

**go
for
your
life**

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› Successful sandwich making

Sandwiches, rolls and wraps are filling and nutritious. When well-priced and attractively presented with interesting and fresh fillings these foods can also be top sellers.

Sandwiches can be made interesting by:

- offering a variety of different types of breads
- filling wraps, pita or a variety of rolls
- making 'sushi sandwiches' or pinwheels by rolling up a slice of bread with filling, cutting it in half and displaying it cut end up
- making multi-layered sandwiches
- making mini rolls using dinner rolls
- offering toasted sandwiches or hot rolls or wraps
- cutting sandwiches into different shapes and sizes
- using a variety of colourful fillings packaged so that students can see the fillings clearly
- using interesting combinations of sandwich fillings including those suggested below.

A healthy sandwich means:

- being able to 'see the bread through the spread'
- using low-fat spreads
- including at least one vegetable (or fruit) filling
- using high-fibre grainy breads
- using lean meats and reduced-fat cheeses.

HINT: Introduce wholemeal or wholegrain bread by making zebra sandwiches using one slice of white bread and one of wholemeal or grain.

Interesting sandwich fillings

Try some of the following sandwich fillings:

- ricotta, banana and honey
- ricotta, sultanas and grated carrot
- crunchy peanut butter*, sultanas and alfalfa sprouts
- leftover roast vegetables (for example, sliced zucchini, capsicum and/or eggplant) and ricotta
- chicken and coleslaw with low-fat dressing
- BLT – lean bacon (cooked and cold), lettuce and tomato

- creamed corn with cheese and ham
- tuna mixed with salsa or chutney or low-fat mayonnaise, corn and grated vegetables
- chutney, ham, low-fat cheese and tomato (put tomato between ham and cheese to prevent sogginess)
- peanut butter* and banana
- crushed pineapple, ham and low-fat cheese
- egg mashed with low-fat mayonnaise and lettuce
- chicken, avocado and cucumber.

Sandwich preparation and making tips

Sandwich making can be a quick, easy and simple task. Use the suggestions outlined below to save time and make preparation easier.

- Prepare ingredients for sandwiches, rolls, wraps, burgers, jaffles and salads beforehand by:
 - washing all vegetables well by separating leaves (if necessary), washing and draining in a colander and patting dry
 - slicing, grating and chopping all sandwich fillings including draining beetroot, slicing meats, and separating meat and cheese slices
 - storing each ingredient in individual, clear, stackable containers in the fridge.
- Chop up a salad mix of different salad vegetables, for example cucumber, lettuce, tomato, carrot, canned corn, capsicum, sprouts, mushrooms and snowpeas. Try preparing the ingredients in different ways such as finely dicing like a salsa, chopping, shredding or grating. Combine this mix in a bowl at the start of the day and use in both sandwiches and salad boxes.



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- Combine meat, vegetables and any sauce or dressing into the one sandwich filling mixture for quick sandwich making. This mixture can be kept stored in the fridge for two days. Possible mixtures include:
 - tuna, corn, grated carrot and chopped celery combined with low-fat mayonnaise
 - diced ham, crushed pineapple and grated cheese bound together with a dash of tomato salsa.
- Invest in a vegetable slicer machine for quick, bulk sandwich-filling preparation.
- Invest in other equipment such as slice guides, spreaders, egg and avocado slicers.
- Ensure knives are sharp for easy cutting.
- When assembling sandwiches:
 - have a large, designated preparation bench with enough room to lay out breads
 - lay out containers of fillings in front of the bread board, within easy reach and in sequence of how they are to be placed on the bread
 - make up one type of sandwich or roll at a time
 - only lay out enough bread for ten sandwiches at a time and pair the bread slices top and bottom
 - place fillings on the bottom layer of bread only
 - to avoid soggy bread, make sandwiches on the day of sale and place wet fillings such as tomato and beetroot in the centre of the sandwich and dryer items against the bread
- Keep bread fresh by:
 - making sure it is well wrapped to prevent it from drying out then freezing it
 - wrapping sandwiches as soon as they are made
 - keeping breads covered – when preparing large quantities of sandwiches, use the crust to cover the top slice of bread on the pile to prevent it from drying out.
- Use frozen bread for making toasted sandwiches or hot rolls – this is a good money saver.
- Use special sandwich packaging (plastic triangular cases) for an attractive display.

HINT: Place a laminated notice on the wall near the sandwich preparation area listing standard instructions for exact filling amounts and cutting instructions for various sandwich fillings so staff know exactly how much to prepare each day. This will not only assist volunteer staff, but also control stock, costs and quality.

