

Healthier Eating and Nutrition in Public Schools: A Handbook for Policy 711

Updated: March 2008

This handbook is for use by school districts, schools, parents/guardians and the school community at large.

Topics:

Food Categories	2
Portions and Servings	3
Combination Foods	4
Everybody has a Role to Play	5
Fundraising Alternatives	6
Food Safety	7
Healthier Eating & Nutrition Activities	8
Recognizing Great Efforts	9
Resources	10

The value of healthy eating and nutrition

The Department of Education has an ongoing commitment to promoting healthier eating and nutrition. This is reflected in the release of *Policy 711 - Healthier Foods and Nutrition in Public Schools*.



Policy 711 outlines the requirements for healthy foods served in public schools, food awareness, and the sale of foods throughout the school system.

What does this policy mean?

✓ The sale and promotion of foods at school, including those in vending machines, only consist of foods with

maximum and moderate nutritional value.

✓ Since September 2007, foods with minimum nutritional value are no longer available, including those in vending machines.

✓ *Fundraising* - the sale of foods with minimum nutritional value in fundraising initiatives, such as chocolate bars, is no longer permitted. This does not apply to parent/community groups who may request participation of high school students in fundraising activities after school hours.

This handbook supplements the requirements laid out in Policy 711. It provides additional information on healthier foods to be served in

schools, fundraising alternatives with products that are compatible with Policy 711, as well as information for the support and promotion of healthy eating and an active lifestyle throughout the public school system.

This handbook is also meant to complement the great work currently underway in the public school system and to ensure our students are as healthy as possible.



The Development of Policy 711

Currently, there is an enormous amount of activity going on at the school level with the goal of providing healthier food options in school and educating our students and school community about the value of healthy eating, nutrition and physical activity. This policy supports those efforts.

The Department of Education sincerely appreciates and supports all of the hard work that is currently underway and recognizes how far we have all come in addressing the issue of healthier eating.

Policy 711 was developed in consultation with many part-

ners: District Education Councils, superintendents, school districts, educators, the Department of Health, public health nurses with the *Healthy Learners in School Program*, public health nutritionists, and various food and beverage industry representatives.



Policy 711 is not suggesting that there are 'good' or 'bad' foods. Rather, there are foods that are healthier and other foods that need to be eaten in moderation and with careful attention to their nutritional value.

¹ **Homemade** – is defined as food prepared with ingredients from the maximum and moderate food categories (as opposed to commercially prepared meals).

² **Flavoured milk** – the nutritional value (protein, calcium, vitamin A & D, etc.) is the same for both white and flavoured milk. However, there is significantly more sugar in flavoured milks and therefore, more calories. In addition, there is a small amount of caffeine in chocolate milk which may also be a consideration.

For more information on healthier eating, visit Canada's Food Guide online at : www.healthcanada.gc.ca/



Food Categories for Schools

Maximum nutritional value – Offer these foods every day

Vegetables & Fruit

fresh or frozen fruit and vegetables; fruit canned in fruit juice; homemade¹ vegetable soups; salads from fresh fruit or vegetables; stir-fries; 100% fruit or vegetable juice (250 mL or less); frozen juice bars with 100% real juice; fruit compote, without sugar; dried fruit

Grain Products

whole grain products including: breads; rolls; bagels; pita; pan-cakes; English muffins; tortillas; pasta; crackers; rice; whole grain unsweetened cereals (hot or cold); homemade noodle

and rice soups; low fat, high fibre muffins

Every effort should be made to incorporate whole grain products into foods served in schools. When whole grain is not available, choose products made with enriched white flour, even though these foods are lower in fibre.



Meat & Alternatives

chicken; turkey (unbattered); lean or extra lean beef or pork; fish or seafood (unbattered); canned fish in water; legumes (beans, peas, lentils); eggs and egg substitute; tofu; soy products; peanut butter; unsalted/unsweetened nuts and seeds

All foods served are subject to the food allergy restrictions of schools.

Milk Products

white or flavoured² milk (2% MF or less); yogurt (2% MF or less); homemade¹ milk based soups or chowders; hard cheeses; fortified soy beverages.

