

For:

- ✓ School council
- ✓ Principal and school leaders
- Teachers
- ✓ Canteen staff
- Students
- ✓ School community

'Go for your life'

Healthy Canteen Kit

getting
started



**go
for
your
life™**



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› Introduction

School canteens and other school food services are important educational resources. They have an important role in the provision of food to students and the school community as well as being an integral part of the school environment.

The school canteen should reflect the educational goals of the school and support and complement student learning. When consumed daily, the food provided through the school canteen may comprise a third of a student's total daily intake and have a significant influence on their health and nutrition.

It is important that parents, teachers and students work together to support a whole-school approach to building a school culture in which students actively choose nutritious foods and a healthy lifestyle.

The *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit* contains the following resources to assist schools to develop healthy canteens and other food services:

- *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy* explains the guiding principles, including food selection, food categories, food safety, and the role of the school council in developing a school food service policy.
- *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Food Planner* assists schools and canteens to make appropriate healthy food choices.
- *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Getting Started* provides advice about how to establish a healthy school food service. It includes healthy fundraising ideas, frequently asked questions and a sample canteen policy.
- *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Student Learning Activities* provides a suite of learning activities for each of the six levels of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) for Years Prep to 10.
- *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Canteen Manual* provides practical information for canteen managers and school personnel to assist with the management and day-to-day running of the school canteen.
- *'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit* CD-ROM provides an electronic copy of the entire kit.
- *At a glance planner* provides a quick reference in poster form to assist with healthy food choices.
- A poster to promote healthy food choices to students.

The 'Go for your life' Healthy Canteen Kit – Getting Started provides information about:

- why healthy food in schools is important
- developing a canteen policy
- how to establish a healthy food service
- developing a canteen menu that reflects the *School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy*
- answers to frequently asked questions
- healthy fundraising ideas
- resources that will support schools to develop a healthy food service.

It is recommended that school councils develop a policy for their canteen and other school food services. This policy-making process should include a discussion about the purpose of the school canteen within the school community.

Many school councils have contractual arrangements in relation to their canteens and these arrangements need to be honoured. Schools that have a specific relationship with a retail shop for the provision of school foods and drinks need to consider how this policy can be applied.

Changes to the school canteen menu or food service will vary from school to school depending on a variety of factors such as:

- how many days per week the canteen is open
- what food preparation facilities are available
- where the canteen is currently placed with respect to making healthy changes.





› Background information

Why is healthy food in schools important?

Nutrition is particularly important in the childhood years, which are a time of rapid growth and development. Healthy eating has a long lasting and positive impact on a child's growth, development and health. In addition, healthy eating will maximise a child's concentration and ability to learn. Nutrition during childhood is also important in preventing lifestyle diseases such as obesity, dental disease, Type 2 Diabetes, hypertension and, in later life, osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease and a range of cancers.

For children, the issue of healthy weight is also of importance. The incidence of overweight and obesity in children and young people in Australia has increased dramatically in recent years, with 1 in 4 children overweight or obese. This has serious long- and short-term health consequences. Excess weight gain in children is usually a result of eating too much food or the wrong type of food, combined with low energy expenditure – doing too little physical activity or being inactive for too much of the day. Children who are overweight or obese are at high risk of low self esteem, poor body image, risk taking behaviour and depression.

The school is a great environment to promote an enjoyment of healthy eating and to nurture a positive body image.

For many students who use the canteen regularly, the food purchased there makes a significant contribution to their total food intake and nutrition. For those students who do not use the school canteen or food service regularly, the canteen still plays an important educational and modelling role for healthy eating habits.

In addition to the provision of nutritious food, the canteen has an important role within the broader school environment in complementing the knowledge, skills and behaviours about healthy eating and lifestyles that are taught in the classroom. The food provided within the school environment has a considerable influence on the development of children's long-term eating habits, food preferences and attitudes towards food.

The school canteen can play an important role in promoting healthy foods and creating a school culture of healthy eating. This can extend beyond the school environment and influence food choices within the family and community, and enhance the social and multicultural aspects of food and eating.

Some nutritional issues that affect children include:

- growth
- bone health and development
- dental health
- weight management (overweight and obesity)
- eating disorders and body image
- mood, concentration and learning
- development of food preferences, tastes, eating habits and skills
- promotion of health and prevention of lifestyle disease
- nutritional adequacy.

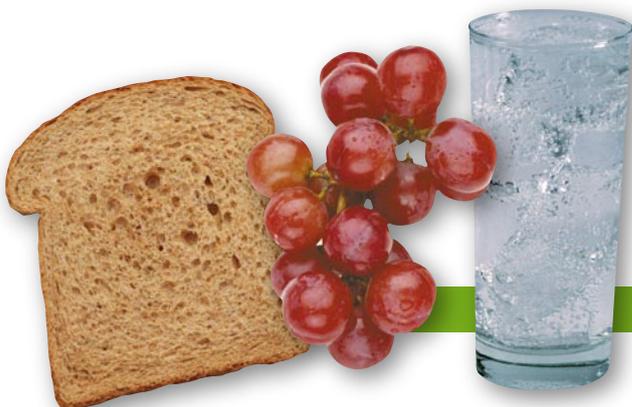
What are Australian children eating?

The National Nutrition Survey (n=2819) in 1995 revealed that on the day prior to the survey:

- 40 per cent of children surveyed ate no fruit and only 50 per cent met recommended intake*
- 23 per cent of children surveyed ate no vegetables and only 33 per cent met recommended intake*
- 51 per cent of this vegetable intake was potatoes and 75 per cent of potatoes were consumed fried or mashed with added fats
- 35 per cent of children surveyed ate snack foods such as potato chips*
- 54 per cent of children surveyed ate confectionery*
- 38 per cent of children surveyed drank beverages such as soft drink or cordial*
- the intake of dairy foods was inadequate to meet calcium requirements, in particular adolescent girls averaged less than 1 glass of milk per day and 37 per cent of 16–18-year-old girls had no milk.

**1995 National Nutrition Survey (8–11-year-olds, n=1 032.7)*

(These values are an average of male and female data for 8–11-year-olds. Values for the 4–7 year age group data are very similar.)



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Establishing a healthy school food service

The following process will assist a school to develop a healthy food service:

