for school. [Information for Parents and Caregivers](#) to support Healthy Eating (Appendix B) outlines the new Provincial SFG and how it impacts the school food environment. Sharing other resources found in Appendix B, such as [Healthy Lunches and Snacks](#) and [Affordable Healthy Eating](#), can help support healthy eating at home and at school.

## Funding

During the pilot phase of the development of the Provincial SFG, schools were able to apply for funding to support implementation. Pilot schools reported this was a positive implementation support and used the funding for promotion materials, taste testing of new menu items, and small kitchen and food storage equipment. As the Provincial SFG are implemented more broadly, School Health Promotion Liaison Consultants can work with schools to determine their needs and provide guidance around funding options. The [Community Healthy Living Fund](#) and [Regional Wellness Coalition](#) grant programs are opportunities to seek funding to support healthier food environments.



## Accountability

The implementation of the guidelines is the responsibility of multiple partners. Consistent use of the Provincial SFG across schools is key. A commitment from all stakeholders is important in a successful transition and long-term improvement in the school food environment in Newfoundland and Labrador. The implementation of the Provincial SFG is a component of the school development plan which is actioned, reviewed or reported on annually.

The process of collaborative inquiry (design, implement, measure, reflect, change and assess) that rests within school development can be used to support the implementation of the Provincial SFG. Through the school development process, school development teams can reflect on their school food environment when planning actions under the wellness and positive relationships determinant.

The school development cycle provides schools with the mechanism to monitor their progress and set goals for a healthy school food environment. Schools are encouraged to reflect and use evidence to plan next steps for creating healthy school food environment. School district and Regional Health Authority staff can support schools in celebrating successes and addressing challenges.

## Food Allergies

Schools are “allergy-aware” and students and staff are asked not to bring specific food items into the building to minimize the risk of exposure to food allergens of concern for students or staff in the school. The Provincial SFG should be approached with that allergy-awareness in mind. It is important to align food and beverage offerings with those that are acceptable at each school. Check with school administrators for information regarding food allergies.

# Using the Provincial School Food Guidelines

## How to assess a food or beverage

The Provincial SFG categorize foods and beverages using the food groupings from Canada's Food Guide (vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods). There is also a category for mixed dishes, which may 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 that cannot be sold and/or served at school.

The following steps outline how to assess a food or beverage to determine if it can be sold and/or served at school. The [School Food Providers Quick Reference Guide](#) (Appendix C) provides a tool to support this process.

### Step 1 - Which of the categories does the food or beverage fall under?

When assessing a food or beverage, first determine if it fits into one of the categories:

- Vegetables and fruits
- Protein foods
- Whole grain foods
- Mixed dishes

If the food or beverage does not fit into one of these categories, then it may be listed in the ingredients that can be used in homemade dishes, or in the listing of condiments, beverages or other product sections of the guidelines.

### Step 2 - Does the food or beverage fall into the Healthiest choices list or the Do not sell or serve list?

Within each of the four main categories is a list of the healthiest choices according to Canada's Food Guide. If a food or beverage is on this list there is no need to do any further analysis, it can be sold and/or served at school.

Within each of the four main categories is also a list of foods or beverages that cannot be sold or served at school. These foods and beverages are higher in sodium, sugars and/or saturated fat. If a food or beverage is on this list, there is no need to do any further analysis, it cannot be sold or served at school.

### Step 3 - Do I need to apply Nutrient Criteria?

If the food or beverage in question is not found in any of these lists (healthiest choices; do not sell or serve; ingredients; condiments; beverages; other products) then the nutrient criteria needs to be applied.

Specific criteria for sodium (salt), sugars and saturated fat are provided for each category and if a food or beverage meets all three criteria it can be sold and/or served at school. If the food or beverage does not meet all three criteria, it cannot be sold and/or served at school. Use information on the Nutrition Facts table and the ingredients list to determine if a food or beverage meets the nutrient criteria. See the section on Label Reading for more details.

If you are still unsure or have questions, please contact the Regional Nutritionist or School Health Promotion Liaison Consultant in your region (Appendix A).





