

Menu Planning and Nutrition Education

Student nutrition programs provide an ideal setting for educational opportunities that help student to develop lifelong healthy eating practices. Being in a relaxed, informal setting with friends, food and eating can be a positive experience for students.

For nutrition education, resources/activities or posters, call York Region Community and Health Services at 1-800-735-6625 ext. 4397

Involve Students and Parents

Involving students and parents/guardians in menu planning, helps them to learn about new foods in addition to their favorites. Students can try foods they have never had before, using their senses to smell, touch and taste.

Adult Role Models

As good role models, staff and adult volunteers should prepare and serve nutritious foods and respond to questions the students have about the foods being served in the program.

Learning about Nutrition

Learning activities should be simple, relaxing and fun. Decorate the program area with posters, books and other resources that support healthful eating practices and give the children a positive message about food and eating.

Engage the school's teachers in making nutritional posters, place mats, and stories that can be shared and displayed around the school. Other ideas include developing skits or songs, or putting on a puppet show.

Inform parents/guardians about nutrition program achievements through the school newsletter or as a display at the school council meeting or parent night.

Be Environmentally Friendly

Being environmentally friendly at school is encouraged, so involve students and parents/guardians in making your nutrition program kind to the environment.

Reduce waste by:

- **buying** in bulk whenever possible to reduce the amount of packaging thrown away
- **considering** student's food preferences and offering appropriate food portions
- **starting** a school compost
- **avoiding** disposable products.

Plan to:

- recycle cans, bottles, etc., according to local recycling program
- buy foods locally.

Menu Planning

Good menu planning is important for running a successful SNP. It will help to sustain your program and ensure that each student is provided with a nutritious meal throughout the school year.

Call **York Region Food for Learning** if you need help planning your menus. Call 1-800-735-6625 ext. 4397 for guidance and suggestions regarding healthy, culturally appropriate, economical food choices for your program.

How to Plan your Menu

- Before starting, ask a parent/guardian/volunteer to help plan the menu.
- Prepare menus for two weeks at a time and use a calendar to list the menu schedule.
- Use *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* * to select a variety of foods from all four food groups. Make sure that breakfast and lunch includes 3 out of the 4 food groups and snacks include 2 out of the 4 food groups. Look through recipe books for food ideas. *See sample Menu Ideas on page 44.*
- Post menus in a location where they can be seen by parents/guardians, children and volunteers.
- Create menus that are flexible and allow for changes in food prices and availability. *See Sample Menu Ideas on page 45.*
- Change your menu 2-3 times per year to add variety.

*Use *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*

- Include at least three of the four food groups for breakfast and/or lunch.
- Breakfast should provide about one-quarter of the day's calories and nutrients.
- Include at least two of the four food groups for snacks.

To encourage students to eat well

- **fruit or juice, cereal and milk, whole grain bread, toast, and crackers**
- **should be available, regardless of what other choices are provided in the snack and/or breakfast program.**

Grain Products

- Children 4 – 8 yrs need 4 servings and 9 + need 6 servings of whole grains or enriched breads and cereals per day.
- Choose whole grain breads or cereals – they have more fibre, vitamins and minerals than white bread and processed cereals.
- Buy a variety of breads, including rye and multigrain.

Examples of one serving:

- 1 slice of bread
- ¾ cup (175 mL) hot cereal
- 30 g cold cereal (this varies so read package for cup measure)
- 1 small bran muffin
- 1 small to medium whole wheat pancake
- 1 waffle.

For a program set of *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* contact, York Region Community and Health Services, Nutrition Services at 1-800-735-6625 ext. 4335

Examples of two servings of grains:

- 1 small bagel, medium pita or bun
- 1 cup (250 mL) cooked rice or pasta
- 1 English muffin

Vegetables and Fruit

- Select fruit or vegetables that are high in vitamin C, such as oranges, grapefruit, orange juice, vitaminized apple juice or tomato juice.
- Choose dark green and orange vegetables and orange fruit (such as carrots, cantaloupe and orange juice) more often because they are high in certain key nutrients such as vitamin A and folacin.

Example of one serving:

- ½ cup (125 mL) fruit or vegetable juice
- 1 medium-size apple, orange, banana, peach or pear
- ½ cup (125 mL) grapes, cherries or pineapple
- ½ grapefruit
- ¼ to ½ cup (50 to 125mL) dried fruit: prunes, dried apricots, raisins, dates or apples
- 1 medium-size potato, carrot, celery stalk or tomato
- ½ cup (125 mL) raw cauliflower or broccoli florets.