Moderate nutritional value – Can be served twice a week

Vegetables & Fruit

fruit in light syrup; canned vegetables; trans fat free oven baked french fries; frozen fruit snacks; 98% or more real fruit juice (251-340 mL); fruit compote, with sugar added; salsa

Grain Products

low fat loaf breads (banana, zucchini, pumpkin, etc); low sodium soups;



whole grain, pre-sweetened cereals (hot or cold); popcorn (low fat); low fat cookies; fruit crisp (apple rhubarb, etc)

Milk Products

yogurt drinks; homemade puddings; cheese slices; homemade yogurt dips for fruit and vegetables; homemade milkshakes; frozen yogurt; cottage cheese (2% MF or less)

Meat & Alternatives

commercially breaded, baked meat, chicken, turkey or fish (not fried or previously fried); baked ham, lean cold cuts (ham, turkey or chicken); salted/unsweetened nuts and seeds, medium ground beef

All foods served are subject to the food allergy restrictions of schools

Minimum nutritional value – Should not be served at school

Vegetables & Fruit

fruit drinks and juice with less than 98% real fruit juice; poutine; deep fried french fries; canned fruit in heavy syrup; processed fruit snacks

Grain Products

pastries; pies; cakes; high fat muffins; doughnuts; pre-packaged cookies; pre-sweetened cereals; high fat crackers; chocolate/yogurt covered chewy granola bars

Milk Products

commercial milkshakes; ice cream

Meat & Alternatives

processed meats (pepperoni, salami, bologna, etc); fried or previously fried, battered or breaded meat, fish, chicken or turkey; hot dogs, bacon

Other

candy; chips; soft drinks (carbonated soda); sweetened beverages (commercially prepared iced teas, lemonade, sports drinks, etc.); high sugar syrups and toppings; deep fried products of any kind; chocolate (bars or candy); commercially prepared cookies



Everyone is different and has different energy needs. As such, the number of “Food Guide Servings” from each food group will vary based on the individual.

Having the amount and type of food recommended and following Canada’s Food Guide will help meet nutrient needs and reduce the risk of obesity.



**Source: Canadian Health Network and National Institute of Nutrition*

Portions and Servings

To eat in a more healthy way, it is very important to consider the amount you are eating in relation to your age, gender and level of regular physical activity.

Food portions have increased steadily in recent years. It is important to be familiar with the appropriate portions. Portions and servings have different meanings. A serving is a standard reference so that you can as-

sess the amount of food you are eating, based on the *Canada’s Food Guide*. A portion can be made up of several servings of foods.

The table below «*One Food Guide Serving Looks like*» serves as a helpful reminder of what is considered a serving for the various food groups.

It may seem as if the number of servings of *Grain Prod-*

ucts or Vegetables and Fruit is very high. But children (and adults) often have more than one serving at a time.

For example, a cup of spaghetti, a bagel or a hamburger bun each count as two servings of *Grain Products*. A 250mL juice box counts as two servings of *Vegetables and Fruit*. So it is easy to see how servings add up if we are aware of the appropriate sizes.

Recommended number of servings per day				
	Children		Teens	
Age	4-8 years	9-13 years	14-18 years	
Sex	Girls and Boys		Female	Male
Vegetables and Fruit	5	6	7	8
Grain Products	4	6	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	2	3-4	3-4	3-4
Meat and Alternatives	1	1-2	2	3

*One Food Guide Serving Looks Like...			
Vegetables & Fruit	Grain Products	Milk Products	Meat & Alternatives
one medium sized piece = tennis ball	1/2 bagel = hockey puck	1 cup (250mL) milk = small measuring cup	75 g meat, poultry or fish = deck of cards, computer mouse or palm of hand
1/2 cup (125mL) fresh, frozen or canned = light bulb or small fist	1/2 cup (125mL) rice or pasta = light bulb or small fist	3/4 cup (175mL) yogurt = small single serving container	3/4 cup (175mL) beans or lentils = fist or cupped hand
1 cup (250mL) raw greens or salad = fist or cupped hand	3/4 cup (175mL) hot cereal = fist or cupped hand	50g cheese = size of two thumbs	2 tbsp. (30mL) peanut butter = ping pong ball



The food categories on page 2 are meant to serve as a general guide and do not represent an exhaustive list of foods that can be made available in public schools.

If a food is placed in a particular category, it is safe to assume that foods similar to that one would be placed in the same category.



Foods are categorized according to the definitions provided in section 3.0 of Policy 711.

Note: in this handbook, as in Policy 711, any reference to food also includes beverages.

Combination Foods and Tips

A note on the food categories

The way we learn to eat is impacted by a variety of influences. Healthy habits need to be established early in life in order to eat well and live well.

Variety

It is important to eat many different foods everyday in order to achieve the daily nutrients you need for good health.

Moderation

A healthy, active lifestyle requires balance. Balance in the foods that we eat, and in the activities we choose, in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Moderation is key to a healthy lifestyle. Overindulging in any one food or activity can result in imbalance.