## Vegetables and fruits

Vegetables and fruits are an important part of healthy eating. It is recommended that they be offered as part of every meal and snack and when possible, make up half of the plate. Fresh, frozen and canned are all healthy options. These foods have important nutrients for growing children and youth including fibre, vitamins and minerals.



Healthiest choices	Do not sell or serve
<p><b>These foods and beverages can be sold or served at school</b></p>	<p><b>These foods or beverages are higher in sodium (salt), sugars and/or saturated fat and cannot be sold or served at school</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh vegetables and fruits</li> <li>• Frozen vegetables and fruits</li> <li>• Canned vegetables (use lower sodium varieties when possible or rinse before using)</li> <li>• Canned fruits or fruit cups (in juice or light syrup)</li> <li>• Fruit sauces (100% fruit with no added sugar, e.g., unsweetened apple sauce)</li> <li>• Dried fruits (100% fruit with no added sugar)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100% fruit juice, fruit drinks, punches or cocktails</li> <li>• Vegetables in sauces (pre-packaged)</li> <li>• Canned fruits in heavy syrups</li> <li>• Battered and/or deep fried vegetables</li> <li>• French fries/potato wedges (par-fried)*</li> <li>• Chips (regular or baked)</li> <li>• Sweetened gelatin / jellied desserts</li> <li>• Fruit cups in gelatin / jelly</li> <li>• Prepared pie filling</li> <li>• Processed fruit snacks (e.g., fruit leathers, gummies)</li> <li>• Frozen fruit bars or fruit-based freezies</li> <li>• Products with non-sugar sweeteners added</li> </ul>

\* Par-fried: Most French fries or potato wedges on the market are par-fried, meaning the potato is cut up and partially deep fried prior to being frozen or packaged. The potatoes are not browned in the process so can be mistaken for not being fried. Review product information to ensure the potato product being used is not par-fried. Potato products that are not par-fried (e.g., pre-cut potatoes, pre-cooked potatoes) can be sold and/or served at school if they meet the nutrient criteria below.)

**Nutrient criteria:** Apply the criteria below to foods and beverages that do not fit in one of the lists above. Compare the criteria with the information on the Nutrition Facts table (which provides information for one serving of the food or beverage) for sodium and saturated fat, and on the ingredients list for added sugars. The product must meet ALL three criteria to be sold or served.

Nutrient	Criteria	Example
Saturated fat	1 g or less	85 g (6 pieces) roasted potato wedges (not par-fried)
Sodium	200 mg or less	
Sugars	None added	

## Whole grain foods

Canada’s Food Guide recommends eating a variety of whole grain foods. Moving toward offering whole grains when possible is encouraged. If whole grains are not available, choosing whole wheat foods over refined grains is recommended. Whole grain foods are a healthier choice because they include all parts of the grain and have more fibre. Eating foods higher in fibre can reduce the risk of chronic disease.



Healthiest choices	Do not sell or serve
<p><b>These foods and beverages can be sold or served at school</b></p>	<p><b>These foods or beverages are higher in sodium (salt), sugars and/or saturated fat and cannot be sold or served at school</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole grains such as barley, rye, whole oats, bulgur and quinoa</li> <li>• Whole grain bread products* (bread, bagels, tortilla wraps, pitas, buns, bannock, naan, pizza crust, flatbread, etc.)</li> <li>• Oatmeal (unsweetened) ^</li> <li>• Brown rice</li> <li>• Whole grain wild rice*</li> <li>• Whole grain pasta*</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pastries, croissants, pies, cookies<sup>+</sup>, donuts, cinnamon buns, sweet buns, cakes, brownies, squares</li> <li>• Pre-seasoned noodles, pasta or rice</li> <li>• Canned rice or pasta</li> <li>• Hot or cold cereals that are not whole grain</li> <li>• Hot or cold cereal (even if whole grain) with chocolate, candies or marshmallows</li> <li>• Coated granola or cereal bars (e.g. covered or dipped in chocolate or yogurt)</li> <li>• Puffed rice cereal bars (e.g. Rice Krispie squares)</li> <li>• Energy bars and protein bars</li> <li>• Toaster pastries</li> <li>• Cheesies, puffs, twists, crisps, straws, pretzels (regular or baked)</li> <li>• Products with non-sugar sweeteners added</li> </ul>

\* The availability of whole grain products is changing quickly and as demand for these products increases, availability and price should improve. School food providers are encouraged to offer whole grain (or whole wheat) versions whenever possible. If there are any concerns with accessing these foods for schools, please contact the Regional Nutritionist to discuss.

