

Resources for Canteens

The *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy 2015* supports school canteens to implement the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines 2013* and provides a whole school framework for supporting students' health and wellbeing.

What hasn't changed for school canteens?

ACT Public School canteens are already implementing the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines (NHSCG)*. These Guidelines are based on a traffic light system to assess foods and drinks that are the best choice (**GREEN**), to be selected carefully (**AMBER**), and not at all (**RED**).

Implementing the NHSCG remains the main priority for ACT public school canteens.



What is different for school canteens?

The new *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy 2015* replaces the *ACT School Canteens Policy 2012* and the *ACT School Canteens Policy Implementation Procedures*. For private canteen operators the new policy introduces the use of the standard *ACT Licence Agreement 2012* and the *ACT Disclosure Statement Leases (Commercial and Retail) 2001*. For Parents and Citizens (P&C) canteen operators there is a single P&C Operated Canteens Canteen Service Deed.

These legal documents replace the informal agreements covered in detail in the *ACT School Canteens Policy Implementation Procedures* and streamline the process for schools. The new Policy requirement for regular menu reviews will be built into the standard Licence Agreement. This provision is designed to assist school canteens to implement the NHSCG.

For more detail about the new contractual arrangements see the factsheet *Canteen Contracts*.

The main change arising from the *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy 2015* is to extend the application of the NHSCG to the broader school environment.

Support for school canteens

Providing a range of healthy options requires careful planning, creative and practical ideas, good marketing and promotion, and strong networking and partnerships. The following resources and services work together to provide training and support for ACT school canteens to implement the NHSCG.

National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines 2013

A range of resources to support canteens to implement the NHSCG, including a Quick Reference Guide, posters and calculators, are available at: www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-nutrition-canteens

User Guide to the National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines

The User Guide is specifically for the ACT and will be a step by step guide to understand and apply the NHSCG. This resource is being developed by ACT Health in consultation with school canteens will be available in term 2, 2015. For updated information go to www.health.act.gov.au/freshtastes

Fresh Tastes: healthy food at school

Fresh Tastes is a free, optional service available to any school in the ACT to help embed a culture of healthy food and drinks. Schools can access resources, training, advice and assistance to implement the *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy 2015* and the NHSCG in their school canteen. ACT schools are invited to get involved by contacting *Fresh Tastes*. Email freshtastes@act.gov.au or visit www.health.act.gov.au/freshtastes

ACT Nutrition Advisory Service

Schools will be able to access support, advice, education, training and workshops to assist them to implement the NHSCG. The service will also undertake nutritional analysis of food and drinks, menu reviews and audits of food and drinks supplied in food outlets, canteens and vending machines. This service will be available from 2015 to 2019.

Canteen Fresh ACT (Nutrition Australia ACT)

Canteen Fresh ACT is a *Fresh Tastes* service provided by Nutrition Australia ACT for all ACT school canteens to support practical implementation of the NHSCG. *Canteen Fresh ACT* support includes small group training for canteen managers, telephone and email advice, and newsletters. Phone (02) 6162 2583, email act@nutritionaustralia.org or visit www.nutritionaustralia.org/act

ACT Council of Parent and Citizens Associations

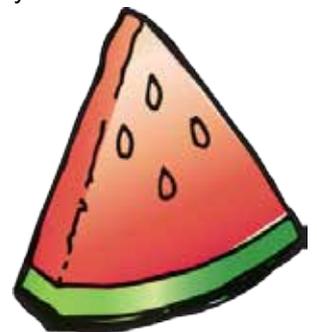
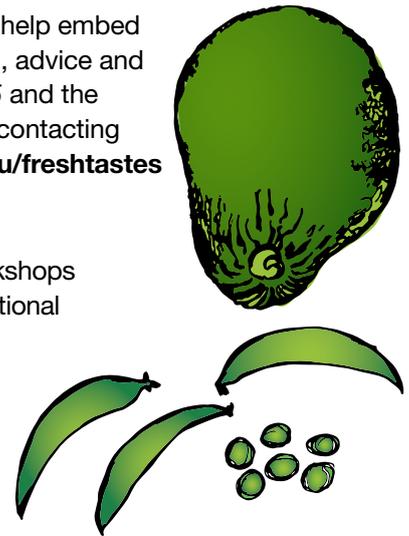
The ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations have received funding from the ACT Government to deliver activities that support the sustainability of ACT public school canteens, improve business practices and increase healthy options in the school community. Phone (02) 6241 5759.

