

## EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

March 11, 2008

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

SUBJECT: Health and Wellness: Plan in Response to Trustee Motion

ORIGINATOR: D. Barrett, Assistant Superintendent

### RESOURCE

STAFF: Jan Anderson, Gloria Chalmers, Margaretha Ebbers, Mark Gratton, Patti McLeish, Stuart Wachowicz

### INFORMATION

**Background:** At the board meeting of November 27, 2007, the trustees unanimously approved the following motion:

“That the district eliminate the sale of junk food in all Edmonton Public Schools and that the administration be directed to deliver a report to public board on the process and timeframe necessary to achieve this end, by no later than March 30, 2008.”

This report provides a context and a plan consistent with the approved motion. As required, the goal of the plan (Appendix I) is to promote and provide healthy food and beverage options to encourage students to routinely make healthy choices. The plan focuses on the reduction, and ultimately the elimination, of the sale of less healthy food in Edmonton Public Schools. The plan is nested within a board policy (Appendix II) and an administrative regulation (Appendix III) that supports a comprehensive school health approach.

For several reasons, the food environment is a critical component of a comprehensive school health plan as envisioned by the Board policy. We know that children and staff spend over half their day in school 10 months a year and consume over one-third of their daily food intake at school. The literature confirms a link between nutrition and children’s readiness to learn. The provincial curriculum includes health and wellness outcomes. Thus, schools are one partner, along with parents, the health authorities, community and business groups in the food sector, in promoting healthy food choices that encourage healthy weights and reduce the risk of chronic diseases.

**Process and Progress to Date:** Policies, regulations, plans and related documentation from other districts and government agencies were reviewed. Consultation was undertaken with nutritionists from Capital Health and other health regions as well as with vendors, product providers and school and district staff regarding the guidelines currently available as well as other nutrition related issues. The guidelines considered included the Canada Food Guide, the draft Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (Appendix IV) the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools and the Standards for the Sale and Distribution of

Food and Beverages in Red Deer Schools (an adaptation of the BC document). Through the Purchasing department, renewable dates of current contracts between schools and vendors were accessed and reviewed. Preliminary discussions regarding these contracts occurred with selected high schools and junior highs, vendors and district legal counsel, and this work will continue.

Based on the data and discussions, a regulation was developed and approved by the Superintendent to provide direction and a call to action in moving forward a comprehensive school health agenda. This regulation will be reviewed yearly and updated as necessary to keep pace with the implementation of the elimination of less healthy food as outlined in the plan provided.

**Highlights of the Plan:** The plan involves partnerships with the major stakeholders. It includes immediate distribution of a regulation that promotes and supports physical fitness and good nutrition. It commits to finalizing criteria for identifying healthy foods by the start of the 2008-09 school year. Between now and then, the draft Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth and the Food Vending Criteria Guidelines by Food Category (Appendix V) developed by regional health authority dietitians provide interim guidelines/criteria to schools. It sets a deadline of August 2011 for the elimination of non-nutritious foods and beverages. The deadline takes into consideration what products are currently available in the market place and the duration of existing contracts. It involves working with schools, health authorities, vendors and suppliers to make changes on an ongoing basis in vending machines, school cafeterias and stores.

**Next Steps:** The policy, the regulation and the plan will be distributed to all district staff and information sessions and support will be provided as required. Simultaneously, work will continue in collaboration with health authority nutritionists to finalize criteria that will clearly define what foods fall into the categories of "Choose Most Often," "Choose Sometimes," and "Choose Least." The criteria will apply to all food and beverages sold in schools through vending machines, school cafeterias, stores and hot lunches. As flagged in the regulation, the criteria can also be used to guide decisions about food and beverages used at school events and ceremonies where food is provided rather than sold or when choosing food as a reinforcement for performance. Continued consultation regarding vending and supplier contracts will be scheduled based on the end date of the contracts, beginning with those that are coming up for renewal within the year. Information and resources will be identified and disseminated on an ongoing basis.

ES:ee

- Appendix I Plan to Promote Healthy Food and Beverage Choices
- Appendix II GBE.BP - Health and Wellness of Staff and Students Policy
- Appendix III GBE.AR - Health and Wellness of Staff and Students Administrative Regulation
- Appendix IV Draft Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth
- Appendix V Food Vending Criteria Guidelines by Food Category

## PLAN TO PROMOTE HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE CHOICES

*Promotion and provision of healthy food and beverage options to encourage students to routinely make healthy choices*

Timelines	Actions
April to September 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disseminate <b>by April 30, 2008</b>, the Health and Wellness Policy and Regulation, Plan and interim guidelines/criteria to promote healthy food and beverage choices.</li> <li>• In consultation with Purchasing, examine in greater detail the existing contracts with caterers, food suppliers and vendors; hold consultation meetings with schools (23) and vendors of contracts that end December 2008 <b>by June 30, 2008</b> and establish a schedule to consult <b>by June 30, 2009</b> with those schools (56) whose contracts end between January 2009 and August 2011.</li> <li>• Seek input <b>by June 30, 2008</b> from principals regarding the interim guidelines/criteria prior to finalizing the criteria.</li> <li>• Using feedback on the interim guidelines/criteria and the assistance of health authority nutritionists, finalize criteria <b>by September 30, 2008</b> for identifying <i>choose most often</i>, <i>choose sometimes</i> foods to enable schools to identify healthy choices</li> <li>• In collaboration with health authority nutritionists and vendors identify and lobby for product availability <b>(Ongoing)</b></li> </ul>
October 2008 to August 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide information sessions regarding the criteria and strategies for making the changes <b>(As needed, October 2008 to June 30, 2009)</b></li> <li>• Maintain and expand partnerships with health authorities and other community organizations in support of healthy choices <b>(Ongoing)</b></li> <li>• <b>By August 2009</b>, require 70% of food and beverages sold in schools to be in the <i>choose most often</i> or <i>choose sometimes</i> categories</li> <li>• Continue consultation with caterers, food suppliers and vendors whose contracts end by August 2011 <b>(Ongoing)</b></li> </ul>
September 2009 to August 2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>By August 2011</b>, require that 100% of food and beverages sold in schools to be in the <i>choose most often</i> or <i>choose sometimes</i> category; at least 50% of items offered must be from the <i>choose most often</i> category</li> <li>• Require that foods sold or provided in schools from the <i>choose least often</i> category be eliminated</li> </ul>