The **Healthy Learners in School Program** promotes and supports healthy eating and physical activity. For more information, or resources to encourage students to make better choices, please consult your district's **Healthy Learners in School Program** public health nurse.



Combination Foods

When serving *combination foods* or *mixed dishes*, consider in which categories the main ingredients belong.

Healthy combination foods contain at least one food from the maximum nutritional value category and at least one additional item from either the maximum or moderate nutritional value categories. Also, remember that food prepara-

tion plays a role in the food categories.

For example, lean or extra lean ground beef is a food with maximum nutritional value. However, if it is served as a hamburger with a processed cheese slice and mayonnaise, fat and sodium are added and therefore, the nutritional value changes.



Tips

Here are a few tips to facilitate the use of Policy 711's food categories:

1. Opt for foods that have been minimally processed.
2. Whenever possible, trans fat free products should be served.
3. Allergies should always be kept in mind when serving food in public schools.
4. Sauces/spreads such as ketchup, mayonnaise, sour cream, etc. used to complement foods should be low in fat and used in teaspoon (5mL) or tablespoon (15 mL) servings.
5. Meat should be broiled or baked instead of deep fried or battered.

Everybody has a role to play

All partners in the school community have a responsibility in promoting and providing healthier foods in public schools.

The school community consists of:

The classroom, the home, the school, the community, the district education council (DEC), the school district as well as the Department of Education.

Within this school community, each partner has certain responsibilities to en-

sure that healthier foods and nutrition play an important role in the public school system.

These responsibilities have been organized around three key areas of the comprehensive school health (CSH) model: education, services and support, and the social and physical environment.

The following table represents the responsibilities of school community partners. The categories are not mutually exclusive but rather represent a holistic approach to healthier eating and nutrition promotion and awareness.



Comprehensive School Health

(CSH) is defined as an approach to school-based health promotion involving a broad range of programs, activities, and services which take place in schools and their surrounding communities.

Such actions are designed not only to affect the health of individuals but also to change the environment in which we live and learn.

CSH is an integrated approach to health that incorporates 3 components: education, services and supports and the environment (social and physical).



	Education	Services and Support	Environment (social and physical)
Classroom	Discuss healthier food options whenever opportunities arise throughout the curriculum.	Intervene when foods with minimum nutritional value are habitually consumed at school.	Use healthier food options during special events and occasions. Never associate food with a reward or punishment.
Home	Model healthy eating and an active lifestyle.	Provide a healthy breakfast before school. Send healthier foods to school as snacks, lunches or for special events.	Ensure children receive positive messages concerning healthier food options.
School	Communicate Policy 711, as well as district and school policies, to members of the school community.	Provide adequate time for lunch in a calm, relaxed atmosphere.	Model healthy eating and an active lifestyle on school grounds. Recognize efforts made to promote healthy eating.
Community	Participate in activities organized by schools concerning healthier eating.	Prepare healthier foods for use in schools. Offer services free of charge or at a reduced rate to promote healthy eating.	Organize healthy eating activities in local schools such as cooking classes, health awareness sessions, etc.
DECs	Support initiatives that promote nutrition in schools.	Develop policies that address healthy eating and nutrition.	Regularly review district healthy eating policies to ensure they are being applied effectively.
School District	Support the <i>Healthy Learners in School Program</i> in the classroom.	Consistently apply the principles of these policies in school activities.	Encourage healthy eating and an active lifestyle in the school community.
Department of Education	Include up-to-date healthy eating and nutrition information in the curriculum.	Implement a provincial healthy eating and nutrition policy.	Ensure a comprehensive approach to implementing the policy by consulting with other partners.



The Department of Education is aware that the public school system relies heavily on fundraising dollars.

Foods such as chocolate bars and candy can be big money makers for local schools. But there are many other ways that schools can raise funds that do not involve the sale of foods with minimum nutritional value.

In order for this policy to be a success, we have to relay a consistent message about healthier foods.

Making the switch from selling foods with minimum nutritional value requires creativity and commitment.

This list is by no means exhaustive. It is designed to serve as a basic guide to be filled in by the many creative fundraising practices that are already underway in New Brunswick schools.

Fundraising Alternatives

Selling

- Citrus fruit by the box or bag
- Magazine subscriptions/book sales
- Raffle tickets
- Local produce such as apples or potatoes
- Seasonal arts and crafts made by the students
- Seeds, seasonal bulbs or cut flowers
- Candles
- Catalogue items
- Toothbrushes (some companies sell toothbrushes at cost for fundraising activities)
- School promotional items like t-shirts



Hosting

- Silent auctions of arts and crafts made by the students
- Community yard sales

Organizing

- Grocery bagging at the local market
- Healthy eating cookbook (compile and sell)
- School/Community bingo
- School/community fair or bazaar

Information Sharing



For example, if your school knows of a local farmer willing to provide produce at cost, take advantage of that opportunity.