Making wraps

To make wraps:

- spread lavash, pita or mountain bread with a spread – lavash bread freezes well and takes only 5–10 minutes to defrost
- place filling ingredients in the middle section of the bread leaving enough room at either side to wrap one side of the bread over the filling
- roll carefully and firmly – this may take a bit of practice
- cut in half diagonally to display the contents
- wrap firmly but not too tightly in plastic wrap
- if wraps are to be heated put foil or paper around the bottom half of the wrap.

HINT: Older students could assist with designing a tasty and exciting wrap that contains Everyday foods to maintain good health. Refer to the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Student Learning Activities (Level 4 'wrap-it-up') for a classroom canteen menu assessment activity.

Making toasted sandwiches

When making toasted sandwiches:

- use day-old bread to make jaffles in advance and store them wrapped in the freezer until required
- spread only a thin scrape of margarine or oil spray on the outside of toasted sandwiches and do not spread anything on the inside to reduce the total fat content
- do not use extra margarine or oil when toasting foccacias or Turkish bread as there is enough oil in them already to prevent them from sticking.



› Salads

With a bit of imagination, salads can be an appealing and nutritious main meal on their own.

Try:

- using the same ingredients for sandwich fillings and salads and preparing them at the same time
- including protein for a nutritious, balanced meal, for example lean meat, tuna, cheese, egg, legumes, nuts* and/or a carbohydrate source, for example croutons, canned corn, couscous, noodles, potato, crackers or bread roll on the side.

Salad ideas

Try these delicious salad ideas. Remember, they can be adapted to include whatever ingredients you have in the canteen – the possibilities are endless!

Asian-style warm beef or chicken salad

Mixed lettuce and salad vegetables such as cucumber strips, snowpeas and cherry tomatoes topped with sliced lean beef or chicken and dressed with an Asian-style dressing such as honey and soy. Serve warm or cold.

Roasted vegetable and couscous salad

A selection of roast vegetables (a good way to use up leftovers in the fridge) folded through cooked couscous and dressed with some tomato salsa. Serve with a dollop of natural yoghurt or dip.

Mexican bean salad

Any combination of finely diced vegetables, canned corn, canned beans and grated cheese combined with salsa. Serve with a dollop of low-fat sour cream.

Potato salad

Baby potatoes halved and cooked in their skin then combined with canned corn, peas or other finely diced vegetables and dressed with low-fat mayonnaise or natural yoghurt.

Cold rice salad

Cooked rice, sweetcorn, peas, diced capsicum, diced celery, grated carrot, spring onions or any other vegetables available combined with diced lean ham and dressed lightly with low-fat French dressing.

Vietnamese-style coleslaw

Shredded cabbage and carrot, bean sprouts (canned), cold shredded chicken, shallots, chopped mint (optional), crunchy noodles and dressed either with low-fat mayonnaise or an Asian-style dressing.

***HINT:** Flaked tuna stirred through many of these salads is an easy, tasty option.*

Serving salads

Try serving salads in different ways. Consider:

- salad plates, for example, a lean chicken drumstick with slices of tomato, beetroot, a pineapple ring, low-fat cheese and shredded lettuce (with a drizzle of low-fat mayonnaise) and carrot served with a dinner roll lightly spread with margarine
- salad cups or tubs (good for salads that are diced or shredded or are moist)
- salad bags, for example a selection of bite-size pieces such as cherry tomatoes, carrot, capsicum and cucumber sticks, low-fat tasty cheese cubes, boiled egg wedges, grapes, nuts* and dried fruit all tossed in a bag (avoid including lettuce as it tends to wilt very quickly).



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› Hot foods

The number and type of hot foods on the menu will vary depending on the canteen's facilities and the season.

Often hot foods are pre-packaged 'heat and serve' foods that sit in the Select Carefully category. However, it is possible to prepare quick and easy nutritious hot food choices that are low in fat and contain vegetables, even in a canteen with limited equipment.

- Ensure commercially prepared hot food choices are nutritious and in line with the *Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents in Australia* by:
 - serving them as a meal deal with a side salad or fruit
 - boosting them up by adding extra vegetables yourself, for example top commercially made pizzas with extra vegetable toppings.
 - choosing low- or reduced-fat products (see the nutrient criteria for Occasionally food on page 13 of the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner and the label reading tips on page 13 of this manual.)
 - choosing products from registered canteen buyer guides¹.
- It is not necessary to provide an extensive range of hot foods. Try offering one different, freshly prepared healthy hot food choice as a rotating daily or weekly special and limiting the range of regular convenience hot foods on the menu. This will be more cost efficient and make preparation and service simple and more rewarding, while still adding variety to the menu.
- Strike a balance between offering sufficient hot food choices and minimising preparation, storage and heating requirements.
- Serve one-pot dishes like stir-fries and fried rice which are quick, easy and cost effective.
- Consider ease of serving, packaging and eating when choosing hot food options.