HEALTH AND WELLNESS OF STAFF AND STUDENTS POLICY

# Edmonton Public Schools Board Policies and Regulations

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CODE: GBE.BP

TOPIC: Health and Wellness of Staff and  
Students

EFFECTIVE DATE: 12-06-2007

ISSUE DATE: 14-06-2007

REVIEW DATE: 06-2012

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The Board believes that employees and students who are emotionally healthy, well nourished and physically active are better able to achieve the goals of education.

The Board is committed to working with parents, community members, organizations and government to foster lifelong habits that improve the health and well-being of employees and students.

The Board encourages each school and central decision unit to maintain a supportive environment that develops the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enable individuals to make choices that foster emotional health, healthy eating and active living.

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Reference(s):

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# Edmonton Public Schools

## Board Policies and Regulations

CODE: GBE.AR

EFFECTIVE DATE: 07-03-2008

TOPIC: Health and Wellness of Staff and  
Students

ISSUE DATE:

REVIEW DATE: 03-2013

### *Promoting Physical Activity and Emotional Well-Being in School Communities*

1. The principal will ensure the school program plan provides all students with quality Physical Education courses and *Daily Physical Activity* on days when Physical Education is not scheduled, in a manner that:
  - complies with the intent of the curriculum,
  - provides a minimum of 150 minutes/week of Physical Education broken into at least three time blocks,
  - plans and schedules are in place to enable *Daily Physical Activity* to be accessed by all students on days when Physical Education is not scheduled.
2. Schools and community will promote the value of physical fitness, active lifestyle and emotional well-being by such things as:
  - encouraging all students to participate in a variety of team and/or individual athletic activities,
  - utilizing resources, information and support from parents, community and organizations such as *Ever Active School*, *Active Playgrounds* and *Canadian Sport for Life*.
  - Disseminating District provided information for parents about the importance and benefits of physical activity for their children both in and out of school, and about how out-of-school activities can be accessed.
3. Principals will develop knowledge, expertise and leadership within the school staff to support quality Physical Education and activity through:
  - ensuring teachers charged with Physical Education instruction are knowledgeable about the content and intent of the provincial Physical Education curriculum,
  - providing access to in-service support for staff charged with planning and implementing *Daily Physical Activity*.
4. Central Services will ensure that support is available for schools to enable the development of an environment that promotes physical fitness, emotional well-being and life-long physical activity by:
  - ensuring District teachers have access to:
    - a. in-servicing in Physical Education
    - b. in-servicing in *Daily Physical Activity*

- c. staff development courses in Physical Education and/or Fitness Training from post-secondary institutions
- d. research and information from Alberta Mental Health
- e. information and activities that support daily physical activity
- f. timetabling and scheduling suggestions
- providing prominent messaging about the benefits and enjoyment of active living and the role of active living for helping with stress management in school and throughout life,
- providing information that promotes and enables physical fitness and emotional well-being for District staff.

*Promoting Nutrition Education and Healthy Eating in School Communities*

1. The principal of each school must ensure that strategies are in place to foster the knowledge, skills and attitudes that promote healthy eating. In fulfilling this expectation schools will:
  - establish linkages between health education and foods available at the school,
  - promote nutrition education and positive food messages provided by the District,
  - schedule lunch breaks that provide time for eating and recreation,
  - limit the use of food items as rewards,
  - include foods from the *choose most often* and *choose sometimes* categories on special occasion days.
  
2. Schools will promote healthy, reasonably priced food choices when food is sold or otherwise offered. In fulfilling this expectation, principals, in consultation with the school community, will plan to:
  - access expertise in the community through partnerships, programs, referrals etc.,
  - offer healthy foods in meal combinations in all places,
  - offer foods that are in the *choose most often* and *choose sometimes* categories
  
3. All schools communities will examine their nutrition practices and provide opportunities, support and encouragement for staff and students to eat healthy foods. In fulfilling this expectation staff may do things such as :
  - create their own health and wellness team that includes staff, parents and students,
  - choose healthy fundraising options
  - create an environment where healthy foods are available, affordable and promoted as the best choice,
  - review options with food suppliers to maximize the nutritional value of the items,
  - define the frequency of special food days in yearly calendars and ensure that healthy food items are available on those days.
  
4. Central Services will support nutrition education and healthy eating by any or all of the following:
  - linking with Capital Health on initiatives, updates, and resources regarding nutrition and healthy living,
  - coordinating information and in-services for District staff on food use in schools relating to cafeterias, stores and vending machines,
  - coordinating information and in-services for District staff on cross-curricular connections with health outcomes

- providing positive food messages,
- disseminating research on nutrition education, and other information related to healthy eating,
- participating in research projects and disseminating findings, such as promoting the best practices in healthy eating and obesity prevention gleaned from the research done with the School of Public Health, University of Alberta and our District,
- seeking and maintaining partnerships that reduce hunger across the District by increasing access to food programs to be provided in a non-stigmatizing manner,
- meeting regularly with District food suppliers.

