

Healthy School Tuck Shops

Making the case for healthy tuck shops

Students like to buy foods at school, and tuck shops give them easy access to foods and beverages as an addition to their lunch. Too often the choices available in school tuck shops offer little or no nutritional value, such as potato chips, candy, soft drinks and chocolate bars. Selling nutritionally poor foods and drinks in the school tuck shop does not support the healthy eating lessons students learn in the classroom. This sends a contradictory message to students that the school does not practise what it teaches and it does not let students apply what they have learned.

What is a healthy tuck shop?

A healthy tuck shop is one that emphasizes foods and beverages with Maximum Nutritional Value (eg, 80 per cent of the foods available are foods with Maximum Nutritional Value) and offers no foods or beverages with Minimum Nutritional Value.

A healthy tuck shop allows students to buy a range of foods and beverages that they enjoy while, at the same time, encouraging healthy choices. Children can't buy good nutrition if you don't sell it!

Benefits of a healthy tuck shop

A healthy tuck shop:

- Reinforces the classroom healthy eating education
- Promotes healthy eating and drinking habits
- Provides students with a healthy source of energy and nutrients during the busy school day

Nutrition Tools for Schools

- Makes money for the school
- Increases the variety of food and beverages available at school
- Links to the 'whole school approach' to creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment
- Shows parents and the local community that the school takes the health of its students seriously

Success to share

When teachers and principal Kate Head, at Thompson Creek School in Dunnville, realized that the school *Snack Shack* offered very little in the way of nutritious snacks, these concerns were shared with both the school council and the student senate. 'We involved our students in making changes and the new *Healthy Snack Shack* was an instant hit with the students! We have grade 6, 7 and 8 girls who before may have purchased a chocolate Popsicle and they are now buying milk and frozen yogurt tubes - this is a group I really worry about and now I see them buying healthy foods! We have more students than ever coming to our *Healthy Snack Shack*! The tone of our school has changed. You can feel it. Parents and students comment on it. We look at everything as a package. It's hard to say if it is the snack program, or the breakfast program, or the physical activity that is having the impact. But I can say this: our kids are doing better, academically and socially. Our parents are feeling more connected to the school. Our teachers are enthusiastic and excited to come to work each day. We're looking at the whole package, the whole school community, and it's working.'-
Kate Head, Principal, Thompson Creek School
Submitted by Kathy Page, Public Health Dietitian, Haldimand-Norfolk Health Unit

We're tucking into a healthy tuck shop!

Use this chart to select foods to sell in your tuck shop. Remember to sell only foods and beverages with Maximum and Moderate Nutritional Value. Work towards ensuring that 80 per cent of the foods available are foods from the Maximum Nutritional Value category, to shift the emphasis in favour of the healthy options.

Suggested beverages for your school tuck shop

Maximum Nutritional Value	Moderate Nutritional Value
White milk (skim, 1% or 2%)	100% pure fruit juice or juice blends
1% Chocolate milk	Yogurt drinks
Fortified soy beverage (plain or flavoured)	
Bottled water	

Suggested foods for your school tuck shop

Maximum Nutritional Value <i>(make up at least 80% of choice)</i>	Moderate Nutritional Value <i>(make up no more than 20% of choices)</i>
Whole wheat wrap, pitas, bagels, bread buns	Plain white or flavoured wraps, white bread, and bagels, buns or pitas
Fresh fruit or fruit salad	100% unsweetened fruit juice
Unsweetened canned fruit or frozen fruit	Sweetened frozen or canned fruit
Fresh vegetables	Processed cheese slices (reduced fat, fat-free or made from skim milk)
Raisins or other plain dried fruit with no added sugar**	Cheese – block or strings (no more than 32% MF)
Lower-fat cheese - block or strings (15 - 20% MF)	Fruit-filled bars (eg, fig)
Hummus dip	Plain soda crackers and melba toast
Lean deli meat, eg, turkey, ham, roast beef slices for making wraps or sandwiches	Plain popcorn
Lower-fat yogurt (2% MF or less) with added vitamin D	Lower-fat yogurt in tubes (no more than 2.5% MF)
Some varieties of milk puddings	Salted nuts, seeds, roasted legume*
100% whole wheat crackers, melba toast, crisp bread	Baked potato chips
Plain or flavoured milk (skim, 1% or 2% MF)	Baked tortilla chips
Unsalted nuts, seeds, roasted legumes*	Lower-salt pretzels
Trail mix*	
Dried fruit bars** that are a good source of vitamin C or A and contain no added sugar	
Some varieties of granola or cereal bars	

*Foods containing or which may contain life-threatening allergens (eg, peanuts and other nuts) should not be available in schools where students have an allergy.

**May increase risk of dental decay

Consultation with a public health dietitian is recommended for identification of specific brands of foods and beverages with Maximum, Moderate and Minimum Nutritional Value.

Does your school have a Healthy School Nutrition Environment?

A Healthy School Nutrition Environment exists when a school promotes healthy eating through words *and* actions. Students get the same message about food, nutrition and healthy eating wherever food is served – in the classroom, in the school and at home. The following nine Essential Elements¹ are recommended for a school to have a healthy nutrition environment.

Whole School Approach	Essential Elements
In the School	<p>Does your school offer healthy, reasonably priced and culturally-appropriate food choices? For example does your school have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • healthy fundraising? • a school milk program? • a healthy tuck shop? • healthy 'special food' days? • non-food rewards in the classroom? • healthy classroom celebrations? • healthy refreshments at school meetings and events?
	Do parents, teachers and volunteers role model healthy eating and body image behaviours at school?
	Does your school have a Student Nutrition Program (eg, breakfast, snack and lunch)?
	Does your school practice safe food practices and have an allergy-safe environment?
	Are nutrition breaks at school appropriately scheduled?
	Does your school have a food and nutrition policy?
	In the Classroom
Do teachers have up-to-date nutrition resources to support the healthy eating expectations in the curriculum?	
In Homes and In the Community	Does your school provide student, parent and community education about healthy eating?

¹ Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health School Nutrition Workgroup. 2004 *Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment*.

Need more information?

Public health offers *Nutrition Tools for Schools - a toolkit for elementary schools*. Whether you're a teacher, parent, school administrator or volunteer, this toolkit will lead you through a step-by-step process to creating a healthy nutrition environment in your school. *Nutrition Tools for Schools* contains a variety of resources and tools to implement the nine Essential Elements listed above. For more information about this toolkit, please contact your public health unit/department.

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