Burgers

When making burgers:

- prepare all buns and salads in advance (for example, when making sandwiches) and add the meat or vegetable pattie at the last minute
- to prevent sogginess, place sauce or mayonnaise on the fillings (salad or pattie) rather than on the bread
- mark packaged burgers for easy identification, for example 'ch' indicating with cheese and 'may' indicating mayonnaise.

HINT: For more appropriate, child-size serves, use English muffins or large dinner rolls for burgers instead of large burger buns or hot-dog rolls.

Hot food ideas

Refer to the the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner food guide tables on pages 16–24.

Here are some more ideas:

- pastas – spiral or penne-shaped pastas are more convenient to serve and eat
- skinless chicken drumsticks
- chicken and vegetable kebabs
- souvlaki – lean chicken, mince patties, sliced steak or lamb, served in pita bread with salad and tzatziki (garlic, grated cucumber and yoghurt sauce)
- falafel wraps (falafel mix can be purchased commercially) – serve falafel balls in a wrap with salad and tzatziki or hommus
- warm chicken salad – mixed salad with grilled chicken or warm skinless BBQ chicken (sliced across the top with an interesting dressing) or some fresh or canned mango added to the salad
- vegetable pastie or filo
- spinach and ricotta filo – this freezes well so make a bulk batch
- spinach and ricotta cannelloni – this also freezes well, so make a bulk batch
- jaffles served in half and whole sizes
- hot rolls or wraps – for example hot cheese rolls, cheese roll-ups*
- fried rice* – add plenty of diced vegetables (canned or frozen for convenience)
- burritos
- bean nachos or tacos with salad
- corn on the cob
- roast vegetable salad
- pizza* – using muffins, pita pizza or regular bases
- oven-baked wedges or mini potatoes – quarter baby chat potatoes or wedge regular potatoes with skin on, sprinkle with herbs, spray with oil, bake in the oven and serve in cups made from paper triangles
- oven-baked vegetable chunks
- pinwheels – baked scone dough rolled with a filling such as pizza or tomato and cheese (can be served hot or cold)
- zucchini slice* – can be served hot or cold.

*Refer to Recipe ideas file which begins on page 17.

¹Canteen-registered product buyer guides provide a list of food products for sale to canteens that have been professionally assessed to ensure that they are above the nutrient criteria for foods in the Occasionally category and suitable for sale in a healthy school canteen. There are many different guides available. (See page 15 for more information.)





One main ingredient – several recipes

Basic ingredients can be adapted across several different recipes, adding variety to the menu while saving time and costs.

INGREDIENT COMBINATIONS	SERVING SUGGESTIONS
<p>Hot fillings</p> <p><i>Savoury:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • creamed corn, grated cheese and diced lean ham • tuna, grated cheese, corn and diced capsicum • crushed pineapple, ham and low-fat cheese (Hawaiian) • finely diced or grated vegetables (capsicum, carrot, corn, celery, mushrooms) combined with a sauce such as low-fat mayonnaise or salsa and low-fat grated cheese • mince and kidney beans mixture • baked beans and low-fat cheese • leftover mince, casserole or stir-fry. <p><i>Sweet:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ricotta, honey and diced dried fruit • banana and cinnamon • banana, sultanas and coconut • banana, pineapple (crushed in natural juice) and coconut • stewed apple (canned pie apple can be used), cinnamon and sultanas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • jaffles or toasted sandwiches • in hot rolls – either hollow out a roll and fill, or spread one half of the roll with ingredients and grill as an open sub • in hot lavash wraps or fillos – a great alternative to pastry-based pies • on jacket potatoes (excluding sweet fillings) • as pizza toppings
<p>Lean mince sauce</p> <p>Make lean mince sauce using lean mince and tomatoes or tomato pasta sauce. Add plenty of grated vegetables (a good way to use up leftover vegetables). Add canned kidney beans for Mexican dishes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a pasta sauce or pasta bake • as a topping on baked jacket potatoes • in bread cases • lasagne • in jaffles (bolognese jaffle, Mexican jaffle) • on half a roll, topped with low-fat cheese and grilled ('hot sub') • in tacos or burritos • as a topping for nachos – put a small handful of corn chips in a small, round, takeaway container, top with mince and bean sauce and sprinkle of low-fat cheese.

HINT: Combine all the ingredients into the one mixture for quick preparation.



› Recess and snack ideas

Children need regular small snacks to provide them with energy for growth as well as important nutrients.

Many snack foods can be energy dense but not nutrient dense. Children who are provided with these unhealthy snacks often fill up on kilojoules, getting energy for growth but not nutrients. Snacks for children should be considered as an important part of their nutritional intake and not as an extra treat.