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Reference(s):

ACA.AR - Respectful Learning and Working Environments

GBE.BP - Health and Wellness of Staff and Students

IG.BP - Student Behaviour and Conduct

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EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

### III. NUTRITION GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH

#### A. Healthy Eating for all Children and Youth

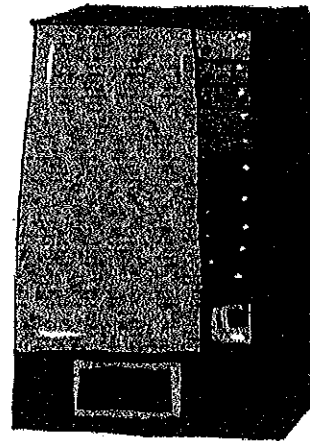
Children and youth have different nutritional needs than adults, and should not be considered as "little adults". Proper nutrition is especially important during childhood and adolescence to:

- Support optimal physical, cognitive, and social growth and development.
- Develop healthy eating habits now and for the future.
- Achieve and maintain healthy bodyweights.
- Reduce the risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, osteoporosis, and type 2 diabetes.

Although the nutritional requirements of young people vary with age, sex, and level of activity, all children and youth benefit from a well balanced approach to eating. A comprehensive approach to healthy eating must consider: i) the components of a healthy diet; ii) ways to enhance access to safe, nutritious foods; and iii) ways to create environments that support healthy food choices. Parents play a significant role in this process, however personnel

at childcare facilities, schools, recreational facilities and community events can all make a unique and important contribution. The Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth adopt a positive approach, and describe general and specific ways in which Albertans can be involved in supporting the health and well being of Alberta's children and youth.

The following general recommendations are relevant in all places where children and youth may be present.







**i) Healthy diets for children and youth include:**

- Nutrient-rich foods from all 4 food groups of Canada's Food Guide:\*

**Vegetables & Fruit**

- Raw or prepared with little to no added fat, sugar, or salt
- Eg. fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables; unsweetened fresh, frozen, or canned fruits.

**Grain Products**

- Whole grain choices that are lower in fat, sugar, and salt.
- Includes whole grain breads, cereals and pastas; brown rice.

**Milk & Alternatives**

- Lower fat (skim, 1%, 2%) milk and milk alternatives.
- Eg. fluid milk, cheeses, yogurts, calcium and vitamin D fortified soy beverages.

**Meat & Alternatives**

- Prepared with little or no added fat or salt.
- Eg. lean meats, fish or poultry; eggs; legumes (eg. dried beans, peas or lentils); nuts/nut butters; tofu.

- Choosing a variety of foods from each food group every day.
- Choosing different kinds of foods within the food groups helps to prevent nutrient deficiencies.
- Limiting foods that are high in sugar, salt, or fat to no more than 1 to 2 servings per week.
- Enjoying regular meals and snacks.
- Water should always be available.
- Choosing appropriate portion sizes of foods, consistent with hunger and fullness.
- Serving sizes for foods that are high in fat, sugar and salt should not exceed:
  - 30 g for chips and crackers
  - 30 g for high sugar cereal
  - 20 g for beef jerky
  - 30 g for cookies and cereal bars
  - 40 g for chocolate bars and candy
  - 55 g for bakery items, including, but not limited to, pastries, muffins, and doughnuts (approximately the size of a deck of cards)
- Making nutritious foods more accessible, and limiting the availability of foods that are less nutritious.
- Ensuring food purchasers know how to read food labels to select healthy foods.

\*Appendix F



*The Food Rating System*

A rating system is a simple means of communicating the relative healthfulness of food options that could be made available.

Facilities and organizations are encouraged to create an identification system for the following three categories:

1. "Choose Most Often" --- High nutrient-rich foods that have:
  - good source of vitamins, minerals
  - at least 2 grams of fibre
  - no more than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving
  - no (0) grams of trans fats per serving
  - contain no more than 35% of their total calories from fat
  - contain no more than 35% of their total calories from sugar
  - no more than 200 mg of sodium per packaged portion

Foods in this category provide multiple nutrients in reasonable quantities; they play an important role in healthy eating and should be first choices.

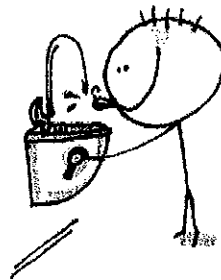
These foods are primarily those represented in the four (4) rainbow arches of Canada's Food Guide.

<i>Vegetables &amp; Fruit</i>	<i>Grain Products</i>	<i>Milk &amp; Alternatives</i>	<i>Meat &amp; Alternatives</i>
Fresh, frozen or canned (no or low salt) vegetables	Whole grain breads, bagels, cereals, tortillas	White milk (skim 1%, 2%) Fortified soy beverages (low fat)	Poultry, fish, red meat, lean deli meats
Fresh, frozen, or canned fruit (in no added sugar)	Whole grain pasta	Yogurt	Peanut/nut butters, nuts, seeds
Unsweetened fruit sauces	Brown rice	Hard cheese, cottage cheese	Beans, peas, lentils

These foods should be consumed daily.



2. "Choose sometimes" — Moderate nutrient-rich foods are foods that have fair levels of nutrients like vitamins, minerals and fibre, but they also contain:
- more than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving
  - more than 35% of their calories from fat
  - more than 35% of their calories from sugar
  - more than 200 mg of sodium per packaged portion



Foods in this category may provide a good source of the minerals such as calcium and iron, but they may also provide more fat and sugar than is needed.

Eating too many choices from this category of foods displaces the consumption of high nutrient-rich foods.

<i>Vegetables &amp; Fruit</i>	<i>Grain Products</i>	<i>Milk &amp; Alternatives</i>	<i>Meat &amp; Alternatives</i>
100% Vegetable or fruit juice	White breads, bagels, cereals, tortillas	Flavoured milk	Beef jerky
Canned fruit (in syrup)	White pasta	Frozen yogurt	Breaded poultry, fish, red meat
100% Fruit leather	White rice	Refrigerated pudding cups	Lean wieners, sausages

These foods could be consumed approximately two (2) to three (3) times in a week.

