

Section 4 Developing actions and alternatives

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Developing actions and alternatives

In Section 3 the Smart Choices committee assessed the current tuckshop menu, collected information on current practices and identified areas for improvement using the Tuckshop Improvement Checklist. This information will be used as the committee starts developing actions and alternatives.

This section contains:

- the action planning process (including the Tuckshop Action Planner template) for working through issues or concerns related to the operation of the tuckshop
- important considerations when choosing foods for a Smart Choices menu
- sample Smart Choices menus
- information on ways of introducing healthier food and drink choices.

Key elements of success

- An action plan that prioritises the areas for improvement in the tuckshop is developed by the committee.
- An approach to the introduction of healthier foods and drinks into the tuckshop is developed that meets the needs of the school community.
- A Smart Choices menu is planned and developed that meets the requirements of the strategy and features a variety of healthy food and drink choices that are tasty, attractive, of good quality and served at the correct temperature.



Developing an action plan

The Tuckshop Action Planner provided in this section can help to prioritise issues of concern and record the activities that will move the tuckshop towards providing and promoting healthier food choices for students.

The Tuckshop Action Planner works through the following steps.

1. Prioritise issues

Look at the areas for improvement identified in the Tuckshop Improvement Checklist.

Questions the Smart Choices committee may consider include:

- What is the committee going to do first and which activities can be left until later?
- Which are the more urgent issues?
- What operational issues need to be dealt with now to support the phasing in of healthier food choices?

2. Explore options

Discuss the range of possible solutions to the issues identified and develop creative ways of dealing with each issue. Identify resources to support the committee in this process.

3. Select one or more preferred options that best suit the tuckshop situation.

4. Identify strategies that will be used to implement the options selected.

5. Set time lines or dates for implementation of the selected options.

6. Assign specific people to be responsible for implementing the options.

7. Record the outcome after the change has been made.

The sample on page 26 shows how the Tuckshop Action Planner could be used to explore the issues of too few volunteers in the tuckshop and time-consuming preparation of fresh foods.

Note: To document decisions about changes to the menu itself, that is, phasing in new foods, see pages 29–30 on designing a Smart Choices menu and introducing new foods. A Phasing in New Foods template is provided to record decisions about alternatives to be tried, timing, feedback, final selections for the menu and promotional ideas.

Case Study

School: Varsity College

Varsity College held a free food-tasting morning tea for all students and staff. This gave the members of the College community the opportunity to taste many of the healthy food options that were being considered by the college. Some of the food selections included curry and rice, satay chicken, tortellini napoli, potato salad, Hawaiian salad and fresh fruit salad. The morning tea was a great success with staff and students expressing enthusiasm and great interest in the new food offerings. These new offerings will add to the healthy choices already supplied at the college including salad packs and sushi.



Tuckshop Action Planner template

Issue	Options	Preferred option/s	Strategies	Time line	Who	Outcome
Too few volunteers in the tuckshop	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Employ a paid manager 2. Recruit more volunteers 3. Pay more staff 4. Open the tuckshop fewer days 5. Streamline work processes in the tuckshop 6. Streamline the menu to reduce the workload 	Recruit more volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak at the new parents orientation day • Send an invitation to join the tuckshop volunteer staff to all new parents in the information kits • Regularly publish the roster in the newsletter to publicly acknowledge those parents who are volunteering • Snippet in the newsletter 	<p>Term 1</p> <p>Term 1</p> <p>Each newsletter</p> <p>Each newsletter</p>	Tuckshop committee president and the tuckshop manager	12 new volunteers recruited over a period of 6 months
Preparing fresh food is too time-consuming	<p>Buy in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ready-to-eat options • salad vegetables that are washed and cut up or grated <p>Reorganise workflow practices in the tuckshop</p>	<p>Reorganise workflow practices in the tuckshop</p> <p>See Section 5 for more information on workflow and organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare all filling ingredients prior to starting production of rolls, sandwiches and wraps • Put up instruction sheets for the production of sandwich, roll and wrap fillings • Purchase take-away style containers for storing prepared vegetables 	<p>Term 2</p> <p>Term 2</p> <p>Term 2</p>	<p>Tuckshop convenor to prepare instruction sheets</p> <p>Committee member to type them up and laminate them</p> <p>Tuckshop convenor to source appropriate containers from packaging supplier</p>	A 30% increase in the number of rolls, wraps and sandwiches produced in a shorter timeframe



Moving to a Smart Choices tuckshop menu

Moving to a Smart Choices tuckshop menu can be done in different ways. Options are outlined below.