Considering the majority of children's snacks are consumed at school, the canteen has an important role in providing healthy snack choices. When choosing snacks to provide in the canteen, consider the following information.

- Portion sizes of packaged snack foods and drinks are becoming king-sized. Young children need much smaller serve sizes than adults, so choose the appropriate size of packaged snacks and provide small and half-serve sizes when preparing snacks in the canteen.

HINT: Use mini muffin tins or paper patty-cake cases rather than the larger muffin trays.

- Low fat may not always mean healthy. Many manufactured snack foods (such as sweet bars) may be low in fat, but still high in kilojoules and low in fibre and other nutrients. Check that these low-fat products are at least high in fibre or have fruit as their sugar source. Refer to the nutrient criteria for an Occasionally food on page 13 of the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner.
- Many sweet snack foods (for example, carob-coated products) will claim to be 'all natural' or a 'health food'. These can sometimes still be high in sugar or saturated fat and classified as confectionery.
- Snacks and drinks based on fruit and vegetables will boost the intake of these important foods.
- Bread-based snacks are a filling, nutritious, low-fat, higher-fibre alternative to cakes and biscuits and can be good value for money.

It is easy (and inexpensive) to come up with some appealing nutritious snack foods. Here are some ideas.

Cereal, grain and nut-based* snacks

- Pinwheel sandwiches**
- Mini rolls using dinner rolls
- Low-fat wholemeal fruit muffins
- Individual bags of pretzels, mini rice cakes, flavoured rice crackers or popcorn (available commercially in individual pre-packs)
- Rice crackers served in small bags of 10–12 crackers
- High-fibre breakfast cereals (for example, Mini Wheats, Fruity Bix) divided into smaller bags
- Nibble or energy mixes served in small bags**, for example dried fruit, nuts*, plain popcorn and breakfast cereals
- Air-popped popcorn** – low fat, plain or flavoured

HINT: Use poor quality or over ripe fruit or vegetables to make up a batch of high-fibre, mini muffins which can be frozen and reheated.

Fruit-based snacks

- Fresh fruit
- 'Traffic lights' – rounds of kiwifruit, banana and watermelon served on a stick or plate
- 'Green and gold' – pieces of chilled orange and kiwi fruit in a bag
- Puréed fruit or juice frozen in an ice-cube tray and served in a cup (a great way to use up overripe fruit)
- 'Banana blizzard' – frozen banana on a stick
- Bag or cup of frozen grapes, orange quarters and pineapple rings
- Stewed or canned fruits unsweetened and in natural juice – served in a cup topped with low-fat custard or yoghurt
- Fruit salad – fresh or pre-cut and unsweetened
- Dried fruit salad soaked in hot water or juice to make plump and served plain or with custard or yoghurt – great in winter
- Dried fruit, for example apples, apricots, sultanas, prunes and dates mixed with nuts* and seeds
- Fruit kebabs using fresh or frozen fruit
- Chopped canned fruit set in jelly cups
- 100 per cent fruit icy-poles or ice crush slurpees** made with puréed fruit or 100 per cent fruit juice mixed with canned fruit – a great way to use up over ripe fruit.

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**Recipes can be found on pages 17–20.

Vegetable-based snacks

- Chunky vegetable pieces served in a cup with low-fat, low-sodium dip
- Crunchy peanut dogs – celery sticks filled with reduced-salt peanut butter*, ricotta or reduced-fat cream cheese
- Corn on the cob
- Oven-baked chunky potato pieces served in a small cup

Dairy-based snacks

- Flavoured low-fat milk served as milkshakes or smoothies** with fresh fruit
- Low-fat cheese cut into sticks, cubes, slices or triangles
- Low-fat plain or fruit yoghurt (fresh or frozen) served in small tubs with fresh fruit
- Low-fat dips, for example tzatziki (natural yoghurt, grated cucumber and garlic) or corn relish dip (cottage cheese, smooth ricotta or reduced-fat cream cheese with corn relish mixed through)
- Milky icy-poles made with flavoured low-fat milk.

HINT: Buy low-fat yoghurt in bulk then portion into individual plastic cups or containers and swirl through muesli and/or fruit such as tinned passionfruit. Label containers with a use-by date and store for up to four days.

Hot snack ideas

- Corn on the cob
- Pinwheels – baked scone dough rolled with a filling such as pizza or tomato and cheese
- Half a jaffle with a fruit filling – a good alternative snack to cakes or donuts
- Small cheese roll
- Hot savoury muffin or scone

Other

Hard-boiled eggs

Refer to the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner food guide tables on pages 16–24 for more suggestions.

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***Recipes can be found on pages 17–20.*



› Drinks

Like snack foods, many drinks can be energy dense but not nutrient dense. Children who are provided with drinks high in sugar often fill up on kilojoules without getting valuable nutrients required for growth.

