



Ka Ora, Ka Ako | Healthy School Lunches Programme



Nutrition guidelines

October 2020

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Nutrition guidelines

The lunch served/supplied should align with the principles in the Ministry of Health Healthy Food and Drink Guidance- Schools (the Guidance) document. For detailed information on types of food and portion sizes please refer to the Guidance document available on the Ministry of Health website.

www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/nutrition/healthy-active-learning

Guidance principles

The principles of the Guidance are as follows.

Variety

Offer a variety of healthy foods from the four food groups:

- » plenty of vegetables and fruit
- » grain foods, mostly wholegrain and naturally high in fibre
- » milk and milk products, mostly low and reduced fat
- » legumes, nuts, seeds, fish and other seafood, eggs, poultry and/or red meat with fat removed.

Minimal saturated fat, salt and added sugar

Food should be prepared with or contain minimal saturated fat, salt (sodium) and added sugar, and should be mostly whole or less processed. This means:

- » foods containing moderate amounts of saturated fat, salt and/or added sugar may be available only in small portions and not served daily
- » no deep-fried foods
- » no confectionery, e.g. sweets, lollies, chocolate.

Drink options

Offer only water and unflavoured milk as drink options. This means:

- » no sugar-sweetened drinks
- » no drinks containing 'intense' (artificial) sweeteners
- » no fruit or vegetable juices (including 100 percent juice, no-added-sugar varieties).



Applying the guidance to lunches

All principles outlined above must be adhered to.

Main meals e.g. soups, frittatas, salads, curry, sandwiches, etc.

- » All main meals in the lunches must be rated 'Green'. This means 75% of the ingredients must include 'Green' category items e.g. vegetables, fruit, wholegrain rice/pasta/bread/wraps, fish, lean poultry/meat, reduced fat dairy products within the recommended portions.
- » Include plenty of vegetables in every meal
- » Consider 'meat-free' days. Lunches don't always need to include meat, a variety of vegetables, legumes and grains can be a healthy balanced meal.
- » Bread, grains and pasta should be wholegrain/wholemeal.
- » If using cheese use low or reduced fat cheese ≤40g.
- » Legumes can be incorporated into the meal. These include: dried beans, peas and lentils. They make healthy vegetarian meals or may be added to a meat dish.
- » If including fish, chicken or meat in your menu remove skin and visible fat. Refer to the 'Nutrition criteria' tables below for portion size recommendations for fish, chicken and meat.

Complementary items or snacks:

- » Select complementary items that are low in saturated fat, salt and added sugar, and within the recommended portion sizes (where specified).
- » If items have a Health Star Rating (HSR) select those that are ≥ 3.5 HSR. Please refer to the Guidance document for detail on types and portion sizes.
- » 'Amber' complementary items eg, packaged snacks and baked items must not be served daily (consider no more than twice per week) and ≤ 800kj per packet.

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Baked items

For baked items follow the recommended portion sizes:

- » scones, cake and dessert ≤ 100 g portion
- » loaf and muffins ≤ 100 g portion
- » slices ≤ 80 g portion
- » biscuits and pikelets ≤ 40 g portion
- » small pastries ≤ 60 g portion
- » pies and quiches ≤ 140 g portion.

Ideas for healthier lunches

Consider these to make your lunches healthier

- » Include two complementary items along with the main meal e.g. low-fat yoghurt and fruit - seasonal fresh fruit, frozen fruit, canned in natural juice (drained)
- » Other healthy complementary items you could include are:
 - vegetable sticks (e.g., carrot, cucumber, celery) with hummus

- wholegrain/multigrain/rye crackers >3.5HSR with no-added-salt nut butter or hummus or reduced fat cheese
- unsalted nuts and seeds with no added sugar
- low or reduced fat yoghurt or custard ≤150g

Portion Sizes

- » Consider having two portion sizes for main meal items; a standard size and a larger size
- » The larger portion may be up to half a size larger than the “standard portion” e.g. 1 standard sandwich as the standard portion and 1.5 sandwich for a larger portion
- » ‘Amber’ items must not make up the difference in portion sizes/ additional portion
- » Through discussion with each school you may estimate of number of standard and larger portions required

Dietary Requirements and Cultural needs

- » Ensure key dietary requirements and cultural needs are able to be adhered to including: dairy free, gluten free, nut free, halal, kosher; cultures where beef and pork are forbidden.

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Summary of the health and food drink guidance

Nutrition criteria

This information is from the Healthy Food and Drink Guidance which identifies the healthy options for the foods and drinks in schools.

It classifies foods and drinks as green, amber and red, as detailed in the table below. This provides a practical way to categorise foods as healthy or less healthy for food service providers.



Green items

- » are a good source of nutrition
- » are the basis of a healthy diet
- » are generally lower in saturated fat, salt and added sugar
- » are mostly whole and less processed
- » come from the four food groups: vegetables and fruit; grain foods (mostly wholegrain and those naturally high in fibre); milk and milk products (mostly low fat); and legumes, seafood, eggs and meat with fat removed.