See what fundraising resources or talents lie within the school community.



It is very important to interact with the local community and make people aware of the fundraising needs of the students and the schools.

Invite local businesses and organizations to the school in September to inform them of and involve them in various fundraising initiatives planned for the school year.

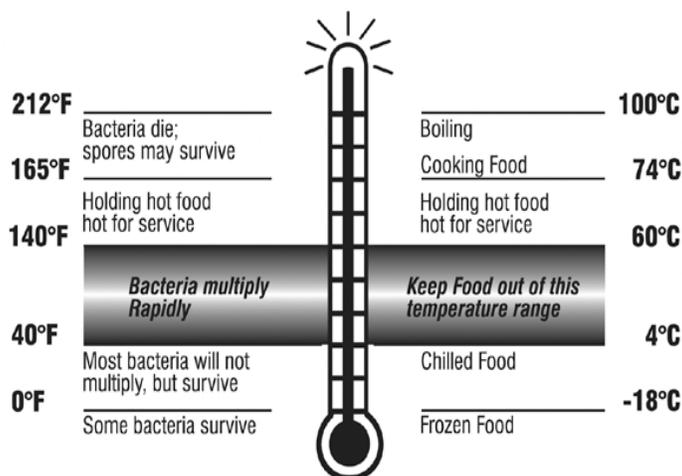
Food Safety

Considerations

Policy 711 specifies that all food service providers prepare and serve food with strict attention to food safety standards.

For more information on food safety, go to the Department of Health website:

<http://www.gnb.ca/0053/foodsafety/index-e.asp>



Prevent contamination!

Always maintain a clean meal preparation area. Wash utensils, containers and dishes with hot, soapy water after each use.

Food Safety First

Keep Cold Foods Cold

Meat and dairy products need to be refrigerated at 4°C, or below, at all times. No food in this category should be left at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Always thaw meat or poultry in the refrigerator, never on the counter.

Chill It

Always cool foods promptly after cooking. Use shallow pans or ice water baths to cool foods quickly in order to move them to the refrigerator faster.

Cooking destroys most bac-

teria but some might live and multiply if food is left at room temperature after cooking.

Clean It

Wash your hands often and then clean and sanitize work surfaces and utensils before and after handling raw meat, poultry or other foods. Any plate or utensil that has come into contact with raw meat, poultry or other foods must be cleaned before using for any other purpose.

Separate It

Always keep raw meat and poultry separate from cooked foods. This prevents

contamination of other foods.

Keep Hot Foods Hot

Hot food must be maintained at a temperature of at least 60°C and served immediately at that temperature. The only way to determine this temperature is with a thermometer.

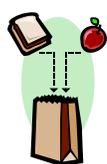
Wash Hands

Use hot water and soap to clean hands thoroughly before handling food.



Keep It Simple

Lunches can be made with foods that remain safe at room tem-



perature. Fresh fruit and vegetables, hard cheeses, breads, peanut butter*, jams, etc.

The best way to avoid food poisoning and other ill-

nesses is to properly prepare each meal.

**where allergies permit*





The activities suggested here are available free of charge, at low cost or could be supported by community partners.



Healthy Eating and Nutrition Activities

Promoting healthy eating and nutrition in schools

Simply implementing a policy will not be enough to transform the eating habits of New Brunswick students.

Students need the support of the entire school community to make a change for the better.

Organize activities within schools that reinforce messages about healthier eating and nutrition.

As much as possible, try to involve students in the planning of these activities and invite the school community

to participate whenever possible.

Suggestions:

