

STUDENT NUTRITION PROGRAM SUPPLEMENTAL GUIDANCE

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Are you involved in supporting your school's Student Nutrition Program?

If so, follow these guidelines to serve up options that are both nutritious and safe.

Healthy eating is important for student learning, well-being, and growth and development. If your school has a Student Nutrition Program, you can help maximize its impact on student health and learning by offering nutritious and safe food options.

Student Nutrition Programs can:

- Help students gain the knowledge and skills needed to make healthy food choices.
- Support positive mental and physical health.
- Build confidence and provide a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Create partnerships and connections with community organizations and businesses.
- Develop environmental responsibility.

Not sure what to serve? Think about the equipment available, how food will be prepared and its nutritional value.

Low Risk Foods:

If you plan to prepare and serve low risk and/or pre-packaged foods, whole or cut fruits and vegetables, OR serve food that has been prepared at another inspected location (e.g. local restaurant, caterer) and doesn't require further preparation at the school.

You will need:

- ✓ Access to a sink for hand washing with liquid soap and paper towel or air dryer.
- ✓ A fridge or freezer with a thermometer for any items that need to be kept cold.
- ✓ A dishwasher, two-sink or three-sink method for cleaning and sanitizing dishes and utensils after each use or use only disposable plates, bowls, cups, and utensils.

Food handler certification **is not required.**

It is still important to understand safe food handling practices while handling food. The food premises operator may consider implementing internal food safety training or procedures are developed to ensure all staff and volunteers are provided with food safety knowledge.

Sample Menu items:

- Whole fruit and vegetables
- Fruit / vegetables, cut into pieces and individually packaged
- Individually wrapped or pre-packaged:
 - Unsweetened apple sauce cups
 - Fruit cups packed in water
 - Yogurt cups and tubes, or cheese strings
 - Pre-boiled, peeled, hard boiled eggs
 - Roasted chickpeas or beans
 - Hummus
 - Low-mercury, boneless fish (e.g. light tuna or salmon)
 - Sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, nut-free butter (in accordance with your school's anaphylaxis policy)
- Sliced bagel, toast, English muffin
- Muffins, biscuits, crackers, breadsticks (with whole grain or whole wheat as the first ingredient less than 8g sugar)
- Granola or cereal bar (with less than 8g sugar/no chocolate)
- Individually packaged or pre-portioned cold cereal (with less than 8g sugar, with whole grain, whole wheat, or bran as the first ingredient)

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High Risk Foods:

If you plan to prepare and serve foods that are higher risk for foodborne illness.

You will need:

- ✓ Access to a separate sink for hand washing with liquid soap and paper towel or air dryer.
- ✓ A food grade, smooth, non-absorbent food preparation surface.
- ✓ A fridge or freezer with a thermometer for those items that need to be kept cold.
- ✓ A three-compartment sink or commercial dishwasher for dishwashing.
- ✓ An appropriate, labelled sanitizer with test strips.
- ✓ Utensils to handle and serve foods or wear gloves to handle ready-to-eat foods.

Food handler certification is required.

A [certified food handler](#) must be on site, when food is being prepared and served.

Sample Menu items:

- Milk (multi-serve e.g. 2L, 4L)
- Block cheese cut into slices
- Cooked or prepared whole grains (e.g. pancakes, waffles, sandwiches, pasta etc.)
- Hot or cold cereals
- Cooked eggs
- Hummus

Some foods are not suitable for children under the age of 4, including:

- Whole fruits with a hard texture or a pit
- Whole baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, grapes
- Fibrous fruits and vegetables with a stringy texture
- Whole seeds larger than sesame seeds
- Popcorn

All Schools must also follow these minimum requirements to maintain food safety and promote well-being:

- All schools must comply with the [Ontario Food Premises Regulation \(O. Reg 493/17\)](#).
- All foods served at Student Nutrition Programs must meet the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCSS) [Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines](#). Foods and beverages should be minimally processed and have lower amounts of added sugar, salt and saturated fat and be good sources of nutrients such as fibre, calcium and iron.
- All foods provided must come from a facility that is already inspected (e.g. grocery store, catering company, etc.) and be transported at a safe temperature (e.g. cold foods in a cooler).
- Foods prepared at home must be approved by the local health unit.
- All foods must be stored at least 15 cm (6 inches) off the floor.
- Foods must be wrapped or kept in covered containers when stored.
- Refrigerators are required for storing high-risk foods such as meat, eggs, and dairy products.
- An accurate thermometer must be available in each cold-holding unit (e.g. refrigerator, freezer or cooler with ice).
- Temperature must be checked regularly to ensure that refrigerated foods are kept at 4°C (40°F) or colder.
- Hands must be washed with soap and running water or using hand sanitizer before preparing food and after sneezing or coughing and using the washroom. Educate students to wash their hands before and after eating.
- Surfaces where food is served must be clean and sanitized with bleach, QUAT or an approved food grade disinfectant.

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Washing the Dishes

- Dishwashing can be done by hand with the proper sink facilities or with a dishwasher.
- Wash and rinse utensils in a separate sink from handwashing or ensure the sink is thoroughly cleaned and sanitized prior to dishwashing.
- The sanitizing step should be conducted in a second or third sink; however, if not readily available, substituting the second or third sink with a dishwash container or bin may be used to complete the sanitizing step.

Sanitizer options and how to prepare them

Quaternary Ammonium-Based Products Strength – 200 parts per million (ppm).

- Measure according to the manufacturer's label. You may need to rinse any food contact surface after sanitizing with ammonium.

OR

Bleach - 100 parts per million (ppm).

- To make 100ppm chlorine sanitizer, mix 2 ml of (5 per cent strength) bleach per litre of water.