



Well nourished  
students learn  
better, behave  
better and  
feel better.

# Healthier Foods

## How To Make Fast-Food Healthier For Students

The **Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools** (2007, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Health) have been created to support decisions for providing food and beverage choices sold in BC schools.

The intent of the Guidelines is to model healthier choices to students. It's expected that at least 50% of the meal and snack choices offered are Choose Most (CM) items. The remainder can be Choose Sometimes (CS) items. For example:

- at least 50% of Cafeteria options each day are CM
- at least 50% of PAC lunch options offered for sale over a one-month period are CM, aiming for CM entrees as much as possible
- at least 50% of options offered for sale at each fundraising event are CM

To assist you in this task:

1. Check the **Brand Name Food List** website to determine the ranking of packaged and franchised foods. If the products are not listed on the website, ask your suppliers to submit them to the Brand Name Food List for ranking or to provide you with the nutrition facts from the package label.
2. If an item does not have Nutrition Facts information (eg. from a local caterer): Use the following **"Healthier" checklists** to plan meals and to assess meal items from businesses or caterers that may not have nutrition information available for their products. Choose fresh wholesome ingredients over packaged processed ingredients whenever possible.

### Healthier 'Choose Most' Entrees

- ✓ contain at least 1/3 of a vegetable or fruit serving
- ✓ include a whole grain
- ✓ include a CM or CS meat and alternatives OR a CM or CS Milk food/beverage
- ✓ have 0-2 condiment portions

### Healthier 'Choose Sometimes' Entrees

- ✓ are missing any one or two of the Choose Most **checklist** criteria above
- ✓ do not contain any items that meet the Choose Least or Not Recommended criteria in the **Guidelines'**
- ✓ have 0-2 condiment portions

### HEALTHIER PIZZA

Choose at least 3 of the following:

- ✓ whole grain crust
- ✓ half the amount of a CM or CS cheese or a mix of CM or CS cheeses
- ✓ tomato sauce instead of barbecue or white sauce
- ✓ two or more veggie or fruit toppings. Try pineapple, tomato, onion, mushrooms, bell peppers, spinach, broccoli, cauliflower – be a vegetable explorer!
- ✓ at least 20 g of a CM or CS meat and alternatives per slice

### HEALTHIER HOT DOGS & HAMBURGERS

Choose at least 3 of the following:

- ✓ whole grain bun (at least 2 g of fibre)
- ✓ CM or CS wiener or burger (consider vegetarian substitutes some of the time)
- ✓ CM or CS cheese



Emphasize whole grains, vegetables, fruit, milk and alternatives and unprocessed meat or alternatives.

- ✓ fresh or cooked (not pickled) veggies as toppings or served with the item as sold. Try onions, tomato, bell peppers.
- ✓ 0–2 condiment portions

**HEALTHIER SANDWICHES**

Choose at least 4 of the following:

- ✓ whole grain bread, pita, tortilla or bun (at least 2 g of fibre)
- ✓ CM or CS meat and alternatives food (consider some vegetarian substitutes)
- ✓ CM or CS cheese
- ✓ two or more fresh or cooked vegetables (not pickled). Try dark green lettuce, onions, tomato, bell peppers, and cucumbers.
- ✓ 0–2 condiment portions

**HEALTHIER PASTA**

Choose at least 3 of the following:

- ✓ tomato sauce (choose lower sodium/salt versions where possible)
- ✓ white sauces made with milk instead of cream
- ✓ whole grain pasta (at least 2 g of fibre)
- ✓ a meat and alternatives item (consider some vegetarian substitutes)
- ✓ two vegetables (not counting the tomato sauce). Try onions, mushrooms, grated carrot, bell peppers, broccoli, and beans.