3. "Choose least often" — Low nutrient rich foods that contain limited nutrients and:
- are poor choices of fibre
  - high in sugar, fat and/or salt
  - are not part of the four (4) food groups in Canada's Food Guide

Regular consumption of these foods is not recommended.

Examples are:

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Potato chips, nacho chips, cheese puffs

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Soft drinks, fruit drinks, iced tea, slush drinks, sports drinks

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Chocolate bars, candy, marshmallows

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Ice cream, milkshakes, frozen treats, candy bar flavoured milk

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High sugar cereals

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Cakes, cookies, granola bars with chocolate or icing

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Deep fried foods

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Sticky buns, donuts, pastries

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Cheese spreads, gravy, whipped cream/topping, cream cheese, sour cream

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These foods could be consumed once a week.

Facilities and organizations would do well to choose an identification system that is readily identifiable for children and youth to help them to consistently identify and select healthy food options. A food rating system is expected to act as a simple, inexpensive, and practical tool.

#### *Rating of Mixed Foods*

Scientists have taken a variety of approaches to the rating of mixed packaged foods. A simple example for choosing mixed foods is to compare similar mixed foods and choose the one with the:

- least amount of total fat
- ≤ two (2) grams of saturated fat/serving
- no (0) grams trans fat
- least amount of cholesterol, sodium and sugar
- most fibre, at least two (2) grams per serving, and
- most vitamins and minerals

Reading Nutrition Facts tables will provide you with the information you need to make healthy choices. For more information on reading Nutrition Facts Labels refer to Appendix C — "Implementation Tools".

A detailed Food Rating System has been provided in Appendix A.

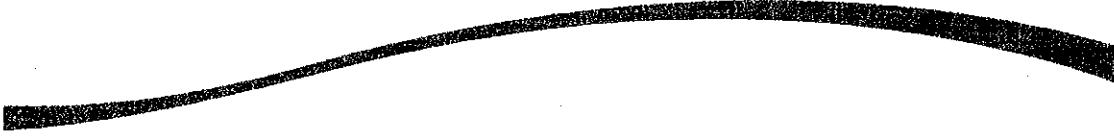


**ii) Enhancing access to safe, nutritious foods involves:**

- Providing safe food handling instruction for all individuals who prepare or serve food.
- Adhering to provincial food safety standards. These optional nutrition guidelines are intended to supplement existing mandatory provincial standards for the provision of food in public facilities.
  - The Alberta Government Public Health Act contains food handling regulations (Alberta Government, 2006).
  - The Alberta Health and Wellness Food Retail and Foodservices Code provides supplemental food handling information (Alberta Health and Wellness, 2003).
- Addressing the potential for allergies by:
  - Having ingredient lists for all foods on hand.
  - Labelling foods that contain common allergens (eg. nuts, fish).
  - Contacting your Regional Health Authority for information and assistance on maintaining an allergy aware environment.
  - Developing policies based on the latest allergy-related recommendations.

**iii) Creating environments that support healthy food choices involves:**

- Working together (parents, children and caregivers) to develop policies that support children and youth in making healthy food choices.
  - Adults must take the lead in defining the food choices that will be available to children at different life stages. Adults should decide what, when and where to offer food, and children should decide whether or not they will eat, and how much to eat.
  - Adults can help establish healthy eating practices by encouraging eating when hungry and stopping when full.
  - Make sure everyone is aware of food policies, including children, parents, and caregivers.
- Being a positive role model. Children adopt many of the eating habits and attitudes about food, health and body weight that they observe in the significant adults in their lives.



- Talking and teaching
  - Eating well for a lifetime requires both knowledge and skills. Talking to children and youth about the benefits of healthy eating, and teaching basic shopping, cooking, and menu planning skills lays the foundation for good health.
  - Make sure healthy foods are available to allow children and youth to practice what they have learned.
  - Coach children and youth how to differentiate internal body hunger from external influence (advertising).
- Recognizing and rewarding positive behaviours and 'champions' of healthy eating. Positive recognition reinforces the value of making healthy food choices.
- Being creative with rewards. Rewards can be non-food items such as extra free time, stickers, games, craft or athletic supplies.
- Using only healthy food items or non-food items for fundraising purposes.
- Creating calm, pleasant atmospheres that make eating enjoyable, and promote the social development of young people.
- Recognizing and celebrating that healthy bodies come in different sizes and shapes.



**Recommendations:**

- Caregivers should provide snacks for children that include nutritious food choices from 1 – 2 food groups.
- 100% of the foods available for regular consumption\* should be foods with moderate to high levels of nutrients.
- Caregivers should have additional snacks available to ensure the nutritional needs of children are met.
- Individual portion sizes should be consistent with Canada's Food Guide.

*\*Special events and food days are excluded from this definition.*

**Taking action:**

- Provide or ask parents to provide healthy simple snacks such as: fresh fruits and vegetables, yogurt, cheese on half a whole grain bagel (see Appendix A for more snack suggestions).





Schools

## B.2 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

Schools can provide a consistent healthy eating message for students by ensuring access to nutritious foods, and by teaching and modeling healthy eating behaviours. Classroom nutrition education should be reinforced by making healthy food options available in school cafeterias, vending machines, stores/canteens, and at special events. Other food-related issues that arise in schools include fundraising with food, food safety, allergies, pricing, role modeling, and the meal-time environment. The following suggestions may be helpful to school administrators, teachers, and other school staff. Parents, other caregivers and/or community groups may also find some of these suggestions useful.

### i) Schools can provide healthy foods

#### What we know:

- Healthy eating supports optimal child health, growth, and intellectual development.
- Portion sizes for many foods are unreasonably large and exceed requirements. Children and youth eat more when they are served larger portion sizes.