- ✓ Talk about why students are choosing certain foods over others.
- ✓ Invite Freggie, or similar nutrition mascots, to come and talk at your school.
- ✓ Offer workshops on how to make healthy lunches.
- ✓ Role model healthy eating at school.
- ✓ Host a healthy snack day and try different healthy foods that students would not normally eat, like star fruit or lychee berries.
- ✓ Host a fruit salad day when kids bring in different fruit from home.
- ✓ Take field trips to grocery stores, local markets or farms to see where food comes from.
- ✓ Health Canada provides many resources free of charge to schools and the public.
- ✓ Produce a Healthy Eating newsletter for parents and students by a different class each month.
- ✓ Have special occasion menus so parents know just what to prepare.
- ✓ Make use of theme months—March is Nutrition Month.
- ✓ Take advantage of community resources such as nursing students from local universities and colleges.
- ✓ Host school health fairs.
- ✓ Implement a nutrition tip of the week.
- ✓ Promote a healthy lifestyle in the classroom by incorporating exercise in discussions on nutrition.
- ✓ Make lunch placemats—students can decorate their own to let parents know what foods are appropriate by meal.
- ✓ Invite a public health inspector to discuss food safety with all staff and volunteers handling and serving foods in the school.
- ✓ Network with parents to see if there are free services that might be provided, such as talks from a dietician, nutritionist or local athlete.
- ✓ Create a comprehensive school health calendar in which the dates of important events are clearly marked for partners and students. This is something that can be done in class by the students themselves.
- ✓ Taste test days—get students to try a variety of foods in the classroom.
- ✓ Post a recipe of the week on the school website.
- ✓ Make Healthy Lunchbox fridge magnets.
- ✓ Appoint a fruit or vegetable of the week. When students are seen eating them, award a non-food prize.
- ✓ Use the *Healthy Learners in School Program*, the *Healthy Minds School Nutrition Program* and other resources.



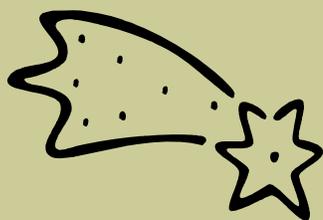
Recognize Great Efforts

Students in New Brunswick public schools have plenty of opportunity off school grounds to indulge in foods that have minimum nutritional value. As such, every effort should be made to encourage healthy eating in school.

Recognizing efforts is a great way to encourage the adoption of healthy eating habits. For example, recognize students who bring healthy lunches to schools. An award or certificate can be a unique way to celebrate and recognize schools, teachers or students who are committed to healthier eating and nutrition. Perhaps even a simple congratulations in a newsletter or on a website. There are many ways the school community can celebrate healthy eating.

Teachers can praise students who pack healthy lunches; principals can applaud teachers who go above and beyond in the classroom; District Education Councils can recognize schools who have promoted and support healthy eating; and, the Minister of Education can highlight successful districts for their efforts in improving the health and wellness of their students and staff.

By promoting healthier eating and nutrition throughout the school community, students, teachers and parents will begin to make the shift from foods with minimum nutritional value to choices that supplement and encourage a healthy lifestyle.



Why not reward schools who are going above and beyond to promote and support healthy eating?

Any kind of recognition is a great way to validate positive efforts.

Resources to promote and support healthier eating and nutrition in New Brunswick's public schools:

Government of New Brunswick:

www.gnb.ca

Department of Education

<http://www.gnb.ca/0000/index-e.asp>

- › Healthy Minds School Nutrition Program
- › New Brunswick School Milk Program

Policies

<http://www.gnb.ca/0000/policies.asp>

- › Policy 127 - Management of Food Services in Schools
- › Policy 312 - Fundraising Involving Door-to-Door and Public Solicitation
- › Policy 315 - School/Community Partnerships and Sponsorships
- › Policy 704 - Health Support Services

Department of Health

- › Healthy Learners in School Program www.gnb.ca/0053/programs/healthylearners-e.asp
- › Food Safety www.gnb.ca/0053/foodsafety/index-e.asp

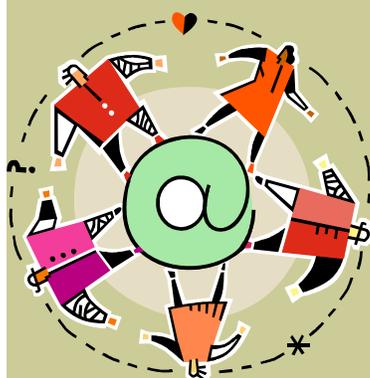
Department of Wellness, Culture and Sport

<http://www.gnb.ca/0131/index-e.asp>

- › Vegetable and Fruit Middle School Grant Program
- › NB Student Wellness Survey

Other Sources

- › Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide- www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide
- › Freggie - Canadian produce industry mascot www.freggietales.com/
- › Dietitians of Canada www.dietitiansofcanada.ca/
- › Health Canada www.hc-sc.gc.ca/
- › Breakfast for Learning www.breakfastforlearning.ca



Visit us on the Internet for more information on healthy eating!



Notes



Department of Education
PO Box 6000
Fredericton, NB
E3B 5H1
(506) 453-3678
March 2008

Ce document est également disponible en français