^ Other whole grain hot or cold cereals may fit but would need to meet criteria outlined on page 17.

+ Cookies cannot be served at school. Some school food providers make cookies with healthier ingredients (e.g., whole wheat flour or oats) however, these are still not acceptable to sell or serve at school.

**Nutrient criteria:** Apply the criteria below to foods and beverages that do not fit in one of the lists above (e.g., cereals, granola bars and crackers). Compare the criteria with the information on the Nutrition Facts table (which provides information for one serving of the food) for sodium, sugar and saturated fat. The product must meet all three criteria to be sold or served.

Nutrient	Criteria	Example
Saturated fat	2 g or less	30 g cold or ¾ cup hot wholegrain cereal 2 cups popped corn
Sodium	270 mg or less	35 g whole grain muffin/loaf, pancake or waffle 24-40 g granola or cereal bar
Sugars	8 g or less	30 g whole grain crackers (if smaller crackers or thins) or 6 whole grain crackers (if larger snack crackers)



## Protein foods

Protein foods are an important part of healthy eating. Offer foods such as beans, lentils, nuts\*, seeds\*, lean meats and poultry, fish, shellfish, eggs, and lower fat milk and dairy products. Offer protein foods that come from plants more often. These plant-based options may provide more fibre and less saturated fat than other types of protein foods, which can be beneficial for heart health.



Healthiest choices	Do not sell or serve
<p>These foods and beverages can be sold or served at school</p>	<p>These foods or beverages are higher in sodium (salt), sugars and/or saturated fat and cannot be sold or served at school</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legumes (beans, peas, lentils) – fresh, canned, dried</li> <li>• Nuts and seeds*</li> <li>• Hummus</li> <li>• Baked beans</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Tofu</li> <li>• Fresh / frozen chicken, turkey, beef, pork, wild game+</li> <li>• Extra lean or lean ground meat</li> <li>• Fresh / frozen fish, seafood</li> <li>• Canned fish</li> <li>• White milk (2% Milk Fat (M.F.) or less)</li> <li>• Unsweetened fortified soy beverage<sup>o</sup></li> <li>• Hard / block cheese (e.g. cheddar, mozzarella, Havarti) including pre-portioned or sticks of cheese</li> <li>• Cottage cheese</li> <li>• Unsweetened yogurt<sup>^</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercially battered and/or breaded pre-fried meat, fish, chicken, turkey (e.g., chicken nuggets, chicken fingers)<sup>x</sup></li> <li>• Deli meats - Bologna, pepperoni, salami, ham, turkey, chicken and roast beef</li> <li>• Weiner / hot dog</li> <li>• Bacon</li> <li>• Sausage</li> <li>• Ice cream, frozen yogurt, frozen dessert</li> <li>• Homemade or pre-packaged milk shakes</li> <li>• Processed cheese – spread, slices or sauce (e.g., Cheez Whiz)</li> <li>• Pudding</li> <li>• Products with non-sugar sweeteners added</li> </ul>

\* Nuts and seeds are healthy protein food choices. Most schools do not permit peanuts and/or tree nuts due to allergy awareness. If your school does allow peanuts and/or tree nuts, they are considered healthy choices to sell or serve at school.

+ Any food service provider who serves wild game needs both a Food Establishment License and a Wild Meat Service License.

<sup>o</sup> Other plant-based beverages like rice and coconut are low in protein and are not part of the Protein foods category. Unsweetened types of other plant-based beverages are listed with beverages.

<sup>^</sup> Other yogurts may fit but would need to meet criteria outlined on page 19.