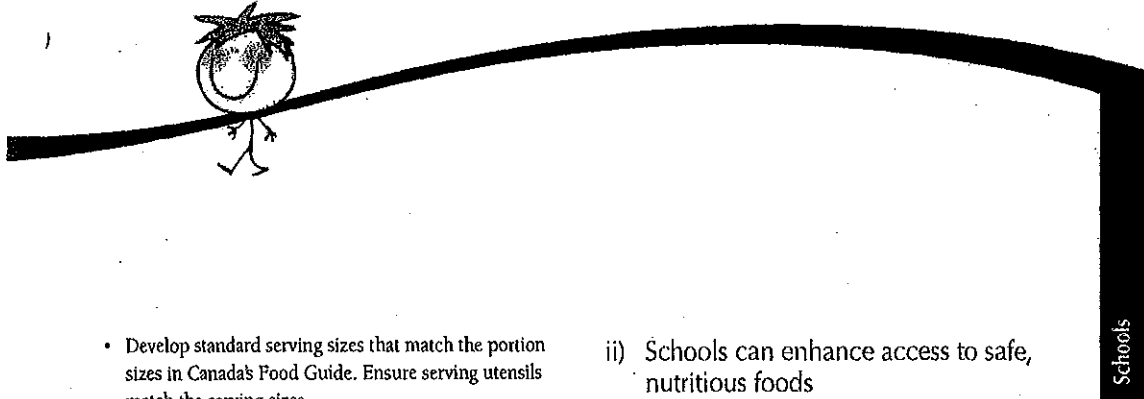
#### Recommendations:

- Use Canada's Food Guide to ensure meals contain foods from at least 3 food groups, and snacks from 1 - 2 food groups.
- Individual portion sizes should be consistent with Canada's Food Guide.
- Stock vending machines with appropriate-sized packages/containers.
- Offer only small portion sizes of less healthy options (where these foods are permitted).

#### Taking action:

- School food policies can be established to determine the types and amounts of foods that can be sold in the school.
- Ensure contract(s) with food and beverage suppliers specify the types and quantities of foods that can be offered in the school.
- Offer healthy food options in meal combinations (eg. salad instead of fries).
- Healthy beverage choices include water, milk (skim, 1%, 2%), fortified soy beverages, and 100% fruit/vegetable juices.





- Develop standard serving sizes that match the portion sizes in Canada's Food Guide. Ensure serving utensils match the serving sizes.
- Offer only small portion sizes of less healthy options if served during special events or food days. Examples include Halloween-sized treats, or small portion sizes of sugary beverages ( $\leq 200$  ml).
- Develop re-usable daily/weekly/monthly menus.
- When planning menus, consider the facilities (eg. space), staff (eg. time, skill level), and equipment (eg. ovens, stoves) required to prepare each item.
- Develop a file of healthy recipes.
- Evaluate how many servings from Canada's Food Guide each recipe provides. This will greatly simplify and speed up the process of developing menus that meet Canada's Food Guide recommendations. Calculate the cost to prepare each recipe. This will help to manage and predict meal costs.

## ii) Schools can enhance access to safe, nutritious foods

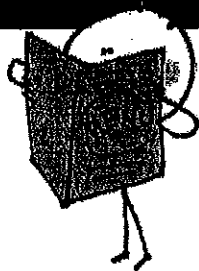
### What we know:

- Price influences student food purchases, and is the most important concern in low-income settings.
- Schools in California found creative ways to effectively and proactively negotiate with vendors in order to comply with legislation that established nutrition standards for competitive foods sold in schools.
- Ottawa Public Health and Ventrex Vending Services demonstrated that selling healthier snacks can be profitable.
- Food availability and accessibility are important predictors of food intake in children and youth.
- Children reduce their consumption of fruit, some vegetables, and milk, and consume more sweetened beverages and high fat vegetables when they enter middle school and gain access to student snack bars.
- Moving healthy foods, such as fruits and vegetables to the start of the cafeteria line makes them more visible and more likely to be chosen.
- The incidence of severe food allergies is increasing.



**Recommendations:**

- Ensure that healthier food choices are competitively priced relative to less nutritious foods.
- If pricing and affordability are a challenge, affordable healthy meal choices should be a priority over affordable healthy snacks.
- All vending machines should contain a 100% of healthy food options.
- Healthy food choices should be available and clearly visible on special food days and at special functions.
- The frequency of special food days should be defined in school policies.
- Students who operate microwaves or other appliances in schools should be monitored appropriately.
- Ensure meal-time supervisors are familiar with guidelines for supporting children with allergies.
- Ensure meal-time supervisors are aware of school policies of how to respond when a child has an adverse food reaction.



**Taking action:**

- Identify vendors, farmers and businesses that can provide Alberta-grown produce or other healthful products at affordable prices.
- Schools can pool their resources and purchase healthy foods in bulk quantities.
- Put healthy food items on sale to encourage students to try them.
- Promote sales of only healthy food items.
- Compensate with a lower profit margin on healthier foods by using an increased profit margin on less healthy foods.
- Develop school policies to guide the types of food offered on special food days, on fieldtrips, and during class parties. Ensure healthy food options are available.
- Develop school policies about junk food brought from home.
- Emphasize and promote cleanliness at meal times.
- Ensure school policies address food allergies and special dietary concerns. The goal of these policies should be to ensure a healthy environment for all children, and to protect children with food allergies from exposure to potential allergens.
- Provide education to ensure students understand the dangers some foods may pose to the health of their classmates.



iii) Schools can create environments that support healthy food choices

**What we know:**

- Students should be given a minimum of 20 minutes to eat.
- If students feel they need to eat quickly, they often choose to skip lunch or purchase foods from vending machines/snack bars.
- Children eat less if they are eager to go out and play.
- Long lines in cafeterias, insufficient time to eat, cramped and unattractive cafeterias, and noise may cause students to purchase more food from vending machines or school stores.
- Increasing the variety and appeal of healthy options may encourage students to purchase them more often.
- Schools offer an ideal setting to promote healthy eating behaviors in children and adolescents.
- School nutrition policies are associated with changes in students' nutritional knowledge and behaviors.
- The food-related behaviours of students change in response to changes in the school food environment.
- Knowledge of healthy eating does not necessarily translate to better food choices.
- The nutrition education students receive in the classroom may not match the messages conveyed in other school settings.