Close the tuckshop for a short period of time and reopen with a new menu selection for the students and staff. The time chosen could be at the end of a school term or at the end of the school year. This can work well particularly if it is supported with strong classroom links, promotion and good communication with the whole school community.

'RED' foods are phased out and healthier choices brought into the menu to replace them, for example, soft drinks are replaced with flavoured milk alternatives and bottled water, and standard pies are replaced with reduced fat alternatives of a reasonable serve size. There is no need for a 'one for one' replacement for all items that are phased out. This may be the opportunity to streamline the tuckshop menu.

If the committee decides to use the phased approach to changing the menu the Phasing in New Foods template on page 28 can be used to guide and record decisions.

See appendixes 1, 2 and 3 on pages 50–3 for further information on food and drink alternatives.

Bring new choices into the menu and promote these well. Phase out foods once the new products are selling well.



Case Study

Barkly Highway State School in Mount Isa

At Barkly Highway State School the deep fryer and the soft drinks have been removed. A range of 'international foods' has been introduced with Mexican being the most popular. Taco wraps are full of shredded lettuce and diced tomato and side salads are added to nachos and chicken enchiladas.

Taste tests were introduced to market the new products, and the tuckshop installed a new bench top with glass sided fridge to display the healthier options. This not only displays the products attractively but also keeps the foods cool and safe.

With the increased demand for salad, the school realised that a veggie garden was needed. Through a Commonwealth Government grant the school is establishing a market garden to supply the tuckshop and students with fresh vegies. Teachers are also keen to include the market garden in their classroom activities!

Case Study

Mareeba State High School

The old menu included items such as hot dogs, pasties, lamingtons and jam and cream doughnuts. The new menu that started in July 2005 now shows that the 'not so healthy' items have disappeared and it is full of healthy, everyday foods such as 'ranch salad', 'salad pocket bread with chicken', 'sushi' and 'fresh fruit salad'.

The school tuckshop convenor has also organised the local baker to bake rolls to its specifications.

In order to make sure these new items sell, they were road tested by staging an expo, supported by suppliers, to promote the new menu. Students learn to appreciate the changes even more when, in the classroom, they compare their tuckshop foods with those of local food outlets.

Phasing in New Foods template

Foods/drinks to be phased out	Alternatives to be trialled	Timing	Promotional ideas	Feedback from customers	Final selection for the menu
Apple slice Doughnut Large muffins Custard tarts Large cake slices	Mini fruit muffins Cut-up fruit Small canned fruits (pre-portioned and easy to store – no wastage) Fruit buns Chunks of fruit bread Muffin-based mini pizzas Snack deals – muffins and fruit Reduced-fat yoghurts Cheese sticks	Term 2	SRC to produce posters on the fruits and muffin-based pizzas available Promote as value for money Posters on building healthy bones with calcium-rich foods Tooth-friendly snack choices	Liked the new varieties of fruit on offer Enjoyed the fruit muffins warm Canned fruits – value for money Pizzas very popular Yoghurts popular	Will offer fruit in season Warm muffins in the winter months Varieties of canned fruits chilled in summer Muffin-based pizzas will be offered – toppings varied to add interest
Soft drinks from the RED segment in vending machines	Reduced-fat flavoured milks Drinking yoghurts Water Fruit juices	Term 2	Gain support from the SRC to promote the new contents of the vending machines Use promotional materials provided by the companies in appropriate locations around the school	Flavoured milks popular Juices and water more popular in summer Would like warm drinks to be available	Stock vending machine currently containing soft drink with fruit juice and water (that meet the criteria) Stock new vending machines with reduced-fat milks, fruit juice, water and yoghurts