Water

Water is the best drink to quench children's thirst. Children need five to eight glasses of water each day – more if it is hot or they are physically active. Children become dehydrated more easily than adults so it is important to replace fluids regularly throughout the school day. Schools should have cooled water for children available from drinking fountains and allow water bottles in class to encourage children to drink more.

HINT: Canteens can promote water by keeping prices low, stocking larger quantities of water in the fridge at eye level and selling it in value meal deals.

Dairy drinks

Low- or reduced-fat milk is recommended for children. Calcium-enriched soy drinks are also suitable for children. Low-fat milks with added flavour are suitable in small amounts (250–300 ml) because they have some nutrients that protect teeth even though they contain added sugars. Full-fat dairy drinks contain saturated fat and are in the Select Carefully category.

100% fruit juice (no added sugar)

Fruit contains natural sugar but once a fruit is juiced it loses its fibre and its sugar content becomes concentrated. When drinks containing concentrated sugars are sipped on, the teeth are bathed continuously and this can lead to dental decay. Products that are 100 per cent juice are in the Select Carefully category and should not replace fresh fruit, which is in the Everyday category.

Other sweetened drinks

Sweet drinks often provide many calories and no nutrients and may contribute to an unbalanced diet and weight gain when consumed frequently.

Sweet drinks have also been shown to contribute to dental decay in children. Bacteria in the mouth convert the sugar in drinks into acid that dissolves tooth enamel. Sweetened drinks are usually acidic already and this also contributes to dental decay. High-sugar drinks and 'sticky' foods such as fruit straps stay in contact with the teeth, increasing the potential for tooth decay. The school canteen can play a major role in promoting good oral health and preventing dental decay.

From 2007, high sugar content soft drinks should not be supplied through school food services. This includes energy drinks and flavoured mineral waters with high sugar content.

Drinks containing caffeine

Some schools may offer tea or coffee for teachers and upper secondary school students. However, products containing caffeine are not recommended for children or adolescents.

Refer to the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner food guide tables on pages 16–24 for ideas about the types of drinks to provide in the canteen. Some interesting ideas for healthier drinks and ices are:

- banana or fruit smoothies*
- icy poles made with low-fat milk
- fruit ice crush 'slushee'.*

*RECIPES can be found on pages 17–20.



› Special dietary requirements

Some students may require special diets for medical reasons. The school food service should try to meet these needs as far as possible so that all children can enjoy eating a healthy lunch from the canteen.

Any special needs for children with disabilities such as modified texture diets or wheelchair access to the canteen should also be considered. The school principal, child's teacher or parents should provide advice of any special dietary needs to canteen staff.

Diabetes

Students with diabetes may request foods with no added sugar or artificially sweetened, low joule or diet products. Sugars naturally occurring in products such as dairy (yoghurt and custard) and fruit are suitable and healthy for children with diabetes.

Coeliac disease

This condition requires a strict gluten-free diet. Gluten is found in:

- wheat
- rye
- oats
- barley
- triticale
- products containing these grains (for example breads, biscuits, pasta, flour).

However, gluten may also be found in less obvious sources such as:

- yeast spreads (for example Vegemite)
- malt extract
- maltodextrin (wheat)
- processed meats
- snack foods
- sauces.

New food labelling laws have made it easier to identify gluten-free or gluten-containing products. Care should be taken when preparing gluten-free foods for students with coeliac disease. You should, for example, use separate toasters, knives and preparation boards.

Absolute avoidance of gluten is extremely important for anyone with coeliac disease. It is recommended that you consult with a dietician if the canteen is required to provide a gluten-free diet.

More information on gluten-free diets can be obtained from a dietician or the Coeliac Society website: www.vic.coeliac.org.au.

Anaphylactic (severe) food allergy

Contact with certain foods can be fatal for people with allergies to these foods. The most common triggers of anaphylaxis are: peanuts, cow's milk, egg, wheat, soy, tree nuts (for example, cashews) fish and shellfish. The school should know of any student with a severe food allergy and should have a policy and appropriate management strategies in place. Make sure the canteen is well aware of students with such allergies and familiar with the school's management strategies.

Dealing with nut allergy

Schools should formulate their own policies regarding the banning of nuts after consultation with the school community and school council. Banning of food or other products is not generally recommended due to the fear of encouraging complacency among staff and students, the presence of hidden allergens and the difficulty monitoring and enforcing a ban. Aside from the case of exceptional circumstances, it is better for schools and canteen staff to become aware of the risks associated with severe allergies, and to implement practical, age-appropriate strategies.

Check your school's policy regarding the use of products containing nuts. The following precautions should also be taken.