**Recommendations:**

- Provide appropriate time and space to eat.
- Healthy food choices should be more plentiful and more visible than less healthy food choices.
- Place healthier food and beverage choices at eye level.
- Ensure that food choices reinforce healthy eating concepts taught in the classroom.
- Fundraising activities should be consistent with healthy eating concepts taught in the classroom.

**Taking action:**

- Develop school policies to address time for eating, seating availability, socializing opportunities, and additional time for play (either before or after the meal).
- Schedule lunches so that recreation time does not compete with mealtimes.
- Allow students to have water bottles at their desks to encourage them to drink more water throughout the day.
- Highlight healthier food choices with signs, stickers, and/or symbols.
- Display posters and sample plates depicting healthy meals that include foods from a minimum of 3 different food groups.

- Suggestions for fundraising:
  - Use non-food items (eg. cookbooks, day timers, raffle tickets for theme baskets, first aid kits, coupon books) or activities (eg. walk-a-thons and talent shows).
  - Use nutritious food items, in appropriate portion sizes (eg. plain popcorn, oatmeal raisin cookies, fruit smoothies).
- Use non-food items for rewards, e.g. extra gym or recess, “treasure trunk”, free time at the end of class, stickers, school supplies.
- Staff, teachers, volunteers, visitors and parents can be healthy eating role models by packing healthy lunches and snacks.
- Serve healthy foods at staff social activities.

#### iv) Grade level of school

##### What we know:

- Children require different levels of support for decision making at different ages.
  - In the youngest children, good decision making is encouraged by ensuring that all available choices would be good choices.
  - As children mature, it is important that they learn how to identify and make good choices on their own. Schools seek to offer a balance between recognizing the need for young people to learn and practice good decision making, and modeling good lifestyle choices.
  - Note that the majority of foods available to students at all levels should be healthy, however older students are given the opportunity for greater independence in decision making.





#### Recommendations:

- In elementary schools, 100% of the foods available for regular consumption\* should be foods with high to moderate levels of nutrients.
- In junior high schools, 100% of the foods available for regular consumption\* should be foods with high to moderate levels of nutrients.
- In high schools, 100% of the foods available for regular consumption\* should be foods with high to moderate levels of nutrients.
- Multi-level schools should adhere to the most conservative recommendation. Eg. In K - 12 schools, 100% of the foods available for regular consumption\* should be foods with high to moderate levels of nutrients.

*\*Special events and food days are excluded from the definition.*

#### v) Additional Implementation Strategies

##### Who to Involve:

- Schools can create their own Food and Nutrition Policy Teams that include staff, parents and students.
- Allowing students to have input into food and beverage choices may encourage greater acceptance of, and adherence to healthy food policies in schools.
- Make sure food services/stores around the school are aware that school food policies exist. Encourage them to support these policies by offering healthier food items.

##### Promotion:

- Teachers and student councils can work together on marketing campaigns that promote healthy food choices (eg. "Caught you eating healthy").
- Newsletters can be an effective way to communicate healthy eating campaigns.

##### Making Changes:

- Do not try to make too many changes at once, instead, focus on one or two changes at a time.
- Develop a transition plan to allow time for students, parents and other key stakeholders to learn about, and adapt to changes.

## B.3 SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND ENVIRONMENTS

Recreational facilities and environments are highly diverse. Recreational facilities range from small community-based recreational centres to larger venues that attract thousands of spectators/participants. They may be operated on a for-profit or a not-for-profit basis. In many instances, the food services within recreational centres are subcontracted to for-profit food service operators. Most facilities serve a diverse customer base of both adults and children. Food service operators can ensure that their menus contain a balance of food items, including healthier food options at competitive prices.

Recreational environments include, but are not limited to events taking place in the community at large such as festivals, team sports, day camps, or summer camps.

### i) Recreational facilities and environments can provide healthy foods

#### What we know:

- Portion sizes for many foods exceed the serving sizes found in Canada's Food Guide.
- Foods that are not part of Canada's Food Guide are often high in sugar, fat, and/or salt, and low in fibre and other important nutrients. These foods are commonly served in very large portion sizes.
- Children eat more food when they are served larger portion sizes.

#### Recommendations:

- Fruits and vegetables (raw, or prepared with little to no added fat, sugar or salt) should always be available.
- Water should always be available. Milk (skim, 1%, 2%) and 100% fruit/vegetable juices should also be available.
- Individual portion sizes should be consistent with Canada's Food Guide.
- Serving sizes for foods that are not in Canada's Food Guide should not exceed:
  - 30 g for chips and crackers
  - 30 g for high sugar cereal (1/2 to 1 cup)
  - 20 g for beef jerky
  - 30 g for cookies (2) and cereal bars (1)
  - 20 g for chocolate bars and candy (1 mini)
  - 55 g for bakery items, including, but not limited to, pastries, muffins, and doughnuts (approximately the size of a deck of cards)
  - 85 mL for frozen desserts, including, but not limited to, ice cream (frozen on a stick)
  - 355 mL for beverages (12 oz)

**Taking action:**

- Ensure beverages such as water (plain, sparkling, flavored), milk, and 100% fruit/vegetable juices are always available.
- Offer only small portion sizes of less healthy options, such as single serving sizes, or small cans of pop, sport drinks, etc..
- As new food service contracts are signed, ensure food service operators will include healthy food items on their menus.

ii) Recreational facilities and environments can enhance access to safe, nutritious foods

**What we know:**

- Food availability and accessibility are important predictors of food intake in children and youth.
- Ottawa Public Health and Ventrex Vending Services demonstrated that selling healthier snacks can be profitable.