Using the Phasing in New Foods template

- select a food or drink or group of foods and drinks to be changed
- look for alternatives
- allocate a time to introduce changes
- consider promotional ideas for the new food or drink
- get feedback from the customers — students and staff
- make a final selection for the menu



Designing a Smart Choices tuckshop menu

At this point in the process the committee may decide to design and develop a Smart Choices tuckshop menu. This will depend on the option the committee has decided on, that is, open with a new menu at the start of a new term or introduce new foods in a phased approach. If taking a phased approach, the menu is likely to evolve rather than be designed all at once.

Alternatively, the committee may prefer to work through Section 5 'Getting on with the job', and gain further hints and tips on managing a Smart Choices tuckshop before re-designing the menu.

When re-designing the menu consider the aspects covered in 'Choosing foods for the menu' on this page. The resources listed below will also assist in the process.

Resources

- From the *Smart Choices Tool Kit*
 - The assessment of the current tuckshop menu page 19
 - Smart Choices Menu templates on the CD-ROM (There are two templates, one suitable for primary and the other for secondary school menus.)
 - Setting selling prices page 43
 - Snack food ideas page 51
 - Sandwiches, wraps and rolls page 50
- From *Smart Choices — Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools*
 - Ready Reckoner pages 19–23
 - Occasional Food and Drink Criteria Table page 15
- Nutrition Information Panels on product labels
- Queensland Association of School Tuckshops — www.qast.org.au
- Nutrition Australia — www.nutritionaustralia.org
- NSW 'Healthy Kids Products' School Canteen Buyers Guide www.schoolcanteens.com.au/buyers_guide/default.asp
- Recipes currently used in the tuckshop
- New ideas for foods and drinks from students and other committee members

Choosing foods and drinks for the tuckshop menu

Growing children and adolescents need nutritious food to keep them physically active, healthy and mentally alert. A Smart Choices menu offers foods and drinks that are tasty, appealing to students, good quality and served at the correct temperature. The menu should also aim to include as many foods as possible from the GREEN category of the Food and Drink Spectrum.

There are many practical considerations when designing a Smart Choices menu. Consider the following points.

- Don't make the menu too extensive. Reducing options will reduce workload. Provide an appropriate number of choices to keep the menu interesting, manageable and profitable. Offer customers a core of food items that seldom change and add variety by providing specials at certain times, or days of the week, or on the summer or winter menu.
- Change the types of foods available at recess and lunch to ensure there are healthy, satisfying choices on offer. For example, the current menu may contain a number of lines of confectionery, crisps and cakes available at recess. These could be replaced with yoghurts, fresh fruits, bread-based mini pizzas and cheese subs/melts.
- Avoid large serve sizes of foods that fit into the AMBER category. Order in smaller serves of commercial food products where available. Prepare smaller serve sizes of foods and drinks that are made or packaged on the premises.
- Promote healthy 'meal deals' on the menu. This provides value for money and encourages the concept of combining foods to create healthy meals.
- Add interesting, enticing descriptions and names for menu categories and foods on the menu.
- Price foods and drinks appropriately for the student market.



Sample Smart Choices menus

Two styles of sample menus are provided on the CD-ROM. One has been designed for a primary school and the other for a secondary school. Use the templates as a starting-point when developing the school tuckshop menu.

Some key points to note on the sample menus.

- There is a balance between the GREEN and AMBER foods on the menu, that is, AMBER foods don't dominate the menu.
- There are no RED foods listed on the menu as these are only provided on two designated 'occasions' per term.
- The same ingredients appear on the menu in a variety of different ways. This allows the ordering of stock and the organisation and workflow in the tuckshop to be streamlined.



Check your progress

- An action plan designed by the Smart Choices committee is in place.
- All menu planning issues have been taken into consideration in designing a Smart Choices menu.
- A decision about the introduction of foods into the tuckshop has been made. The foods will either be
 - introduced all at once, or
 - phased in over an identified time period.
- A Smart Choices menu has been planned.
or
- The phasing-in process has commenced.