Amber items

- » are not part of an everyday diet
- » may have some nutritional value
- » are often more processed
- » in large serving sizes, can contribute to consuming excess kilojoules/calories.



Red items

- » have poor nutritional value
- » are high in saturated fat, salt and/or added sugars
- » can contribute to consuming excess kilojoules/calories
- » are often highly processed foods and drinks.



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Ready-to-eat menu items

The tables below highlight ready-to-eat items that are likely to be on a school menu. The Guidance document provides further detail on ingredients for preparing these items including portion size recommendations, e.g., amount of chicken or meat within a sandwich or wrap. *Please refer to the full Guidance document for further information on ingredients and individual food items when planning your menu.*

Mixed meals and ready-to-eat meals

Mixed meals and ready-to-eat meals (two or more items or ingredients from different food groups, e.g., pizza, lasagne, macaroni cheese, soup).



Green items

Meals that contain vegetables and/or fruit and at least 75% green ingredients and no more than 25% of amber ingredients, as assessed by a visual check or by referring to the ingredient list.

Green items include:

- » all vegetables: fresh, frozen or canned
- » all fruit: fresh, frozen or canned
- » wholemeal/wholegrain breads, wraps, rice, pasta,
- » reduced fat milks and milk products: cheese e.g. edam; milk; yoghurt; coconut milk
- » beans, lentils
- » tofu
- » eggs
- » fish: fresh, frozen or canned eg, tuna in spring water
- » skinless chicken
- » lean red meats: visible fat removed
- » mince: lean mince or standard mince cooked and fat drained.

Examples include:

Spinach and tomato pizza, tomato and mushroom calzone, chilli bean burritos, spaghetti bolognese, vegetable pasta dishes, salads, soups, rice and curries, meat and veg stews, stir-fry, rice dishes, wraps, frittatas.

Cooking methods:

- » where possible grill, bake, steam rather than fry
- » use small amounts of vegetable oil like Canola oil for cooking rather than butter, lard or coconut oil.



Amber items

Meals that contain vegetables and/or fruit and are prepared with green and amber ingredients only.

Amber items include:

- » plain white flour/white rice white/bread/ wraps
- » full fat milk products including tasty cheese, full fat yoghurt, custard and dairy food
- » chicken with the skin
- » red meat with visible fat
- » standard mince fat not drained.

Healthy swaps:

- » swap plain flour, white rice, white bread/rolls/wraps for wholegrain, wholemeal or multigrain.
- » swap full fat cheese, milks, yoghurts, custards, dairy food for low or reduced fat varieties.

Examples include:

Lasagne, macaroni cheese, quiches, pies, muffins, pastries.

How to make amber foods healthier:

- » add lots of vegetables in lasagne
- » add cauliflower to macaroni sauce make with reduced fat milk and edam cheese
- » add lots of vegetables to quiches or pies



Red items

Meals that contain no vegetables, fruit or green items or ingredients.

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Sandwiches and wraps



Green items

Sandwiches and wraps prepared with vegetables and green ingredients only, including the bread.

Breads, wraps, rolls, pitas you can use are:

- » wholegrain
- » wholemeal
- » multigrain
- » high fibre varieties.

Fillings you can use are:

- » salad vegetables: lettuce, tomato, cucumber, onion, carrot, spinach, beans
- » egg
- » reduced fat cheese like edam $\leq 40\text{g}$
- » lean shredded cooked chicken
- » canned fish (e.g. tuna in spring water drained)
- » lean red meat
- » lean mince or cooked mince with fat drained.



Amber items

Sandwiches and wraps prepared with vegetables and green and amber ingredients only, including the bread.

Amber items are:

- » plain white bread, rolls, wraps, pita
- » full-fat cheese $\leq 40\text{g}$
- » processed fish/seafood e.g. battered fish/ packaged fish cakes $\leq 50\text{g}$ in sandwiches, rolls, wraps or salads; $\leq 120\text{g}$ as a meal
- » processed chicken e.g. deli or smoked meat, luncheon, loaf $\leq 50\text{g}$ in sandwiches, rolls, wraps or salads; $\leq 120\text{g}$ as a meal
- » processed meat e.g. deli or smoked meat, luncheon, loaf $\leq 50\text{g}$ in sandwiches, rolls, wraps or salads; $\leq 120\text{g}$ as a meal.

How to make amber foods healthier:

- » add lots of vegetables to sandwiches, rolls, wraps, pitas,
- » use reduced fat edam cheese,
- » use lean chicken or meat,

Healthy swaps:

- » swap plain flour, white bread/rolls/wraps for wholegrain, wholemeal or multigrain
- » swap full fat cheese, milks, yoghurts, custards, dairy food for low or reduced fat varieties.