<sup>x</sup> Most breaded products on the market are pre-fried, meaning the product is deep fried prior to being frozen or packaged. Review product information to ensure the product being used is not pre-fried. Products that are not pre-fried (e.g., pre-baked chicken burgers) can be sold and/or served at school if they meet the nutrient criteria on page 19.

**Nutrient criteria:** Apply the criteria below to foods and beverages that do not fit in one of the lists above. Compare the criteria with the information on the Nutrition Facts table (which provides information for one serving of the food or beverage) for sodium, sugar and saturated fat. The product must meet all three criteria to be sold or served.

#### Milk, yogurt drinks or fortified soy beverages

Nutrient	Criteria	Examples
Saturated fat	3 g or less	200 mL flavoured yogurt drink 250 mL chocolate milk* 250 mL flavoured fortified soy beverage
Sodium	180 mg or less	
Sugars	20 g or less	

\* Milk is an important source of nutrients for school-aged children and youth. In NL, the School Milk Foundation offers white and chocolate milk in the majority of schools as part of the School Milk Foundation’s program. A new chocolate milk with less added sugar has been developed for the School Milk foundation that meets the above criteria. At lunchtime, school food providers should offer both white and chocolate milk at school.

#### Milk Products (not beverages)

Nutrient	Criteria	Examples
Saturated fat	3 g or less	100 g flavoured yogurt 125 mL yogurt tube 21 g cheese string
Sodium	180 mg or less	
Sugars	16 g or less	

#### Other meat, poultry or fish

Nutrient	Criteria	Examples
Saturated fat	3 g or less	60 g precooked meat, fish or poultry (not pre-fried) 60 g pre-seasoned meat, plant-based pattie, fish or poultry 60 g meat balls 35 g dried meat (not pepperoni or salami)
Sodium	350 mg or less	
Sugars	N/A	

## Mixed Dishes

Use this category for dishes that are either homemade or pre-packaged/prepared that use foods from more than one grouping (vegetables and fruits, whole grain foods and protein foods). This may include spaghetti with meat sauce, macaroni and cheese, stew, salads, pizza, etc.

School food providers are encouraged to prepare menu items in house whenever possible to support healthy eating and limit the offering of highly processed food. Home-made items offered must still align with foods that can be sold or served at school as outlined in these guidelines, e.g., homemade cookies, regardless of their ingredients, cannot be sold or served. Also all general recommendations in these guidelines should still be applied when cooking and baking in-house, e.g., using lower sodium products, using wholegrain or whole wheat flour and avoiding the use of non-sugar sweeteners as ingredients.

Healthiest choices	Do not sell or serve
<b>These foods and beverages can be sold or served at school</b>	<b>These foods or beverages are higher in sodium (salt), sugars and/or saturated fat and cannot be sold or served at school</b>
Dishes freshly made using ingredients* that are listed in any of the Healthiest choices categories can be sold and/or served at school.	Dishes (whether homemade or pre-prepared) that include ingredients that cannot be sold or served at school. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dishes made with protein foods that are listed in the Do not sell or serve category, e.g. pizza or subs with salami or pepperoni</li> <li>• Dishes made with non-sugar sweeteners</li> </ul>

\* Ingredients can also come from the list provided later in this document.

**Nutrient criteria:** Use the criteria below and on page 21 for foods and beverages that do not fit in one of the lists above. Compare the information on the Nutrition Facts table (which provides information for one serving of the food or beverage) with the criteria. The product must meet all three criteria to be sold or served.

### Pre-made, pre-packaged, or frozen meals (nutrients as per single serving indicated on the label)

Nutrient	Criteria	Examples
Saturated fat	4 g or less	pizza pita sub  burrito meat pie lasagna
Sodium	500 mg or less	
Sugars	NA	

**Chili, stew, chowder or soup (served as a meal, not as an ingredient)**

Nutrient	Criteria	Examples
Saturated fat	3 g or less	250 mL chili, soup, chowder, stew
Sodium	350 mg or less	
Sugars	NA	

**Label Reading**

The information found on food and beverage packaging can help you make healthier choices for foods and beverages to sell or serve at school. It is important to understand the food label, which includes a variety of information such as the Nutrition Facts table (NFT) and the ingredients list.

