

School Menu Checklist

This menu checklist provides general guidance to schools around healthy food choices, when reviewing menus for school meals and snacks. It is based on Canada's Food Guide and does not include product or recipe analysis; therefore alignment with the Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (ANGCY) is by estimate only. To review the school menu according to the ANGCY, please refer to [Healthy Eating for Children and Youth in Schools](#). Also, this menu checklist does not compare the menu to the overall nutrition needs of a student because the school is providing only a portion of the student's nutritional intake for the day.

Instructions for use: Use this checklist to determine whether the overall menu and specific menu items meet recommendations from the CFG and the ANGCY. Any sections marked as *Sometimes* or *Not at All* are potential areas for improvement. Use the comments box to note suggested menu revisions or to add general comments. Schools may also wish to collect and use feedback from students, parents, and staff to improve menu satisfaction.

Recommendations	Our school meets the recommendation:			
	Usually	Some -times	Not at all	Comments
Overall Menu:				
Include a variety of foods from each of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide (CFG).				
Offer foods which are fresh and/or minimally processed; refer to the ANGCY for nutrient criteria. This includes foods that have no or minimal amounts of added sugar, salt, fats. You may wish to visit the Healthy Food Checker to analyze the packaged foods provided.				
Include food that is handled properly and safely. Contact your local Public Health Inspector/Environment Health Officer (AHS Environmental Public Health) about the type of Food Handling Permit needed for your school.				
Provide a variety of options for meals and snacks where possible. Consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food colours, textures, flavours, shapes, temperatures (e.g. cold salad, hot sandwich) Seasonal availability and cultural variations 				
Offer options for religious or dietary restrictions where applicable (e.g. vegetarian options available).				
Use cooking methods such as roasting and baking that require little or no added fat. Avoid deep-fried or pan fried foods.				
Avoid foods that are high in saturated and trans fats, sugar and salt (e.g. cookies, chips, ice cream).				
Avoid the use of sugar sweetened beverages and sugar substitutes (e.g. pop, iced tea, fruit punch).				

Recommendations	Our school meets the recommendation:			
	Usually	Some -times	Not at all	Comments
Meals and snacks:				
Meals – Aim to include foods from each of the four food groups from CFG.				
Snacks – Aim to include two food groups from CFG; if offering one food group choose a Vegetable or Fruit.				
Food Groups and Beverages:	Usually	Some -times	Not at All	Comments
Vegetables & Fruit – use a variety of fresh, frozen and canned vegetables and fruit. Offer vegetables or fruit instead of juice. If offering juice, limit to ½ cup (125mL) per day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim for 1 serving from CFG* 				
Grain products – make at least half of the grain products whole grain such as whole wheat bread, buns, bagels, tortillas, pita bread, noodles and rice. Starchy vegetables such as potatoes, yams, or corn can be offered instead of a grain product at meals. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim for 1 serving from CFG* 				
Milk & Alternatives – offer unflavored 2%, 1%, or skim milk and unsweetened or plain fortified soy beverage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim for ½ - 1 serving from CFG* 				
Meat & Alternatives – include a variety of lean meats, poultry, fish and meat alternatives such as eggs, beans, lentils, or tofu. Avoid processed meats (eg sausages, hot dogs). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim for around ½ - 1 serving from CFG* 				
Avoid sticky, sweet food such as dried fruit, which can stick to the teeth and cause cavities.				
Offer water along with other beverages. Encourage water throughout the day.				
* Servings for meals. Serving sizes at snacks may be smaller. If required, additional servings at meals and snacks can be provided. Please refer to ANGCY and CFG for serving size recommendations and amounts.				

For more information:

[Canada's Food Guide](#)

[Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth](#)

[Healthy Eating Starts Here](#)

[Healthy Eating Resources](#)

[Inspiring Healthy Eating](#)

For questions, contact: PublicHealthNutrition@ahs.ca