Red items

Sandwiches and wraps that do not meet the amber criteria:

- » food in larger portion sizes than specified in the Amber criteria e.g., full fat cheese $\geq 40\text{g}$
- » processed fish, chicken meat that does not meet the Amber criteria
- » full-fat items such as cooked mince fat not drained
- » sausages served either as part of a meal or individually.

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Sushi



Sushi prepared with mostly green ingredients (e.g. sushi made with either white or brown rice).



Other sushi, except for sushi containing deep-fried ingredients



Sushi containing deep-fried ingredients.

Baked items



Baked items are NOT green.



Amber items

Packaged or unpackaged baked items must contain some wholemeal flour, wholegrains (e.g. oats, bran, seeds) and/or fruit or vegetables (e.g. fresh, frozen, canned or dried).

Amber items are:

- » products that contain no confectionery
- » products that have no icing
- » muesli bars with an HSR of ≥ 3.5

Portion sizes:

- » scones, cake and dessert ≤ 100 g portion
- » loaf and muffins ≤ 100 g portion
- » slices ≤ 80 g portion
- » biscuits and pikelets ≤ 40 g portion
- » small pastries ≤ 60 g portion
- » pies and quiches ≤ 140 g portion.



Red items

Products that do not meet the amber criteria:

- » Sausage rolls
- » Energy bars, protein bars and other muesli bars with an HSR < 3.5
- » Sweet bakery items that contain confectionery
- » Sweet bakery items with icing.

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Milk and milk products



Green items

Milk:

- » Unsweetened low-fat milk and plant-based milks (e.g. soy, rice, almond, oat) with added calcium and vitamin B12

Milk products:

- » Reduced- or low-fat milk products with an HSR of ≥ 3.5 :
- » yoghurt and dairy food (≤ 150 g portion)
- » custard (≤ 150 g portion)
- » cheese (≤ 40 g portion)



Amber items.

Milk:

- » Unsweetened full-fat milk and plant-based milks (e.g. soy, rice, almond, oat) with added calcium and vitamin B12.

Milk products:

- » Full-fat milk products with an HSR of ≥ 3.5 :
- » yoghurt and dairy food (≤ 150 g portion)
- » custard (≤ 150 g portion)
- » cheese (≤ 40 g portion)
- » Reduced- or low-fat cream, sour cream and cream cheese
- » Lite coconut milk or coconut cream, or coconut cream diluted with water

'Lite' refers to a version of the standard variety that is reduced in fat, salt, energy and/or sugar.



Red items

Milk:

- » All sweetened milk drinks.

Milk products:

- » Full-fat milk products with an HSR of < 3.5 :
- » yoghurt and dairy food (> 150 g portion)
- » custard (> 150 g portion)
- » cheese (> 40 g portion)
- » full-fat cream, sour cream and cream cheese
- » frozen desserts, e.g. ice cream
- » full-fat coconut milk and coconut cream.

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Example healthy lunch menu

Lunch -Main meals (including meat, vegetarian, vegan if needed)	Snacks or complementary items
vegetable soup wholegrain/brown bread roll	1-piece fruit 150g low fat yoghurt
sandwich/wrap: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» salad vegetables (lettuce, tomato, cucumber, carrot, onion etc)» wholegrain bread/wrap» one of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– vegetable and bean patty– egg– tuna (in spring water, drained)– skinless shredded chicken– lean beef» ≤40g low/reduced fat cheese» small amounts of low or reduced fat dressing may be served on the side	1 piece fruit ≤ 30g unsalted mixed nuts with no added sugar
vegetable frittata: spinach, carrot, kumara, pumpkin, mushrooms, courgettes, broccoli side salad: Greek/grated slaw vegetables	1 piece fruit mini fruit bran muffin 80g portion
Mexican rice salad: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» brown rice» black beans, mixed beans (canned and drained)» corn kernels» tomato» red onion» ice berg lettuce	1 piece fruit carrot sticks and hummus
Pasta bowl: <ul style="list-style-type: none">» wholemeal pasta/spaghetti» one of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– lentil/kumara balls or– broccoli/falafel balls» meat balls (lean mince + vegetables)» tomato pasta sauce with vegetables mixed in» small amount of low-fat edam cheese (optional)	1 piece fruit mini rolled oat and fruit slice 60g portion (no icing or confectionery)
Stir fry <ul style="list-style-type: none">» mixed vegetables (fresh seasonal, frozen, canned)» one of:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– tofu– chickpea– lean meat stir-fry (chicken/lamb/pork/beef) or» baked kumara wedges or brown rice	fruit salad (fresh, frozen or tinned in natural juice drained) 150g low fat yoghurt

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Further information

For more information email school.lunches@education.govt.nz

Read about School Lunches Programme at <https://www.education.govt.nz/free-and-healthy-school-lunches/>

For detailed information on types of food and portion sizes please refer to the Guidance document available on the Ministry of Health website.

www.health.govt.nz/our-work/preventative-health-wellness/nutrition/healthy-active-learning

Recipe ideas: <https://www.healthykids.org.nz/eat/recipes>