

# Healthy food and drink choices in schools

**GREEN**  
Fill the  
menu



**AMBER**  
Select  
carefully



**RED**  
Off the  
menu



Australian Better Health Initiative: A joint Australian, State and Territory initiative. Acknowledgement NSW Health

## Tips for making healthy food and drink choices – Parents and carers

Children's energy needs for a busy day at school require them to eat a variety of foods. Factors that determine the amount children eat include age, sex and physical activity level. Children will have the best chance of getting all the nutrition they need if they are offered a variety of tasty and healthy foods every day which reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents.

In this state, 30 per cent of girls and 23 per cent of boys are either overweight or obese. Over their schooling life children can consume up to 2 500 meals. Therefore it is crucial that these meals are nutritious, whether brought from home or purchased from the school canteen. All meals should reflect healthy food choices.

Healthy foods allow children to:

- ✓ grow and develop
- ✓ concentrate
- ✓ have the energy to play and participate in sporting activities.

Lunches from home reflect:

- ✓ personal choice
- ✓ parental knowledge about health and nutrition
- ✓ cultural differences.

Parents and carers can support healthy food and drink choices. When making lunches at home:

- ✓ choose a variety of foods
- ✓ include bread, wholegrains, rice, pasta or noodles (try wholegrain for extra goodness)
- ✓ include milk, cheese or yoghurt
- ✓ include some meat, fish, chicken, eggs
- ✓ go for 2 (fruit) and 5 (vegetables)
- ✓ choose water as a drink
- ✓ keep 'junk' food away from school.

Some snack ideas are:

- ✓ rice cakes and reduced fat cream cheese
- ✓ fresh fruit pieces and yoghurt dip
- ✓ plain popcorn

- ✓ small tub yoghurt
- ✓ cheese stick or triangle
- ✓ muffins with fruit
- ✓ english muffin and cheese
- ✓ fruit bread
- ✓ scone – plain or fruit or pumpkin
- ✓ pikelets
- ✓ small sandwich
- ✓ crispbreads and spread
- ✓ wholemeal crackers and cheese.

Some lunch ideas are:

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

Keep food fresh and safe to eat by packing a frozen drink or an ice brick.

These foods and drinks are not good choices for school lunches:

- ✓ 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.

### For more information

On lunch box food, visit the Meerilinga Lunch Box World website [meerilinga.org.au](http://meerilinga.org.au)

Nutrition Australia website [nutritionaustralia.org](http://nutritionaustralia.org) or phone 6304 5714

Heart Foundation website [heartfoundation.com.au](http://heartfoundation.com.au)

Policy and standards for healthy food and drinks in public schools, [det.wa.edu.au/healthyfoodanddrink](http://det.wa.edu.au/healthyfoodanddrink)