

**Guidelines for  
Food and Beverage Sales  
in BC Schools**

**Ministry of Education  
&  
Ministry of Health**

**Revised  
September 2007**



**ActNowBC**

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## Overview

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Schools in British Columbia are at the forefront of creating healthy eating environments. The sale of junk-food is steadily being replaced with healthy food and beverage choices in school vending machines, cafeteria, stores, and school fundraisers.

The 2007 update to the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools* (2005 Guidelines) strengthens BC's commitment to providing a healthy eating environment for students. The former implementation date of 2009 has been accelerated to 2008. The revised Guidelines also contain stricter nutrition criteria for the consumption of calories, fat, salt, and sugar to support making food and beverage choices in BC schools the healthiest in North America.

## Background

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In November of 2005, the Ministries of Health and Education published the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools*, with the instruction to schools to implement these Guidelines fully by 2009. The 2005 Guidelines reflected BC's commitment to health and education. The 2005 Guidelines recognized four key facts:

- Students, on an average school day, consume about one-third of their calories at school, and a significant amount of that is purchased on site;
- Good nutrition is important for healthy growth and development in childhood and can reduce the risk of health problems in later years;
- Healthy children learn better; and
- Schools can directly influence students' health.

Provincial Nutritionist Lisa Forster-Coull and other BC Registered Dietitians developed the 2005 Guidelines with input from parents, teachers, school trustees, administrators, physicians, dental hygienists, and school food and beverage suppliers.

The 2005 Guidelines were also informed by a province-wide study<sup>1</sup> of school food sales and policies conducted in the Spring of 2005. This study found that the foods and drinks sold in schools tended to be high in calories and low in nutrients. The study also found that things were improving. At the time, more than 50 percent of BC schools taking part in the study had already implemented one or more nutrition-related policy, and more than 80 percent of reporting districts had a district-wide nutrition policy in place, under development, or planned. A Spring 2007 survey was carried out to assess change since the 2005 survey and the implementation of the *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools*.

The 2005 Guidelines provided BC schools with a nutrition standard, reducing the ambiguities in deciding "what is a healthy food?" Vendors started using the 2005 Guidelines to change the contents sold in vending machines, parent groups began to use the Guidelines to change the menus for student lunches, and school stores began shifting to healthier stock-lists.

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<sup>1</sup> Findings from the study are presented in the *School Food Sales and Policies Provincial Report*. The report is available online at [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

## Rationale for 2007 Revisions

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Since the Guidelines were published in November 2005, new federal standards for food and beverages served to children and youth have been developed. The Ministries of Education and Health have revised the 2005 Guidelines to reflect these new standards. These revisions include:

- Aligning with *Canada's Food Guide (2007)* which recommends much lower fat, salt, and sugar consumption for persons over the age of two;
- Reflecting the knowledge gained since mandatory nutrition labeling came into effect;
- Eliminating the *Choose Least* food and beverage options which could previously make up 10 percent of products offered; effectively eliminating sales of all diet beverages from Elementary and Middle schools, most fries, and highly salted, sweetened and processed products; and
- Adopting stricter criteria for fat, salt, and sugar in the *Choose Most* and *Choose Sometimes* categories, thereby eliminating sales of chips moderately high in fat or salt, high sugar energy bars and a few other products.

## 2007 Revisions

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As with the 2005 Guidelines, the 2007 revised Guidelines apply to all food and beverages sold to students in all school locations and events, including vending machines, school stores, cafeterias, and fundraisers. See Table 1 for a summary of the 2007 Guidelines.

There are two key changes for all schools to note:

- The timeline for full implementation has been moved forward to 2008; and
- ***Not Recommended* and *Choose Least*** foods must be eliminated from sales in
  - Elementary Schools by January 2008, and
  - Middle and Secondary Schools by September 2008.

Although the revised Guidelines continue to use the same categories (*Choose Most*, *Choose Sometimes*, *Choose Least*, and *Not Recommended*) there have been changes in the ingredient and nutrient criteria. Some of these changes include:

- Removing artificially sweetened items from Elementary and Middle schools due to an increase in the number of products containing these ingredients and a broadly expressed desire to minimize children's consumption of these products outside of parental supervision;
- Redefining vegetable and fruit juices and other beverages to reflect the growing number of choices available; and
- Aligning with new evidence as outlined in *Canada's Food Guide (2007)*, limiting fat and sodium content in most food groupings to deal with a number of fatty and salty snacks previously permitted under the 2005 Guidelines.