**HEALTHIER SOUPS**

Include all of the following:

- ✓ a lower sodium/salt broth and/or low fat milk for your base
- ✓ add extra vegetables
- ✓ use whole grain pasta, whole grain rice, or barley to add fibre
- ✓ flavour with salt-free herbs and spices instead of salt. Limit added salt to 1-2 Tbsp (15-30 mL) per 50 servings.

**HEALTHIER COOKIES, LOAVES, MUFFINS**

Choose at least 2 of the following AND use the portion sizes suggested:

- ✓ 50% or more of the flour is whole grain
- ✓ has dried fruit, fruit sauce (no added sugar or sweetener), grated vegetable, or bran. In schools without allergy limitations, nuts or seeds could also be used.
- ✓ fat source is oil, or margarines with no trans fats
- ✓ AND size: cookie is 6 cm or less in diameter; loaf slice is 2 cm thick or less; muffin is the size of a tennis ball or smaller.

**HEALTHIER SMOOTHIES**

- ✓ use frozen unsweetened fruit instead of frozen yogurt or ice cream to add coolness and texture
- ✓ use soft tofu or yogurt to add protein which contributes smoothness and helps make the smoothie a little more filling
- ✓ add calcium by using milk or unflavoured fortified soy drink instead of juice.
- ✓ If you want to add herbs or “boosters” to smoothies, check with Dial-A-Dietitian to make sure these are safe for students.
- ✓ Watch portion sizes (see Guidelines)

**HEALTHIER MEALS**

Caterers, cafeteria workers and parents planning lunches for sale can use these hints to ensure they are providing healthy meals to students:

- ✓ A balanced meal includes at least one food from each of the four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide.
  - Vegetables and Fruit: 125 mL vegetable or fruit, or 250 mL salad
  - Grain Products: 1 slice bread or 125 mL of grain (rice, pasta, etc)
  - Milk and Alternatives: 250 mL milk or 175 mL yogurt or 50 g cheese
  - Meat and Alternatives: 75 g or ½ serving for elementary schools
- ✓ If a fundraising meal does not contain all four food groups, inform parents so they can send a choice from the missing food group(s) from home.



**Limit sodium (salt), saturated fat, trans fat, and sugars.**

- ✓ It's okay to include a small dessert, like a healthier cookie, with a balanced meal.

Here is an example of a Healthier Fast Food Meal:

- ✓ Burger on whole grain bun, with 10-15mL ketchup or pickle
- ✓ Carrot Sticks\* with 15 mL ranch dip
- ✓ ½ a large apple
- ✓ 250 mL carton of milk

*\*Kids can get bored of carrot sticks. Try some other raw veggies as well, and cut them into different shapes from time to time, such as: carrot coins, celery sticks, turnip sticks, broccoli "trees", cauliflower florets, radishes, snow peas, green, red, orange, or yellow pepper strips, cucumber coins or wedges, mushroom (whole or sliced), cherry tomatoes, corn salsa (not a finger food)*

**ENSURE FOOD SAFETY**

Contact the Environmental Health Officer at your health authority to receive guidance on the following:

- ✓ Only work with franchises and caterers that have a food operating permit.
- ✓ If you are preparing school meals and snacks on school property, ensure proper food safety measures are in place.
- ✓ Have at least one person with FOODSAFE training in attendance when food is being served to students.

**RESOURCES**

- ✓ Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools (2007, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health)  
[www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/guidelines\\_sales07.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/guidelines_sales07.pdf)
- ✓ Brand Name Food List  
[www.brandnamefoodlist.ca](http://www.brandnamefoodlist.ca)
- ✓ Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide  
[www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html)
- ✓ FOODSAFE  
[www.foodsafe.ca/](http://www.foodsafe.ca/)

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- ✓ Dial-a-Dietitian at 604.732.9191 (toll free in BC at 1.800.667.3438)  
[www.dialadietitian.org](http://www.dialadietitian.org)
- ✓ A community nutritionist or public health inspector at your local health unit.

*An initiative of these BC Healthy Living Alliance members:*