Healthy Kids Association

All school canteens can access recipes and a range of resources on running a canteen from the Healthy Kids Association website. School canteens can also access excellent resources to help canteens and schools with marketing healthy foods. Healthy Kids Association members can access menu reviews, telephone advice, business advice and a Healthy Kids magazine. For more information, visit www.healthy-kids.com.au

Find out what your customers want

- Consider face to face surveys, questionnaires, focus groups and suggestion boxes to collect information about your customers' healthy food preferences and ideas.
- Ask basic questions about student and parent or carer attitudes and beliefs, what they want from a canteen, what they think of current items, what they would like on the menu and what they expect to be charged.
- Survey people to describe their favourite healthy foods. What words do they use to talk about food? These may be good words to capture for your marketing. Students are more likely to use their own language if they are interviewed or in a focus group led by another student.
- Include taste testing of menu items in the research.



Promoting healthy food and drinks

Make them look good

Have healthy choices visible and eye catching such as:

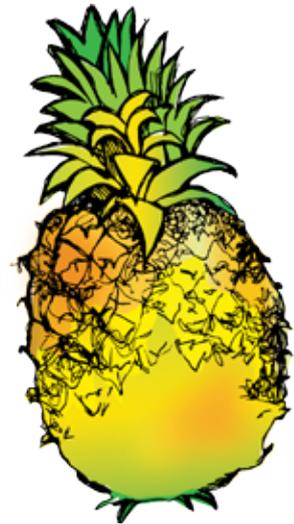
- Have a bowl of fresh fruit at the front counter where children can see it.
- Wrap sandwiches in clear plastic to sell at the counter.

Make sure children can see them

- Display wrapped healthy foods at children's eye level.
- Have a step or stool in front of the counter so that the shortest children can also see what's for sale.

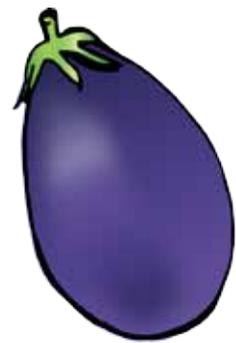
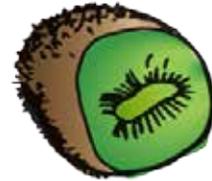
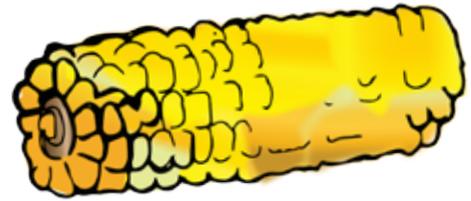
Promote healthy choices

- Invite members of the school community to suggest new healthy menu items. Conduct a competition to collect ideas to add to the lunch, recess or breakfast menu.
- When a new food is offered by the canteen, conduct a competition to name the new food. Exciting, enticing and creative names for new food can help to increase their appeal and popularity.
- When introducing a new item, let students and the whole school community know by placing an ad in the school newsletter, making an announcement in the school assembly, or publicising it over the school PA system.
- Invite students to promote foods offered by the canteen. They could make posters, write articles for the school newsletter or make up songs, slogans or jingles. A prize could be offered for the most effective method of promotion.
- Choose a food of the week to promote. For example, promote fruit and vegies that are in season and offer them in a variety of ways. Pumpkin, for example could be offered as pumpkin soup, pumpkin pie and oven baked crunchy chips. Arrange for the canteen to award faction or house points for students who order this food.
- Offer free samples for the first couple of weeks or start by selling them at an 'opening' special price.
- Have special days like 'Taco Tuesday'.
- Have a big blackboard outside the canteen that lists new foods or the daily specials.
- Draw on your market research and create fun names for food and drinks that appeal, for example:
 - Monster Munchies
 - Barunga Burgers
 - Fruit Wobbles
 - 'The Works' salad
 - Wipeout
- Don't be afraid to try new items
- Vary your menu with the seasons and keep it interesting



Attract and retain school canteen volunteers

- Call for volunteers in the school newsletter or make an announcement at events where parents are present. Let them know the advantages of volunteering.
- Offer professional development or training opportunities, such as attending a canteen expo.
- Get to know your volunteers.
- Provide name badges.
- Make sure volunteers get a relaxing, decent break when they need it.
- Offer a 'buddy system' so volunteers can work in pairs which is more socially rewarding and reassuring for new volunteers.
- Ensure the canteen is a happy, pleasant place to work.
- Offer volunteers and/or their children a complimentary healthy lunch.
- Create a calendar of volunteers' birthdays and celebrate their birthday by sending a card.
- Thank volunteers on a regular basis so that they feel appreciated.
- Acknowledge volunteer assistance in the school newsletter and at school annual events and presentations.
- Place photos of the volunteers up in the canteen with their names so that students get to know them (if they wish).
- Provide formal acknowledgement of their assistance with a certificate of appreciation at the end of the year.
- Budget for volunteer thank you gifts.
- Give personalised letters or small gifts, like flowers or a card to say thank you.



