



GREEN Fill the menu



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

AMBER Select carefully



Acknowledgement NSW Health

RED Off the menu



Tips for making healthy food and drink choices – Teachers

Teachers can be good role models for students by eating healthy foods and drinking water. The Department of Education and Training's *Healthy Food and Drink* policy applies to all activities undertaken by teachers. No 'red' food or drinks should be provided as classroom rewards or during cooking activities. Where student engagement with 'red' foods is essential in Home Economics classes, consideration should be given to the connection with other learning outcomes of the Curriculum Framework and the importance of students' learning to make healthy food choices.

Teachers are encouraged to take every opportunity to discuss with students the importance of healthy food and drink choices and being active. Teachers can engage students in curriculum activities that promote the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (AGHE).

Classroom activities that support healthy food and drink choices may include:

- ✓ keeping a food diary over the period of a week
- ✓ identifying problems and difficulties with bringing healthy lunches to school ie, keeping foods hot or cold
- ✓ identifying ideas to overcome the barriers to healthy lunches
- ✓ designing a lunchbox ie, battery or solar powered
- ✓ student assessments of their own lunch.
Please note it is important not to criticise the contents of students' lunches
- ✓ discussing healthy lunchbox combinations

- ✓ asking students to set goals to achieve a healthy diet or healthy lifestyle
- ✓ daily fruit and water breaks
- ✓ trying new foods in the classroom
- ✓ having a classroom lunch where students plan a menu based on healthy food and drink choices
- ✓ linking with the canteen to conduct a 'design a sandwich or salad day'
- ✓ in-class food awareness activities ie, growing tomatoes or alfalfa as part of a science project, food processing activities ie, bottling and drying.

'Red' foods and the curriculum – home economics and vocational courses

'Red' foods should only be included as part of the curriculum in line with the AGHE, that is, on limited occasions and in small amounts across the course of study. Including the preparation and presentation of 'red' foods can indirectly promote consumption of these foods and should be avoided where possible. This means:

- ✓ In any food preparation activity, all categories of food such as appetisers, main course and dessert should reflect a focus on healthy foods recognising that, for students to prepare and serve a range of foods and use a range of techniques, they may on limited occasions be preparing and serving 'red' foods and/or preparing foods in such a way that renders them 'red' foods.

Healthy food and drink choices in schools

Tips for making healthy food and drink choices – Teachers

- ✓ Making and tasting small quantities of 'red' foods can increase students' understanding of the properties of food and the related food science. This understanding should only be used to justify small amounts of 'red' foods being eaten.
- ✓ In instances where it is necessary for students to engage in comparative food studies that involve 'red' foods, and there is a need to taste these foods, then it should be in small taste testing experiences. The focus of the curriculum is for students to develop an understanding of the reasons for national differences in food behaviours including food availability, social, economic, cultural, environmental, political and technological factors.
- ✓ Food is often used to reflect a particular cultural context such as Oktoberfest or Bastille Day. It is acknowledged that some of these foods may be 'red' foods, however these occasions should be limited and 'red' foods should be kept to small amounts.
- ✓ Food preparation techniques such as deep frying and pastry making are essential competencies of the vocational curriculum. These techniques should only be practised until the required level of competency has been achieved.
- ✓ In meal preparation activities where a variety of techniques are necessary, those that are associated with 'red' foods, such as deep frying, should be balanced by a focus on techniques that encourage the use of 'green' and 'amber' foods.

Ideas for non-food rewards for students

Food preferences become established following our experiences with food and eating. Children are exposed to many different messages regarding food from a very early age. Schools should provide an environment where positive messages regarding nutritional standards are modelled and reinforced through the curriculum and food services.

Using food and drinks of poor nutritional value as a reward for students can contradict the messages promoted in the school curriculum. Utilising such foods may reinforce students' food preferences and prove counterproductive to learning programs that promote healthy eating.

Changing the practice of using food to reward good behaviour (especially confectionary) can initially be challenging. However, the move towards other non-food rewards can prove a worthwhile one, especially when students are involved in the process of choosing alternatives.

Praise and positive reinforcement are the preferred methods in encouraging students to keep up their good work; however, some of the following non-food rewards are also popular in schools:

- ✓ Correspondence with parents/carers
- ✓ Stickers
- ✓ Certificates
- ✓ Pencils, pens, erasers
- ✓ Stencils, stamps
- ✓ Ribbons or hair accessories
- ✓ Computer time
- ✓ Time to listen to music
- ✓ Going to library to select a book
- ✓ Playing a game or puzzle
- ✓ Yo-yos
- ✓ Temporary tattoos
- ✓ Hula hoop
- ✓ Water bottles
- ✓ Balls
- ✓ Skipping rope
- ✓ Discount vouchers (e.g. for surf shop, AFL shop, music shop, ten pin bowling, movies, or skating)
- ✓ Raffle tickets

For more information

- On lunch box food, visit the Meerilinga Lunch Box World website meerilinga.org.au
- Nutrition Australia website nutritionaustralia.org or phone 6304 5714
- *Healthy Food and Drink* policy, det.wa.edu.au/healthyfoodanddrink