Fruit Juice versus Fruit Drinks See *Nutrition Matters Fact Sheet in Resource section 11.*

- Look on the label for the word “juice” rather than “drink” “cocktail,” “punch” “beverage” “ade” or “blend”.
- Look for 100 per cent pure juice.

- Packaged fruit-flavoured drinks, or beverages made from crystals, might contain vitamin C, but not the potassium, B-vitamins, fibre and other nutrients that real juice provides.

*See Section 11 Resources for a copy of *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide Focus on Children Six to Twelve Years.*

Milk Products

- It is important to include a choice from this group at breakfast because children may not drink milk at school during lunch.
- Children 4 to 8 years old need two servings of milk products a day.
- Youths 9 to 16 years need three to four servings of milk products a day.
- Check the labels and choose products with a lower percentage milk fat (M.F.) or butter fat (B.F.), such as 1% milk.
- Low-fat milk products still provide the high-quality protein and calcium essential to healthy eating.

Examples of one serving:

- 1 cup (250 mL) milk
- ¾ cup (175 gm) yogurt
- ½ cup (125 mL) shredded Cheddar or processed cheese
- 2 cheese slices (50 g)
- cheese piece 3x1x1 inch (7.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm).

Meat and Alternatives

- Children need two to three servings of meat and alternatives every day.
- This food group is especially important for protein and iron.

Examples of one serving:

- 1 to 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup (100 g) tofu
- 1/2 to 1 cup (125 to 250 mL) cooked legumes, such as kidney beans or chickpeas
- 50 to 100 grams meat, poultry or fish (100 grams is about the size of a deck of cards or 1 chop or a small hamburger patty)

Shopping for Food

- Check cupboards and refrigerator to see what you have in stock.
- Look through store flyers and discount coupons before you go to the grocery store to get an idea of what is on sale.
- List menu items on your shopping list.
- Purchase foods that are frequently eaten like bread, cereal and crackers in bulk.
- Buy store brand products. They are usually cheaper than brand name food items.
- Keep purchases within budget.
- To help future planning, keep a list of suppliers. *See Sample Supplier's List on page 46.*

Costing out the Menu

York Region Food for Learning has determined the average daily costs to feed one child:

\$1.00	breakfast
\$0.65	snack
\$2.00	lunch

When planning your menu, try to keep the average daily food costs equal to the cost of feeding one child a breakfast, lunch or snack (*see Sample Menu Planning Worksheet Breakfast at the end of this section*). Be sure to include the serving sizes for each food item. For example 1 medium orange, 1 cup milk, 1/2 bagel, 3 carrot sticks.

Once you have costed the menu, include food donations and make adjustments where necessary.

The following is an example of how to calculate the cost per serving of a 750 gram box of cereal which costs \$3.79.

1) To determine the number of serving/ package:

$$\frac{\text{Total amount in package (750 g)}}{\text{serving size (30 g)}} = 25 \text{ servings}$$

2) To determine the cost/serving:

$$\frac{\text{total cost } (\$3.79)}{\text{\# of servings (25)}} = \$0.15/\text{serving}$$

Serving the Food

- Plan a pleasant atmosphere for eating. Have adults eat with the students when possible. Students learn table manners and food attitudes by example and are more likely to try new foods in this setting.
- Celebrate occasions with your menu. Halloween can be the occasion for pumpkin muffins; Easter, scrambled eggs in a pita; or Hanukkah, potato latkes or noodle pudding. Birthdays can be celebrated with muffin cupcakes or banana breakfast bars. On Fridays, serve something special the children particularly like, such as personal pizzas. Students can prepare place mats and centerpieces and other decorations especially for any of the occasions noted above.
- Whenever possible, include students in preparing, serving food and cleaning up.
- Regardless of personal preferences, servers should have an enthusiastic approach to all food offered.
- All servers should follow hand-washing procedures.

Special Dietary Needs

- Some students may require special menus for health reasons. For example, there are students with food allergies, lactose intolerance, or diabetes. Some religions and cultures do not permit certain foods, such as beef pork or any meat.
- Send a letter to parents/guardians asking them if their child(ren) have special food needs. It is the responsibility of

parents/guardians to inform the school of any food allergies, special dietary needs or dietary restrictions.

- Keep records of students who require special menus. Ensure that all of the people preparing and serving food are aware of these students.
- A public health nutritionist/dietitian and parents/guardians can help with menu substitutions for students with special needs.
- Always supervise students when they are eating. Some foods are not suitable for students for safety reasons. For example, young children can choke on foods such as raw carrot sticks, grapes or wieners.