The NFT is based on a specific amount of food: the serving or serving size. The serving size is shown by the word “per” followed by the amount in the serving, for example 125 mL, 1/2 cup, 90 g, 3 crackers or 1 (single) package.

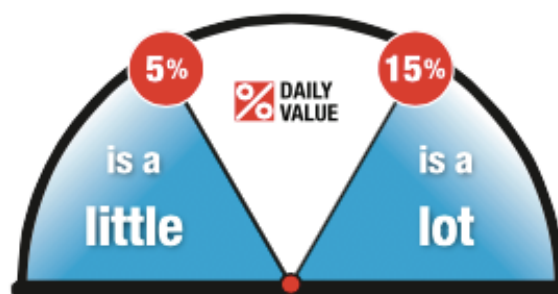
The number after the nutrient is the actual amount of the nutrient in that serving size of the food. Even if the amount of a particular nutrient is zero, it is listed. Use the information on the NFT to determine if a food fits criteria outlined for sodium, sugars and saturated fat in these guidelines.

The NFT includes information on the % Daily Value (DV) for each nutrient and can tell you at a glance if there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in that serving size of the food.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
<b>Valeur nutritive</b>	
Per 1 cup (250 mL) pour 1 tasse (250 mL)	
<b>Calories 110</b>	<b>% Daily Value*</b>
	<b>% valeur quotidienne*</b>
<b>Fat / Lipides 0 g</b>	<b>0 %</b>
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides 26 g</b>	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	22 %
<b>Protein / Protéines 2 g</b>	
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg</b>	
<b>Sodium 0 mg</b>	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Potassium 450 mg</b>	<b>10 %</b>
<b>Calcium 30 mg</b>	<b>2 %</b>
<b>Iron / Fer 0 mg</b>	<b>0 %</b>
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	
*5% ou moins c'est peu, 15% ou plus c'est beaucoup	

5% DV or less is “a little”

15% DV or more is “a lot”



Depending on the nutrient you are looking at you may want less or more of it for good health. For example, fibre, calcium and iron are all nutrients that are important for children and youth to consume, whereas sodium, sugar and saturated fats are nutrients to limit.

The information in the NFT, including the % DV is helpful when doing a quick comparison of two products to determine the healthier choice. Keep in mind though, that it does not necessarily tell you whether a food or beverage is healthy nor whether it meets these Provincial SFG. For example, the % DV can tell you which chip has less sodium but that doesn't mean chips are a healthy choice. Use the tables (Healthiest Choices and Foods not to sell or serve as well as nutrient criteria as needed) in the Provincial SFG to support which foods and beverages should be sold or served at school.

Food packages also display an ingredients list. Use the ingredients list to determine what is in a food and whether it should be sold or served at school. The ingredients are listed from the largest to the smallest amount (by weight). This list is very important if you are interested in a specific ingredient (e.g., whole grains [you want more of these], or non-sugar sweeteners [these foods cannot be sold or served at school]).

Here is an example of a product ingredient list.

**Ingredients:** Sugars (fancy molasses, brown sugar, sugar) • Flour • Vegetable oil shortening • Liquid whole egg • Salt • Sodium bicarbonate • Spices • Allura red **Contains:** Wheat • Egg



Note that on the newest food labels the sugar-based ingredients will have to be grouped together. This will help you to see that sugars have been added and understand how much sugars are added to the food compared to other ingredients. Sugars may be listed in the ingredients list as white sugar, brown sugar, beet sugar, raw sugar, agave syrup, honey, maple syrup, barley malt syrup, fancy molasses, fructose, glucose, glucose-fructose (also known as high fructose corn syrup), maltose, sucrose or dextrose. Fruit juice and purée concentrates can also be added to replace sugars in foods.

Non-sugar sweeteners will also be listed in the ingredients list. A list of non-sugar sweeteners is found later in this document.



