

# Smart Choices

## What is Smart Choices?

Smart Choices is all about offering healthy food and drink choices to students in Queensland schools. Smart Choices applies to all areas of the school environment, including the tuckshop or canteen, vending machines, fundraising, classroom rewards and sports days.

Smart Choices categorises foods and drinks into three groups based on how nutritious they are:

**GREEN** – these foods and drinks are excellent sources of important nutrients. They should be encouraged and promoted in the school as the best choice.

**AMBER** – these foods and drinks have some sugar, fat or salt added during processing. They should be selected carefully.

**RED** – these foods and drinks have very little nutritional value. They should be supplied by schools on no more than two occasions per term.

## What about drinks?

The cheapest and healthiest thirst quenching drink for children is plain water. Children also need milk for building strong bones and healthy teeth.

Drinks that are not needed as part of a healthy diet include fruit juice, cordial, soft drinks, sports drinks, flavoured waters, energy drinks and large serves of flavoured milk.

These drinks can fill children up and lead to a decreased appetite for other healthier foods. They can have a high sugar and energy content, which can lead to an unhealthy weight and damage to children's teeth. It is best to provide these drinks only very occasionally or at special celebrations.

For more information on healthy eating for young children, speak to your school or visit:

[www.foodsmartschools.org](http://www.foodsmartschools.org)

[www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/schools/healthy)

# smart CHOICES

Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy  
for Queensland Schools

## A healthy start to school



## smart Food and drink CHOICES SPECTRUM

‘Have plenty’



Encourage and promote these foods and drinks.

These foods and drinks:

- are excellent sources of important nutrients
- are low in saturated fat and/or added sugar and/or salt
- help to avoid an intake of excess energy (kilojoules or calories)

‘Select carefully’



Do not let these foods and drinks dominate the choices and avoid large serving sizes.

These foods and drinks:

- have some nutritional value
- have moderate amounts of saturated fat and/or added sugar and/or salt
- can, in large serve sizes, contribute excess energy (kilojoules or calories)

‘Occasionally’



These foods and drinks are to be supplied on no more than two occasions per term.

These foods and drinks:

- lack adequate nutritional value
- are high in saturated fat and/or sugar and/or salt
- can contribute excess energy (kilojoules or calories)



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## Healthy eating for children

Lunches and snacks play an important role in supplying children with their daily nutrition needs. Nearly half of a child's daily nutrition needs should be met during the hours they are at school.

Good nutrition at school will help children:

- build healthy bodies and minds
- stay alert and focussed in class
- fuel with the best foods for activity and play
- stay healthy and fight illness
- maintain a healthy weight.

Eating habits are formed early in life, so by packing a healthy lunchbox and being a good role model, you will send a positive and powerful message to your child.

## Eating at school

It is likely your child will find eating at school very different from eating at home or in other early childhood settings. Their lunchboxes will become their one stop shop for all their meals and snacks while at school. This may include morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

## Tips for packing healthy lunches

- Aim to include at least one item from each of the five food groups in your child's lunchbox:
  - grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high fibre varieties
  - lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans
  - milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat
  - fruit
  - vegetables and legumes/beans.
- Keep food easy to unwrap or peel.
- Pack lunches in a cooler bag or insulated lunchbox and include a frozen drink or small freezer brick.
- Consider your school's policy on managing allergies.

## Healthy lunchbox ideas

- **Sandwiches, wraps and rolls:** This favourite can be kept interesting by varying the different types of breads and healthy filling combinations.
- **Mini pizza:** Spread half a bread roll or muffin with tomato paste and add toppings such as lean ham, pineapple and capsicum. Sprinkle with reduced fat cheese and grill until golden. Great eaten cold.
- **Leftovers:** Rice, noodle and pasta dishes can be great the next day. Remember to keep them safe and cool in the lunchbox.
- **Finger salad pack:** Combine a selection of lean meat, reduced fat cheese, boiled egg, vegetable sticks such as carrot, celery, capsicum, cherry tomatoes and serve with a bread roll.
- **Vege or fruit dippers:** Cut up vegetable sticks and cherry tomatoes and serve with low fat dips or salsa. Fruit such as strawberries, grapes and melon can be served with reduced fat yoghurt.
- **Small homemade muffins, scones or pikelets:** Add some extra fruit such as banana or blueberries, or vegetables such as corn, capsicum or grated zucchini.
- **Homemade popcorn:** Air-popped popcorn is a great nutritious snack and easy to eat at school.
- **Raisin bread:** This is a great alternative to high fat and sugar muesli bars.
- **Wholegrain crackers with reduced fat cheese.**