Food Allergies

- Check with school principal to see if a school food allergy policy exists.
- Ask the school principal for the emergency plan procedure for a student with an allergy. Post a photo of the student with an allergy in the food preparation area. Along with this, list the allergies and the instructions on how to deal with reactions beside each student's photo.
- Follow parents'/guardians' instructions carefully regarding foods their children should avoid.
- Some students can have a life-threatening allergic reaction to a particular food. Provide alternatives to menu items when necessary.

Sample • Menu Ideas

Sample Cold Breakfast Menu Ideas for Centres without Cooking Facilities

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1) ½ medium whole wheat pita bread
 2 ham slice
 ¼ cup grated cheese
 ½ cup unsweetened grape juice</p> <p>2) 1 medium carrot muffin
 1 medium banana
 ¾ cup yogurt
 ½ cup unsweetened apple juice</p> | <p>3) 1 whole wheat bagel
 2 processed cheese slices
 1 slice of tomato
 ½ cup unsweetened orange juice</p> <p>4) ¾ cup cereal
 1 cup 1% or 2% milk
 1 medium orange
 ½ cup unsweetened apple juice</p> |
|---|---|

Sample Hot Breakfast Menu Ideas for Centres with Cooking Facilities

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|--|---|
| <p>1) 2 waffles with syrup
 ½ cup apple sauce
 ½ cup carrot sticks
 1 cup 1% or 2% milk</p> <p>2) ½ cup baked beans
 1 slice whole wheat bread with butter
 1/8 cantaloupe sliced
 1 cup 1% or 2% milk</p> | <p>3) 1 scrambled egg
 1 slice whole wheat toast
 ¼ cup green pepper rings
 ¾ cup yogurt
 ½ cup unsweetened orange juice or water</p> <p>4) ¾ cup hot cooked oatmeal
 1 medium orange
 ½ medium banana
 1 cup 1% or 2% milk</p> |
|--|---|

Sample Snack Menu

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1) 6 whole wheat crackers
 2 tbsp cheddar cheese
 1 cup 1% or 2% milk</p> <p>2) 1 small bran muffin
 ½ medium banana
 1 cup 1% or 2% milk</p> | <p>3) ½ pita bread cut into wedges
 2 tbsp hummus
 ½ cup carrot sticks
 ½ cup unsweetened orange juice</p> <p>4) 3 Arrowroot cookies
 ¾ cup yogurt
 1/8 sliced cantaloupe sliced</p> |
|--|--|

Sample One Week Breakfast Menu

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Grain Products	whole wheat pita bread	carrot muffin	whole wheat bagel	cereal	waffles
Vegetables & Fruit	grape juice	banana apple juice	slice of tomato orange juice	orange	apple sauce carrot sticks
Milk Products	grated cheddar cheese	yogurt	processed cheese slices	1% milk	1% milk
Meat and Alternatives	ham slices				
Other Foods					syrup

One Week Menu Planning Worksheet

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Grain Products					
Vegetables and Fruit					
Milk Products					
Meat & Alternatives					
Other Foods					

Sample Costed Menu Planning Worksheet for a Breakfast Program

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
	Food & svg size	Cost /svg	Food & svg size	Cost /svg	Food & svg size	Cost /svg	Food & svg size	Cost /svg	Food & svg size	Cost /svg
Grain Products	½ whole wheat pita bread	.10	1 med. carrot muffin	.25	1 med. whole wheat bagel	*DF	¾ cup unsweetened cereal	.21	2 waffles	.28
Vegetables and Fruit	½ cup unsweetened grape juice	.08	1 med. banana	.20	1 slice tomato	.10	1 medium orange	.40	½ cup carrot sticks	.12
			½ cup unsweetened apple juice	.08	½ cup unsweetened orange juice	.08	½ cup unsweetened apple juice	.08	½ cup unsweetened apple juice	.08
Milk Products	¼ cup grated cheese	.62	¾ cup yogurt	.59	2 processed cheese slices	.40	1 cup 1% milk	.24	1 cup 1% milk	.24
Meat and Alternatives	2 ham slices	.69								
Other Foods									syrup	.01
Total Cost	**\$1.49		**\$1.12		**\$0.58		**\$0.93		**\$0.73	

*DF – Indicates donated food

The average daily cost to fee one child breakfast = $1.49 + 1.12 + 0.58 + 0.93 + 0.73 \div 5 = \1.00

Costed Menu Planning Worksheet

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday	
	Food Item & Svg Size	Cost / svg	Food Item & Svg Size	Cost / svg	Food Item & Svg Size	Cost / svg	Food Item & Svg Size	Cost / svg	Food Item & Svg Size	Cost / svg
Grain Products										
Vegetables and Fruit										
Milk Products										
Meat and Alternatives										
Other Foods										
Total Cost										