

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.

Avoid foods that could go off, especially on a hot day as there are no fridges at school. Take care with foods such as rice.

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

Use a thermal flask to keep food warm - rice/noodles on the top and vegetables or chicken in another compartment

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.

Add fresh fruit – choose fruit that is in season for example apples, oranges, grapes, mandarins and bananas.

Healthy lunch ideas

- ✓ sandwiches, rolls or wraps with vegemite, tuna, chicken and/or salad
- ✓ rice
- ✓ felafel
- ✓ hard boiled eggs
- ✓ lamb or chicken
- ✓ salad vegetables
- ✓ pita or lebanese bread with hommus avocado, egg and/or salad.

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

Toasted Mexican pita pockets

Makes: 10

Traffic Light Category: **Green**

Ingredients:

- 10 tortillas
- 400g salsa
- 3½ cups chopped cooked chicken breast
- 7 cups loosely packed English spinach
- 2½ cups reduced fat grated cheese
- 2½ cups diced avocado

Method:

1. Lay tortillas flat and spread 1tb/20g of salsa in the middle of each tortilla
2. Place ¼ cup of chopped cooked chicken breast on top of salsa in each tortilla
3. Place ¼ cup diced avocado on top of chicken in each tortilla then mix in cheddar cheese,
4. Place ¾ cup loosely packed English spinach on top of avocado in each tortilla
5. Sprinkle ¼ cup reduced fat grated cheese on top of English spinach in each tortilla
6. Fold each of the four sides in to form an enclosed parcel
7. Place in a heated flat toasted sandwich press, folded side down for approximately 1-2 minutes until golden
8. Serve warm.

Note: Kidney beans could be used instead of chicken for a vegetarian alternative.

Other seasonal vegetables could be used such as chopped tomatoes, diced capsicum, chopped spring onion or chopped mushrooms.

Perfect Pikelets

Recipe from Canteen Cuisine

Makes: 25

Traffic Light Category: **Green**

Ingredients:

- 2 cups self raising flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 ¼ 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 teaspoons 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	Examples
Fill the menu	
Breads	A variety of bread types
Cereal foods	Wholegrain cereals; oats; pasta; noodles; rice; polenta; cous cous; quinoa; barley
Vegetables	Vegetables (fresh, frozen and tinned); salads (reduced fat dressing only); all salad mixtures
Fruit	Fresh; frozen; tinned (in natural juices)
Legumes	Tinned (e.g. bean mix, kidney beans); cooked; baked beans
Reduced fat dairy products and alternatives	Yoghurt (plain or fruit); cheese; liquid breakfast*
Lean meat, poultry, fish and alternatives	Lean meats (excluding ham); chicken (no skin) or registered meats*; fish (e.g. tuna, salmon, sardines); egg
Sandwich fillings	Lean meats (excluding ham); chicken (no skin); fish; creamed corn/corn kernels; egg; canned spaghetti (reduced salt); salads; baked beans; reduced fat cheese; hommus; vegemite; yeast spreads; fish spreads*
Hot food	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
Snacks	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*
Drinks	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
AMBER	Examples
Select carefully and limit	
Reduced fat dairy products	Dairy desserts
Full fat dairy foods and alternatives	Milk; soy; yoghurt (plain or fruit); custard; cheese
Savoury commercial products#	Registered products such as ovenable fish/chicken/potato portions should be chosen because they are lower in fat/salt*
Processed meats	Lean ham; lean bacon
Dried fruit	Dried fruit (excluding fruit leathers)
Snack food bars	Registered products such as breakfast bars; cereal bars; fruit bars*
Savoury snacks	Registered products such as oven baked vege chips; garlic or herb bread lightly spread*; lightly flavoured snacks such as crisps, crackers and popcorn*
Cakes, muffins and sweet biscuits	Registered products such as cakes; muffins and biscuits (reduced fat and/or sugar and based on wholemeal flour*)
Ice-creams, ice-blocks, fruit based icy-poles, slushies	Registered ice-creams*: milk based ice confectionery; frozen yoghurts; rice cream; 99% fruit juice based icy-poles
Drinks	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
RED	Examples
Off the menu:	
Confectionery	All types, caramelised pop corn
Pastry items	All types that do not meet the criteria for registration
Sandwich meats	High fat sandwich meats including polony (devon) and salami
Deep fried foods	All types
Savoury snacks	Crisps, chips and other similar products that do not meet the criteria for registration
Ice-creams	Chocolate coated and premium ice-creams
Sandwich fillings	Honey; jam; chocolate spreads; confectionery sprinkles
Cakes, muffins and sweet pastries	Croissants; doughnuts; cream filled buns; iced cakes; sweet pastries; slices
Drinks	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

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