## Ingredients used in recipes for mixed dishes

Additional ingredients can be used to prepare recipes. Where possible try to use lower sodium varieties (e.g., tomato sauce, soup). The following are examples of ingredients that can be used to prepare recipes:

- Oils, soft tub margarines (these types of margarines can also be served in individual portions)
- Sugar, maple syrup, table syrup, corn syrup, honey, molasses
- Herbs, spices, salt, flavourings (e.g., vanilla, onion powder, garlic powder, etc.)
- Tomato sauces, tomato paste
- Condensed soup, broth, bouillon
- Cocoa powder
- Whole grain flours or whole wheat flour – whole grain wheat flour may not be readily available, and Canada’s Food Guide notes that although whole wheat flour is not whole grain, it can still be a healthy choice because it contains fibre (along with other nutrients)
- Baking powder, baking soda, cream of tartar, corn starch
- Vinegar

## Condiments

Condiments are used to enhance the flavour of foods and beverages. They can be high in sodium, sugars and/or saturated fat and should be used in small quantities. Where possible, try to use low sodium varieties (e.g. ketchup, soy sauce) or low saturated fat versions (e.g., sour cream).

Examples include:

- Ketchup
- Mustard
- Relish and pickles
- BBQ sauce
- Mayonnaise
- Salad dressing
- Soy sauce
- Sour cream
- Salsa
- Guacamole
- Hot sauce
- Cream cheese
- Jam
- Honey
- Syrup (for pancakes or waffles that meet the guidelines)
- Croutons
- Soft tub margarine
- Gravy (only when served as part of a roast meat dinner or sandwich such as with turkey, chicken, beef, pork or wild game OR when made as part of a homemade stew)



## Beverages

Canada's Food Guide recommends making water your drink of choice. Healthy beverage options other than water can include:

- Milk
- Unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages (e.g., soy, almond, rice, coconut, etc.)
- Unsweetened coffee and teas\*

\* These beverages can be sold or served in high school only and can be made available to students or staff. Condiments i.e., milk, cream and sugar can be served on the side. Non-sugar sweeteners cannot be served.

Other beverages should not be consumed regularly as they have too much sodium, sugars and/or saturated fat, or are sources of caffeine or non-sugar sweeteners.



### These beverages cannot be sold or served at school:

- Flavoured water (artificially flavoured, sweetened with sugar or non-sugar sweeteners)
- 100% fruit juice
- Fruit drinks, punches and cocktails
- Vitamin water
- Sports drinks
- Energy drinks or Energy shots
- Soft drinks / Pop (regular and diet)
- Slushy drinks
- Sweetened iced tea
- Sweetened hot or cold coffee or tea drinks
- Homemade or pre-packaged milk shakes
- Bottled / Pre-prepared Smoothies
- Packaged hot chocolate (regular or "lite")



## Other products

Highly processed foods and beverages should not be eaten regularly because they are not a part of a healthy eating pattern. **These foods and beverages add excess sodium, sugars and/or saturated fat to the diet and cannot be sold or served at school.**

Highly processed foods and beverages include the sugary drinks listed in the beverages section above, and:

- Candy, chocolate (bars or candies), cookies
- Gum
- Chips, cheesies, puffs, twists, crisps, straws, pretzels (regular or baked)
- Ice cream, frozen yogurt, frozen desserts or popsicles
- Pudding
- Sweetened gelatin (jelly) / jellied desserts
- High sugar dessert toppings or syrups
- Whipped cream or whipped dessert topping
- Deep-fried products of any kind
- Poutine
- Nachos

## Non-sugar Sweeteners

Sometimes, in an attempt to lower the sugar content of foods and beverages, non-sugar sweeteners are added to products. Often, these products are low in nutrition and may replace healthier foods and beverages. The Provincial SFG do not allow foods or beverages that contain non-sugar sweeteners to be sold and/or served at school.

Non-sugar sweeteners can include artificial sweeteners, sugar alcohols and natural non-sugar sweeteners. You can find out if a food or drink contains non-sugar sweeteners by reading the ingredient list. Look for words such as: aspartame, acesulfame potassium, neotame, advantame, sucralose, saccharin, cyclamate, thaumatin, sugar alcohols (sorbitol, isomalt, lactitol, xylitol, mannitol, maltitol, erythritol, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates), steviol glycosides (stevia), and polydextrose.