**Recommendations:**

- Ensure that healthier food choices are competitively priced relative to less nutritious foods.
- All vending machines should contain healthy food options.

**Taking action:**

- Include healthy options in all vending machines.
- Install vending machines that offer only healthy food choices, especially in high-traffic locations.
- Place healthy food options at eye level.
- Display healthier foods alongside foods of similar types (eg. whole grain cereal bars next to chocolate bars, milk next to soft drinks).
- Display healthier food choices more prominently than less healthy food choices (eg. milk displayed at eye level, soft drinks adjacent but just below).
- Do not charge a premium for healthier food options. A lower profit margin on healthier foods can be compensated for by an increased profit margin on less healthy foods.
- Put healthy food items on sale to encourage children and youth to try them (e.g. half the price of unhealthy food choice).



iii) Recreational facilities and environments can create environments that support healthy food choices

**What we know:**

- A survey of arena patrons conducted in Ontario revealed that:
  - Over 90% of participants would like to have healthier options available for purchase in the arenas.
  - Convenience, cost and freshness were the 3 most important determinants of food purchases.

**Recommendation:**

- Healthier food options should be fresh, convenient, attractively packaged, and prominently displayed.

**Taking action:**

- Package healthy foods attractively.
- Advertise the nutritional value of healthier food items.
- Establish an identifiable rating system to showcase nutrient-rich foods.
- As perishable items will require frequent monitoring to ensure freshness and safety, set up a tracking system for these foods.

iv) Healthier food options for recreational facilities

**1. Beverages:**

- Milk: skim, 1%, and 2%
- Fortified soy beverages
- Water: plain, sparkling, flavoured
- Juice: 100% real fruit/vegetable juices
- Soft drinks: diet

**2. Vegetables & Fruit:**

- Fresh fruit
- Smoothies with frozen fruit
- Vegetables with or without "light" dips
- Baked veggie wedges
- Tomato salsa as a dip

**3. Grain Products:**

- Whole grain, low fat crackers (with or without cheese)
- Pretzels
- Whole grain cereal bars
- Puffed or baked snack chips
- Whole grain/corn snacks
- Whole grain bagels, muffins, breads, cereals
- Baked whole grain pita bread 'chips' with salsa dip



#### 4. Milk & Alternatives

- Milk: skim, 1%, and 2%
- Fortified soy beverages
- Fresh and frozen yogurt
- Cheese sticks
- Cheese with whole grain, low fat crackers

#### 5. Meat & Alternatives

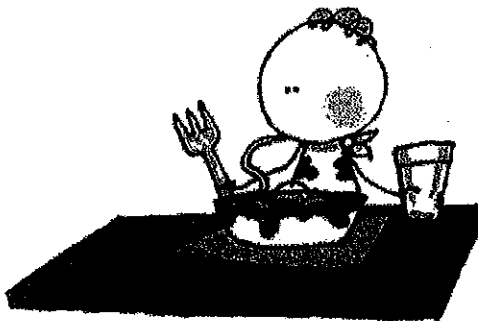
- Trail mix
- Nuts, soy nuts
- Beef jerky
- Ready to eat canned tuna

#### 6. Mixed Meals

- Sushi
- Whole wheat burritos and wraps with lean meats and vegetables
- Rice bowls with lean meats and vegetables
- Sandwiches on whole grain breads

#### v) Recreational environments

- Coaches play a key role in influencing the food choices and eating habits of children and youth. Coaches should therefore have a practical, working knowledge of general and sports-specific nutrition.
  - Coaches are encouraged to take advantage of existing programs that provide nutrition instruction, such as those offered by the Sport Medicine Council of Alberta and/or the National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP).
  - The general and school nutrition guidelines contained in this document are very relevant for coaches. Healthy snack suggestions can also be found in Appendix A.
- Day camps and summer camps should follow the guidelines provided for childcare centres and/or schools, depending upon the age of the campers. Caregivers should be trained to ensure they are able to provide appropriate healthy food choices for children and youth and to model healthy eating behaviours.





east central health

**Food Vending Criteria Guidelines by Food Category**  
**Preface for these guidelines**  
**Draft January 2008**

These guidelines were developed by East Central Health's Healthy Weights Initiative Health Promotion Facilitators to assist recreation centers, facilities, and schools to move towards the availability of healthier vending options. It is recognized that healthy vending is a new venture opportunity in Alberta. This document represents a starting point for facilities to begin to provide healthier options and is not meant to be an ending point. In addition, this document is not meant to replace the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth, which are being created by Alberta Health and Wellness, but are meant to be used until this document is released and provides further direction.

This listing is based on products that are currently available in the Alberta marketplace and will be revised quarterly as more healthy vending products become available. It is a hope that this document will be able to further influence the nutritional quality found in vending machines.

This listing does not constitute endorsement of any of the products listed, and is only meant to provide some guidance as to products which are currently available in Alberta and how to determine some nutrition criteria.

The products are categorized according to the food groups in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. As a result, foods that are not found on the food guide are placed

in a miscellaneous category. Just of note, beverages such as water is included in this listing, but certainly would be offered in a healthy vending machine.

Some of the criteria used to review the products were as follows:

**Vegetable and Fruit-** focused on 100% fruit products. Vegetable products focused on 100% vegetables and limited in added sodium.

**Grain Products-** lower in fat, sodium, and sugar and to include whole grains

**Milk and Alternatives** – lower in fat. At this point sodium was not considered due to the nutritional benefits of cheese and the level of sodium found in these products.