Pricing

- Mark up the price of '**AMBER**' items as a way of subsidising a price reduction on '**GREEN**' menu items to make them more attractive to purchase.
- Try discount coupons, loyalty/rewards cards, introductory sales and meal deals.

Ideas for school lunch, snacks and recess

Regular eating times such as breakfast, morning snack, lunch, after school snack and dinner are important during childhood to help meet a child's energy and nutrient needs for growth and development. In fact, for children, eating little and often can be the best way to meet nutritional needs.

All foods – snacks and drinks, as well as meals – consumed throughout the day should make a positive contribution to the quality of a child's diet. Too often the snack foods on offer are high in fat, salt or sugar, and fruit and vegetable based snacks are unavailable or unappealing.

However, there are many alternatives and children can help to choose healthy, nutritious and attractive snacks for between meals. Smaller servings of foods and drinks suitable for lunches can also be used as snacks. Here are some additional quick and easy snack ideas.

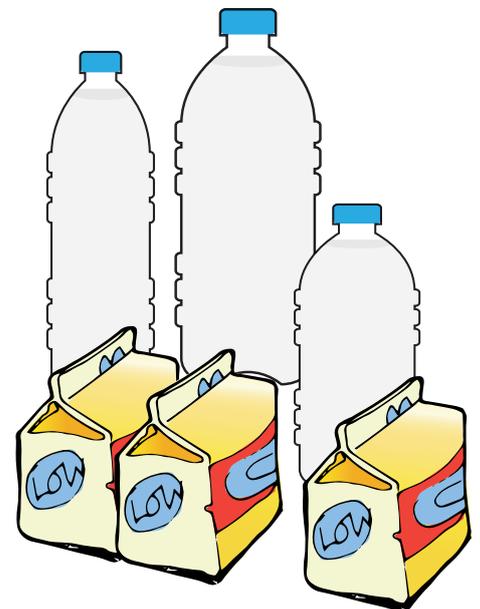
COLD SNACKS

- fresh fruit (diced) or frozen fruit pieces, fruit or vegetable kebabs
- vegetable sticks (carrot, celery, zucchini) with hummus dip
- high fibre cereals that are low in sugar in bowls ready for milk to be added, or eaten as snack packs
- mini wraps – serve ½ Lebanese wraps filled with sandwich fillings
- garden salads mixed with chicken, egg, cheese or tuna
- coleslaws, tabouli, potato or Greek salads (with low fat dressings)
- reduced fat cheese and plain crackers (with no added salt)
- plain popcorn
- small reduced fat plain or fruit yoghurt/frozen yoghurt
- rice cakes/corn cakes/crispbread with hummus, vegemite, mashed banana or reduced fat cheese
- pita crisps with vegetable based dips
- fruit bun (un-iced)
- pikelets
- trail mix nibbles
- mini fruit/vegetable muffins



HOT SNACKS

- raisin toast or English muffins spread lightly with polyunsaturated margarine
- soup with a bread roll (preferably wholegrain)
- 1/2 jaffle (with low fat cheese and tomato or baked beans)
- corn cob
- 1/2 boiled potato topped with grated reduced fat cheese
- home made garlic bread using a thin scrape of polyunsaturated margarine and crushed garlic
- small serves of pasta or rice salad
- mini pizzas using English muffins as the base
- reduced fat cheese melt
- reduced fat custard (or rice custard) served plain or with fruit
- crumpets (wholemeal) with low fat cream cheese, a scrape of polyunsaturated margarine with vegemite or baked beans



DRINKS

- plain water
- reduced fat milk

References and Resources

National Healthy School Canteens: Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens, updated 2013 www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-nutrition-canteens

The ACT Government Health Policy: Healthy Food and Drink Choices 2013, ACT Government, Acknowledging - WA Department of Education Factsheets, *Healthy Food and Drink Choices in Schools*. www.det.wa.edu.au