- If a packaged product contains nuts, the package will state this. Ensure that any product prepared in the canteen containing nuts or using ingredients that were labelled as containing nuts is labelled on both the menu and the food item itself.
- Provide nut-free choices.
- Be wary of contamination of other foods when preparing, handling and displaying food. For example, a tiny amount of peanut butter left on a knife and used elsewhere is enough to cause a severe reaction in anyone who is allergic.
- Place notifications about your canteen's procedure regarding nut allergy in a visible place as a reminder to all workers.

HINT: Some schools may have the child's name and photo displayed in the canteen as a reminder to staff.

Absolute and strict avoidance of nuts and nut products is extremely important for anyone with an anaphylactic nut allergy. It is recommended that a dietician is consulted if the canteen is required to provide food for a child with this allergy.

Lactose (dairy) intolerance

Lactose is the sugar found in dairy foods. There are varying degrees of lactose intolerance. Some children can only tolerate low amounts of lactose. For these children, provide some non-dairy, calcium-rich foods such as calcium-enriched soy drinks. Ensure some lunch choices are dairy-free. Yoghurt and hard yellow cheeses are lower in lactose than other dairy foods and so may be tolerated in small amounts. However, this should be clarified with the parents.

Food additives and food intolerances

Food intolerances are usually triggered by naturally occurring chemicals in foods rather than additives. Food intolerance results in mild symptoms such as bloating and skin rashes. This condition is different to food allergies which are a more severe reaction and can be fatal.

Food additives are commonly reported as a cause of food intolerance. Medical opinion, however, reports that true intolerance to food additives only occurs in a very small proportion of the population¹. If a child has a genuine intolerance to a particular food additive the parents should be able to notify the school and canteen of the exact additive name and code to look for on food labels.

What are food additives?

Food additives are substances that are added to processed foods in small amounts. These additives may be synthetic, or naturally occurring substances such as vitamin C (in fruit) or lecithin from egg yolks.

Food additives are used to improve:

- quality or stability of a food, for example sorbitol is added to dried fruit to retain its moisture and softness
- taste or appearance of a processed food, for example lecithin is added to margarine to give it a nice texture.

Are food additives safe?

There has been increasing concern regarding the safety of food additives. Food standards in Australia are very stringent and a food additive is only authorised for use in Australia after extensive testing to show no harmful effects resulting in the general population from long-term consumption.

Labelling of food additives

Australian food-labelling laws require all food additives to be identified on the product label. Previously just a code system was used according to the functional classification of the additive, but now labels must state the actual name of the additive. For more information on food additive codes and labelling visit the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand website: www.foodstandards.gov.au/whatsinfood/foodadditives.cfm.

¹ Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy. www.allergy.org.au



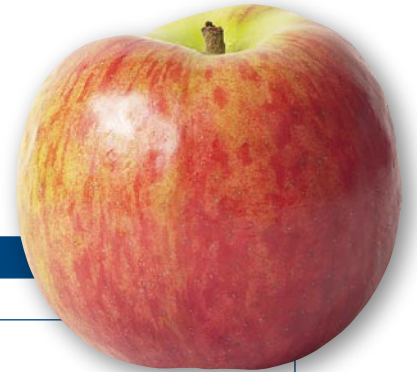
› Making recipes healthier

Many of your favourite recipes may only need a few changes to make them healthier. Modify your favourite recipes by:

- reducing or removing certain ingredients, for example fat, sugar or salt
- substituting healthier ingredients where possible
- changing the cooking method.

Experiment, but remember to taste test or trial any new recipes with students before selling them. Some recipes are best kept for special occasions!

Try some of the modifications outlined in the following table.