**Meat and Alternatives** – lower in fat, and sodium

This document was adapted from the following documents:

Dietitians of Canada Criteria and Examples of Foods for Ontario Elementary School Vending Machines

Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth – Draft for Discussion, June 2007

Standards for the Sale and Distribution of Food and Beverages in Red Deer Public Schools, November 2007

Your Guide to Grocery Shopping document from Extenso-Centre de Reference sur la nutrition humaine [www.extenso.org](http://www.extenso.org)

## Food Vending Criteria by Food Category

### Vegetable and Fruits

#### **Dried/Dehydrated Fruit Chips**

Nutrition Category	Nutrition Criteria that must be followed per service to be considered Choose Most Based on 2 fruit servings of 30 gm
Portion Size	< 30 gm
Calories	About 100 calories
Sodium	Less than 200 mg
Total Fat	<1 gm
Saturated Fat	0 gm
Trans Fat	Less than 0.2 grams or free of trans fats
Sugar	< 30 g
Fibre	>1 gram
Protein	Not currently listed as a requirement
Portion Size	2 servings of fruit is 30 gm. The concern with this product is portion size.

#### **Sweet Potato chips**

Nutrition Category	Nutrition Criteria that must be followed per service to be considered Choose sometimes
Portion size	50 gm,
Calories	250 cals
Sodium	20 mg Na
Total Fat	12 gm fat
Saturated Fat	
Trans Fat	
Sugar	
Fibre	1.75 gm fiber
Protein	1.75 gm protein

#### **Other suggested vegetable and fruit products:**

100% Dried fruit (raisins, craisins, mango, apricot, etc.)

100% Dried Fruit Leather

100% fruit and/or vegetable bars

Fresh fruit

Pre-packaged vegetables with or without dip

Pre-packaged fruit with or without dip

Fruits gummies where fruit puree is the first ingredient

Frozen fruit bars

Baked Vegetable and potato chips if lightly seasoned

Smoothies with frozen fruit

Salsa

Draft Nutrition Guidelines by Food Category

Developed by Pamela Boyson

and Caroline McAuley

## Grain Products

### Popcorn/ pretzels

Nutrition Category	Nutrition Criteria that must be followed per service to be considered
Portion Size	
Calories	< 300 cal per serving
Sodium	Choose most < 200 mg Choose sometimes 200-400 mg
Total Fat	5-10 gm
Saturated Fat	<6 gm
Trans Fat	Less than 0.2 grams or trans fat free
Sugar	Less than 4 grams (16 grams)
Fibre	>2 grams
Protein	> 2 gm
Portion Size	

### Chewy Bars

Nutrition Category	Nutrition Criteria that must be followed per service to be considered Choose sometimes
Portion Size	30-38 g
Calories	Less than 300 calories
Sodium	Less than 450 mg
Total Fat	Less than 7 g <i>Note: *If a bar has nuts as one of the key ingredients then it will be higher in fat and in protein.</i>
Saturated Fat	<3
Trans Fat	Less than 0.2 grams or free of trans fats
Sugar	<12 grams. <i>Note: *May have 12-16 grams of sugar IF fruit is the first or second ingredient.</i>
Fibre	At least 2 grams
Protein	At least 2 grams

### Other suggested grain products:

Muffins: no more than 55g, trans fat free

Baked Pita chips-

Crackers: 20 g serving, low fat and trans fat free, preferably made from whole grains

Snack breads (sweet or savory): 55 g, trans fat free

Cookies: 30g, trans fat free

Puffed or baked snack chips

Whole grain/corn chips (low fat, trans fat free)

Bagel – 45 grams

Cereal- 30 gm cereal < 5gm sugar if not added fruit, up to 12 gm sugar with added fruit, preferably whole grain

## Milk and Alternatives

Cheese strings, cheese sticks- 100% real cheese  
Yogurt - 2% MF or lower  
Yogurt tubes - 2% MF or lower  
Cheese with whole grain, low fat crackers

## Meat and Alternatives

Nuts/ Trail Mix- less than 50 gm servings (BBQ peanuts, almonds, trail mixes)  
Beef Jerky- 20 gm serving  
Peanut butter and crackers handisnacks

## Beverages

Water  
100% Vegetable and Fruit Juices – less than 500 mg sodium, no added sugars  
Milk and flavored milk (2% MF or less) \* no milkshake or chocolate bar type drinks  
Flavoured water (artificially sweetened)  
Sparkling waters (flavored and unflavored)  
Diet soft drinks

\*Energy drinks are not recommended for children. Energy drinks contain high amounts of caffeine and medicinal ingredients and the safety of these ingredients is not well known (Dietitians of Canada, 2005)

\*Having milk and flavored milks for sale is important due to the research that shows milk is an excellent sport recovery beverage.

## Miscellaneous

### **Baked Potato Chips**

<b>Nutrition Category</b>	<b>Nutrition Criteria that must be followed per service to be considered Choose sometimes</b>
Portion Size	Less than 55 grams
Calories	Less than 200 calories
Sodium	Less than 450 mg
Total Fat	Less than 7 g
Saturated Fat	
Trans Fat	Less than 0.2 grams or free of trans fats
Sugar	Less than 3 g
Fibre	greater than 1 gram
Protein	No requirement

## Potato Chips

Nutrition Category	Nutrition Criteria that must be followed per service to be considered Choose sometimes
Portion Size	Less than 55 grams
Calories	Less than 300 calories
Sodium	Less than 450 mg
Total Fat	12 g or less
Saturated Fat	
Trans Fat	Less than 0.2 grams or free of trans fats
Sugar	Less than 3 g
Fibre	greater than 1 gram
Protein	No requirement

### Other suggested miscellaneous products:

Sugar free candies

Cough Lozenges

100 calorie packaged products (i.e. chocolate bars, cookies, snack mixes)