

Nutrition Services, Population and Public Health

A Guide to Offering Healthy Food and Drinks in Schools

Use this chart to help you find food and drinks based on the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (ANGCY)*. This resource is for food purchasing and food provision only and is not intended to be used as guidance for individual students or their families.

Food Item	Offer Most Often	Offer Sometimes	Offer Least Often
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen, or canned • Prepared with healthy cooking methods (grilled, steamed, baked, roasted, stir-fried, sautéed, or poached) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked, commercial potato or sweet potato fries, wedges, or hash browns • 100% dried or baked vegetable snacks with added salt • With added fat or sauces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep-fried potato or sweet potato fries, wedges, or hash browns • Deep-fried vegetables • Pickled vegetables
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen, dried, or pureed (sauces) with no added sugar • Canned in water or juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen, dried, or pureed sauces with added sugar • Canned in syrup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frozen desserts or snacks made with fruit juice (sorbet, gummies, or gelatin desserts) • Dried fruit with a chocolate or yogurt coating
Grains	<p>Products with whole grains as the first ingredient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread products, crackers, pasta, and noodles • Cereal with ≤10 grams of sugar per $\frac{3}{4}$–1 cup (175–250 mL) serving • Pancake, waffle, muffin or granola bar, or cookie with ≤10 g of sugar in a 35 g serving • Cooked whole grains (quinoa, brown or wild rice, cornmeal, oats, bulgur, couscous, or barley) 	<p>Products with non-whole grains as the first ingredient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread products, baked crackers, pasta, and noodles • Cereal with 11–16 g of sugar per $\frac{3}{4}$–1 cup (175–250 mL) serving • Pancake, waffle, muffin granola bar, or cookie with 11–16 g of sugar in a 35 g serving • Non-whole grains such as white rice or rice noodles, or white pasta made with durum wheat • semolina 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep fried bread products, or crackers • Pasta, rice, or rice noodle products that have been seasoned with salt • Cereal with >16 g sugar per $\frac{3}{4}$–1 cup (175–250 mL) serving • Pancake, waffle, cookie, muffin, or granola bar with >16 g of sugar in a 35 g serving • Instant noodles
Nuts, Seeds, Beans, and Lentils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned or dried beans, peas, and lentils • Tofu, soybeans, and edamame with no added salt • Nuts and seeds with no added fat, salt, or sugar • Nut and seed butters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nuts and seeds with added salt, fat, or sugar • Meat alternatives with added salt or fat (burger, hot dog, ground meat, or deli meat) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned beans with added fat or sugar (baked beans) • Flavoured nut spreads with added sugar (chocolate, hazelnut, caramel, or other flavours) • Nuts and seeds roasted or deep-fried in oil • Dessert tofu
<p>• Refried beans, hummus, and bean-based dips. Read labels when purchasing and select lower sodium options as possible. If preparing on site, use recipes with little or no sodium.</p>			
Dairy and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk, kefir, cottage cheese or yogurt with no added sugar • Cheese and cheese strings with ≤20% M.F. • Fortified cheese alternative • Fortified soy, pea, or chickpea beverage with no added sugar • Fortified plant-based yogurt with no added sugar (soy, almond, or coconut) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milk, kefir, cottage cheese or yogurt with added sugar • Cheese and cheese strings with >20% M.F. • Fortified soy, pea, or chickpea beverage with added sugar • Fortified plant-based yogurt with added sugar (soy, almond, or coconut) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream cheese • Processed cheese spreads • Processed cheese slices

Food Item	Offer Most Often	Offer Sometimes	Offer Least Often
Meat, Poultry, Fish, and Eggs	Prepared with healthy cooking methods (grilled, steamed, baked, roasted, stir-fried, or poached) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean ground meats Lean meats or wild game Eggs Fresh or frozen fish and seafood without added salt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ham, turkey breast, roast beef, or chicken breast deli slices Processed meat products (chicken strips, fish sticks, chicken nuggets, meat or fish burgers, or meatballs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pepperoni, salami, bologna, or pastrami deli slices Bacon, hot dogs, or sausages Deep-fried products (chicken strips or nuggets, popcorn shrimp, or fish sticks) Pickled eggs or fish Dried meat jerky
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canned fish – Read labels when purchasing and select lower sodium options as possible. 		
Meals and Combination Dishes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made only with <i>Offer Most Often</i> foods Made with healthy cooking methods (grilled, steamed, baked, roasted, stir-fried, or poached) ≤700 mg sodium per meal or dish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made with any <i>Offer Sometimes</i> foods and no <i>Offer Least Often</i> foods 701–900 mg sodium per meal or dish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made with any <i>Offer Least Often</i> foods Deep-fried foods >900 mg sodium per meal or dish
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plain, flavoured, or carbonated water with no added sugar Milk or kefir with no added sugar Smoothie made with no added sugar or juice Fortified plant-based beverages with no added sugar (soy, pea, oat, chickpea, almond, hemp, coconut, rice, or cashew) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Milk or Kefir with added sugar Yogurt drink with added sugar Smoothie made with juice but no other added sugar Fortified plant-based beverages with added sugar (pea, oat, chickpea, almond, hemp, coconut, rice, or cashew) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit juice Drinks with sugar substitutes Drinks with added sugar <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pop, iced tea, and slushes sports drinks hot chocolate energy drinks vitamin water smoothies Drinks with caffeine
Sweets and Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popcorn with ≤3 g fat per 2 cups (500 mL) Trail mix with no added salt, sugar, candy, or chocolate Rice cakes made with brown rice and no added sugar Nut, seed, fruit, or protein bars with no added sugar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popcorn with >3g and ≤10 g fat per 2 cups (500 mL) Trail mix with added salt or sugar Rice cakes made with white rice or added sugar Baked snacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> potato, bean, pea, corn, soy, vegetable, or rice chips non-whole grain crackers cheese or vegetable puffs Nut, fruit, or protein bars with added sugar Roasted seaweed snacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Popcorn with >16 g sugar or >10 g fat per 2 cups (500 mL) Trail mix with added candy or chocolate Deep-fried snacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> potato, bean, pea, corn or soy, or rice chips cheese or vegetable puffs Pudding Popsicles®, ice cream, frozen yogurt, and frozen desserts Pretzels Candy and marshmallows Chocolate Doughnuts, cakes, pies, and pastries

*Some variations from ANGCY may be indicated.