## Safe Food Handling

It is important to practice [safe food handling](#) when preparing and serving foods. Properly preparing, storing and serving foods can prevent illnesses caused by bacteria like Salmonella, Campylobacter, or E.coli. Cafeterias and canteens should be licensed and compliant with the Food Premises Regulations. Commercial operators of school cafeterias should also meet the approved [food safety training](#) requirements.

Consider the following when offering meals and snacks at school:

- At least one employee who has current food safety training must be present in the food premises while it is in operation;
- Kitchen facilities should be used for food preparation only;
- Individuals who are ill should not be allowed in the kitchen;
- Food handlers and servers should be kept at the lowest manageable number and other people should be asked not to enter the kitchen area;
- Sufficient refrigeration space is needed to keep perishable foods (e.g., milk, eggs, meats, fish, poultry) at 4°C (40°F) or lower. A thermometer should be kept in the fridge to monitor temperature;
- Sufficient equipment is needed to keep hot foods at 60°C (140°F) or higher;
- Thermometers should be available to check cooling and cooking temperatures;
- A separate sink with supplies (liquid soap and paper towels) should be on-site for hand washing only. Hands must be washed frequently; and
- The kitchen should have a three-compartment sink for washing and disinfecting utensils and dishes, or a two-compartment sink and commercial dishwasher.

Work with your Regional Environmental Health Officer (EHO) to determine any specific requirements for your school's food service area. See Appendix A for a link to EHO contacts for your region. More information is also available from the [Public Health Agency](#) of Canada.

### The following food safety tips can help avoid food-borne illnesses:

#### Clean

Hands, surfaces and utensils frequently.

#### Cook

All meats, poultry, fish and eggs to the proper internal temperature. Use a thermometer to check the temperature.

#### Chill

All perishables and leftovers promptly to reduce the growth of bacteria. Thaw frozen foods in a refrigerator or a microwave oven, not at room temperature.

#### Separate

Raw meats from raw vegetables and fruits, and raw food from prepared food. Use different cutting boards and utensils to avoid cross-contamination. Store packaged raw meats in pans on lower refrigerator shelves, below ready-to-eat foods, to prevent contamination caused by dripping.

# Appendixes

## Appendix A – School Health Contacts

School Health Promotion Liaison Consultants			
Avalon East	Susan Barry	susanbarry@nlesd.ca	709.758.2388
Avalon West and Vista/Burin	Jennifer Rex	jenniferrex@nlesd.ca	709.466.5717
Central	Vacant	Vacant	709.256.2547 ext. 230
Western	Vacant	Vacant	709.637.6769
Labrador	Andrew Battcock	andrewbattcock@nlesd.ca	709.896.4993

Regional Nutritionists			
Eastern (Metro)	Lesley Burgess	lesley.burgess@easternhealth.ca	709.752.4422
Eastern (Rural)	Melissa Caravan	melissa.caravan@easternhealth.ca	709.229.1605
Central	Jill Wheaton	jill.wheaton@centralhealth.nl.ca	709.651.6335
Western	Lesley French	lesleyfrench@westernhealth.nl.ca	709.784.6130
Labrador- Grenfell	Vacant	Vacant	709.897.3140

### Environmental Health Officers

The Officer for your region can be found [here](#) or at [gov.nl.ca](http://gov.nl.ca)

**Please note** – contact information may change over time. Your school’s public health nurse can help connect you with these and other school health supports in your region.

# Appendix B – Healthy Eating Resources

[Canada's Food Guide](#)

[Information for Parents and Caregivers to Help Support Healthy Eating](#)

[Healthy Lunch and Snack Ideas](#)

[Affordable Healthy Eating](#)

# Appendix C – Other Implementation Supports

[Using the Provincial School Food Guidelines - School Food Providers Quick Reference Guide](#)

[Planning Healthy Menus for School](#)

[Engaging Students in Menu Development](#)

[Implementing the Provincial School Food Guidelines](#)

[Provincial School Food Guidelines - Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Communicating the Provincial School Food Guidelines](#)

