Canteen, Nutrition and Healthy Eating Policy

Frequently Asked Questions

Q Why are full-fat dairy products in the AMBER SELECT CAREFULLY category and not the GREEN ALWAYS ON THE MENU category?
A Full-fat dairy products are a rich source of protein, calcium, vitamin A and some B vitamins. However, they are relatively high in saturated fat. The Australian Dietary Guidelines (NHMRC 2013a) recommends children 2 years of age and older choose reduced-fat varieties of dairy foods where possible. Reduced-fat dairy products provide similar quantities of calcium, protein and vitamins to the full-fat versions but they contribute far less saturated fat. Therefore, reduced-fat dairy products should be promoted as a healthier alternative to full-fat dairy products.

Q Why is fruit juice categorised as AMBER SELECT CAREFULLY and not GREEN ALWAYS ON THE MENU?
A Fruit juice contains some valuable nutrients. However, it is much lower in dietary fibre than fresh fruit. Drinking fruit juice in large amounts can contribute to excess energy being consumed. The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (NHMRC 2013b) recommends choosing fruit more often than juice because it is higher in fibre. Therefore, fresh, canned (in natural juice) and frozen whole fruit should be promoted as a healthier alternative to juice.

Q Why is dried fruit categorised as AMBER SELECT CAREFULLY and not GREEN ALWAYS ON THE MENU?
A Dried fruit is a good source of carbohydrates and dietary fibre and adds variety to the diet. However, if eaten in large amounts dried fruit can easily contribute to excess energy being consumed. The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (NHMRC 2013b) recommends that no more than one serve of dried fruit be eaten each day. Fresh, canned (in natural juice) and frozen whole fruit should be promoted as a healthier alternative to dried fruit.

Dried fruit sticks to the teeth and promotes tooth decay. The Australian Dental Association recommends dried fruit be eaten as part of a meal, not as a between-meal snack.

Q Is it okay to use frozen or canned fruit and vegetables?
A Choose in-season, locally grown produce, for the best flavour and value for money. If this isn't possible, frozen or canned vegetables and fruit can be a convenient alternative.

Choose canned or frozen vegetables without added salt and added flavourings. Select fruit canned in natural juice.

www.education.nt.gov.au
Q Can we serve homemade fruit jelly cups?
A Adding fruit to jelly that is made from a packet could be seen as GREENing the product, however, packet jelly is a RED food so cannot be served. If the jelly is homemade using at least 99% fruit juice that has no added sugar and the serve size is less than 200mL, then a fruit jelly cup will meet the criteria for AMBER.

Q Can we serve carbonated juice?
A Fruit and vegetable juices are categorised as AMBER SELECT CAREFULLY as long as they are: at least 99% fruit/vegetable juice (including sparkling varieties), have no added sugar and are a maximum 250mL serve size.

Q Why is white bread categorised as GREEN ALWAYS ON THE MENU?
A Bread is a good source of carbohydrate, protein, fibre and many vitamins and minerals. Different types of bread add variety to the diet. The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating (NHMRC 2013b) recognises all breads as valuable sources of nutrients, with wholemeal or wholegrain varieties being better choices within the bread category. The National Healthy School Canteen (NHSC) Guidelines are consistent with this message by stating that all breads be in the GREEN ALWAYS ON THE MENU category and suggesting higher fibre choices where possible.

Q Can canteen vouchers be used as a reward, even though the policy states that ‘Food or drinks are not to be used as a classroom reward’?
A It is not uncommon for children to be given food as a reward for doing something well. This practice can have negative consequences including: putting high energy foods on a pedestal, undermining health promotion messages and nutrition education given at school, contributing to poor health such as dental caries and obesity (as rewarded foods are often high in fat and sugar), and teaching children to eat when they are not hungry.

Research shows that when children eat nutritious foods, they perform better at school and learn more effectively (Kleinman et al 2002). Praise and positive reinforcement are the preferred methods for encouraging students to keep up their good work; however a canteen voucher may be used as a reward as this will allow students to access healthy food choices at appropriate times for eating.

References
National Health and Medical Research Council (2013a) Australian Dietary Guidelines. Canberra: National Health and Medical Research Council.