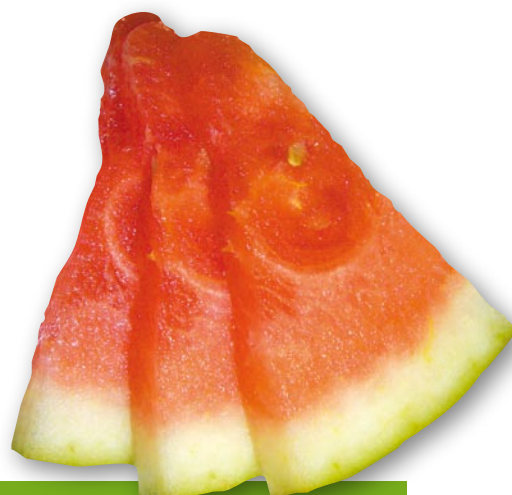


INGREDIENT	HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVE
Full-cream milk	Skim or low-fat milk
Full-cream yoghurt, ice-cream and custard	Low-fat varieties
Cream	Chilled, whipped, reduced-fat evaporated skim milk Low-fat ricotta blended with a little icing sugar, fruit or low-fat milk Low-fat vanilla yoghurt or custard
Sour cream or cream cheese	Low-fat natural yoghurt Reduced-fat evaporated milk and lemon juice Ricotta or cottage cheese Reduced-fat cream cheese
Cheese	Smaller amounts of stronger-tasting cheese (for example grated parmesan instead of grated tasty) Smaller amounts of reduced-fat varieties
Butter, margarine, oils and lard or copha	Mono/polyunsaturated oils and margarines Smaller amounts – use an oil spray or brush Spread margarine thinly or do not use it at all Use stocks, juices or other sauces for sautéing instead of oil Steam or bake instead of frying Halve the fat (oil or margarine) in cakes and sweet recipes – it will not have a significant effect on the final product
Mayonnaise and dressings	Try: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fat-free dressings • low-fat yoghurt as a base • fruit juices/herbs • balsamic vinegar • soy/sweet chilli/lime dressing • low-fat spreads such as chutney, mustard, tomato salsa or paste, fruits, ricotta or cottage cheese, hommus
Meat	Remove skin and visible fat before cooking Choose lean cuts and buy skinless chicken Reduce amount of meat in a recipe and replace with legumes or vegetables Grill or bake meats instead of frying Avoid crumbing and battering meats Drain fat off mince during cooking

INGREDIENT	HEALTHIER ALTERNATIVE
Eggs	Use two whites in place of one whole egg
Pastry	Use filo pastry instead of shortcrust or puff pastry Choose reduced-fat puff pastry or use less, for example only cover a pie with pastry Make a cooked rice crust – mix cooked rice with egg white and press into pie plate
Cakes and biscuits	Use the minimum amount of fat needed for biscuits – 2 tablespoons per cup of flour Add mashed pumpkin, stewed fruit or yoghurt to moisten cakes or muffins Use polyunsaturated or monounsaturated oil or margarine instead of butter Choose scones, pikelets, fruit breads, yeast breads and fruit cakes – they contain less fat Reduce sugar to 1/4 cup per cup of flour when making cakes Use canned or dried fruit or fruit juice instead of sugar to sweeten cakes, sweets or biscuits
Sauces and gravies	Use fruit sauce or chutneys Do not use pan juices for gravy Choose low- or reduced-sodium sauces, stock powders, seasoning and gravy powders Use low-fat evaporated milk or low-fat yoghurt for creamy sauces Use reduced-fat cheese or ricotta cheese in white sauces
Coconut milk or cream	Use evaporated low-fat milk plus coconut essence Use low-fat yoghurt with a little desiccated coconut Use a tomato base and just add a dash of reduced coconut milk or powder for flavour
To increase fibre	Use plenty of fruit and vegetables – wash and leave unpeeled where possible Use wholegrain breads, cereals, rice and flour Add wholegrain, high-fibre products to recipes, for example grainy bread in bread and butter pudding, seeds or cereal to fruit crumble topping, oats to rissoles, legumes such as kidney beans, lentils or baked beans to mince and other savoury dishes. Add fruit and seeds to cakes and dessert food
To reduce sodium (salt)	Do not add salt to water when cooking pasta Do not add salt to sandwich fillings Use low- or reduced-salt sauces, gravies and stocks Flavour with herbs and spices rather than salt Choose garlic and onion powder instead of garlic and onion salt Be careful of seasoning mixes as many are high in salt

HINTS

- *When reducing the fat or sodium content of a dish, try using more herbs, spices or lemon juice to enhance the flavour.*
- *Stew fruit without sugar and add apple, dried fruit or fruit juice for extra sweetness and cinnamon or cloves for extra flavour.*
- *Write recipes up on a template that lists ingredients, instructions and costing per serve. A log or diary of whenever the recipe is cooked is also useful on a recipe template. (Refer to Recipe ideas file on page 17.)*



› Reading food labels

There are many manufactured products available and promoted to canteens. Some manufacturers are now tapping into the healthy canteen movement and marketing healthier versions. An understanding of food labels is essential in helping choose healthier foods.

Nutrient claims

These are statements on the front of the packet telling you about the product. For example, 97 per cent fat free, high fibre, low fat, low sodium. Most of these claims are genuine and help you to determine if the product is suitable.

The following are some common nutrient claims used in advertising that may be misleading and should be checked against the nutrition information panel or ingredient list.

Light/lite

This does not always refer to the fat content; it may mean lighter in flavour or colour.

Reduced fat or % less fat

This means that the food has less fat than the regular product but does not necessarily mean that it is low in fat.

Cholesterol-free

This means that the product does not contain any cholesterol. But it does not mean it is fat-free or even low in fat. All foods that originate from plants and their oils are free of cholesterol but are not necessarily free of or low in saturated fat.

No added sugar or salt

This means the product has had no sugar or salt added. The food may naturally contain high amounts of sugar or salt, for example 'no added sugar' orange juice is still high in fruit sugar.

All natural

This does not necessarily mean healthy. These products can sometimes still be high in sugar or saturated fat.

The nutrition information panel

Every product must have the nutritional values per 100 grams or 100 millilitres stated on the packaging. Use this information to compare products.

Use the per serve column to compare your serve to that recommended. One serve may not necessarily equal one packet or the amount you would normally eat.

Look at the example below.

Nutrition information panel

Servings per package: 8

	Average quantity per 100 g	Average quantity per 60 g serve
Energy	1555 kJ	467 kJ
Protein	8.6 g	2.6 g
Fat – total	1.1 g	0.3 g
– saturated	0.3 g	0.1 g
Carbohydrate – total	80.5 g	24.1 g
– sugars	13.7 g	4.1 g
Dietary fibre	9.4 g	2.8 g
Sodium	8 mg	2 mg
Potassium	424 mg	127 mg

The ingredients are listed in descending order of quantity. The nutrition information panel must state the levels of any nutrient about which a nutrition claim has been made on the packaging (for example high fibre, low salt, reduced fat).

Ingredients: Wholewheat, fruit paste (25%) (dried dates, sultanas, pear juice concentrate, glycerol, blackcurrant juice concentrate), sugar, vitamins (niacin, riboflavin, thiamine)

For current information about food labelling laws in Australia, refer to the Food Standards Australia and New Zealand website at: www.foodstandards.gov.au/whatsinfood.

› Choosing basic ingredients

Basic foods and ingredients such as bread, dairy and breakfast cereals, can be assessed using the table below.

FOOD	TOTAL FAT	FIBRE
Breakfast cereals*	Less than 5 g/100 g	8 g/100 g or more
Bread	Less than 5 g/100 g	5 g/100 g or more
Milk	Less than 2 g/100 g	
Cheese	Less than 15 g/100 g	
Yoghurt	Less than 2 g/100 g	
Ice-cream	Less than 5 g/100 g	
Mayonnaise, sauces, dressings	Less than 5 g/100 g	
Meats, for example mince	Less than 10 g/100 g	

*Breakfast cereals should contain no more than 15 g/100 g total sugar. Check the ingredient list for the type of sugar. Specific nutrient guidelines for sugar are not given. Check the ingredient list for the source of the sugar. Sugar that comes from a fruit or dairy source is more nutritious than sucrose.

Some products may be naturally high in fat (for example, margarine, cheese) and sugar (for example, honey) and may not meet these nutrient guidelines. Limit the amount of these foods used. Choose foods with fats that are low in saturated fat.

› Choosing commercial foods

Nutrient criteria for assessing Occasionally foods

When choosing commercial, pre-packaged foods, such as hot foods and snack foods, refer to the nutrient criteria for Occasionally foods (refer to page 13 of the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner). The criteria will enable a particular product to be assessed to determine if it falls into the Occasionally category or the Select Carefully category.

Using canteen-registered product buyer guides

There are several different canteen buyers guides (or registered product lists) available for school canteens. They are useful tools to assist canteens in choosing healthier food products. Most of these lists are based on a set of minimum nutrient criteria that a product must meet in order to be registered as suitable for sale in canteens. Buyer guides assist when assessing a manufactured product to see if it is above the nutrient criteria for an Occasionally food.

Most of the products listed are packaged foods that fit into the Select Carefully category. Manufactured products on these lists make easy, convenient additions to the menu to increase variety but should not dominate the menu or take the place of healthy Everyday fresh foods such as fruit and vegetables.

Examples of foods that may be found in these guides include reduced-fat and reduced-sodium pastries and savoury foods, reduced-fat, high-fibre cakes and muffins, snack foods based on fruit juices and low-fat dairy desserts.

REMEMBER: *The best choices of all – fresh fruit, vegetables, salad and lean meat sandwiches, milk and water – do not need to be registered as healthy in a buyer guide to prove how good they are.*

The canteen-registered product buyer guides available in Victoria include:

- Victorian School Canteen Association Buyers' Guide¹
- Australian School Canteen Association (ASCA) Buyers' Guide
- FOCiS Registered Products List (StarChoice)
- NSW School Canteens Association 'Healthy Kids' Products School Canteen Buyers Guide

Note: Canteen-registered product buyers guides may list some drinks that are not consistent with the 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner.

¹Canteen-registered product buyers guides provide a list of food products for sale to canteens that have been professionally assessed against the nutrient criteria for Occasionally foods and are suitable for sale in a healthy school canteen. There are many different guides available.