Table 1

<b>2007 Guidelines Summary</b>			
<b><i>Not Recommended</i></b>	<b><i>Choose Least</i></b>	<b><i>Choose Sometimes</i></b>	<b><i>Choose Most</i></b>
These items (including candies and drinks where sugar is the first ingredient, or the second ingredient after water) tend to be highly processed, or have very high amounts of sweeteners, salt, fat, trans fat, or calories relative to their nutritional value.	These items (such as french fries) tend to be low in key nutrients such as iron and calcium or may be highly salted, sweetened, or processed.	These items (such as flavoured yogurts) tend to be nutritious but moderately salted, sweetened, or processed.	These items (including whole grain breads and fresh vegetables) tend to be the highest in nutrients, the lowest in unhealthy components, and the least processed.
<b>These food and beverage items <u>must</u> be eliminated from school sales by 2008.<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>These food and beverage items <u>must</u> be eliminated by 2008.<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>These food and beverages <u>can</u> account for up to 50% of total food and beverage items sold in BC schools by 2008.<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>These food and beverages <u>must</u> account for 50% or more of food and beverages sold in BC Schools by 2008.<sup>5</sup></b>

## **Nutrition Criteria**

The 2007 Guidelines provide detailed criteria to clarify where specific food items fit (“Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping”, pages 6-18). Potato chips for example could fit in any of the four categories, depending on their nutritional value:

- *Choose Most* potato chips have less than 5 grams of fat and less than 150 mg of sodium per serving. This is consistent with recommendations in Canada’s Food Guide which emphasizes limiting added sodium and fat;
- *Choose Sometimes* potato chips also have less than 5 grams of fat, but the sodium content is between 150-300 mg of sodium;
- *Choose Least* potato chips are higher in fat (5–14.9 grams) or in sodium (300-450 mg); and
- *Not Recommended* potato chips are those with 15 grams or more of fat, or more than 450 mg of sodium, or more than .02 grams of trans fats.

<sup>2</sup> To be eliminated from Elementary school sales effective January 1, 2008; to be eliminated from Middle and Secondary school sales effective September 1, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> To be eliminated from Elementary school sales effective January 1, 2008; to be eliminated from Middle and Secondary school sales effective September 1, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> Elementary schools effective January 1, 2008; Middle and Secondary schools effective September 1, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Elementary schools effective January 1, 2008; Middle and Secondary schools effective September 1, 2008.

Appendix A provides further information and resources to help users understand how to read ingredient lists and nutrition labels. While foods meeting both the *Choose Least* and *Not Recommended* criteria cannot be sold in schools effective 2008, they have not been collapsed into one *Not Recommended* category for the purpose of assisting schools and parents in making healthier choices in situations where food and beverages are provided to students but not 'sold' to students.

While the criteria were developed to guide decisions about food and beverages sold to students, the criteria may also be used to guide decisions about food and beverages used at school ceremonies and celebrations. For example, *Choose Least* items would be better choices than *Not Recommended* items when food and beverages are provided and not sold.

## Goal

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The goal of the Guidelines is to improve the choices offered within the school setting so that it is easy for students to make healthy choices on a routine basis. The food environment influences our purchasing and consumption habits. The Guidelines provide schools, and food/beverage providers within schools, with a standard for decision-making.

## Minimum Standards

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By September 2008, all schools and districts will be required to ensure that of the food and beverage items sold in schools:

- At least 50 percent are in the *Choose Most* category;
- Up to 50 percent (maximum) are in the *Choose Sometimes* category; and
- *Choose Least* and *Not Recommended* items are no longer sold to students.

Under the Guidelines, a school menu board that has ten items listed must list a minimum of five products from the *Choose Most* category, and a maximum of five *Choose Sometimes* products. Products from the *Choose Least* and *Not Recommended* group would not be listed on the menu board and would not be sold to students.

Under the Guidelines, two vending machines with ten slots each could have a maximum of ten slots providing *Choose Sometimes* and a minimum of ten slots with *Choose Most* products.

- "At least 50 percent" refers to the number of offerings, not the total sales.

- These Guidelines apply to all vending, school stores, cafeteria and fundraising sales of food and beverages in the school setting.

### The Checkmark System ✓

In an effort to assist students in making informed choices about nutrition, the report recommends schools and school districts implement a checkmark system at the point of sale, such as on the front of vending machines' slots or on food menu boards.

Checkmarks ✓ are universal symbols of excellence. In the school food context, checkmarks may be interpreted by students as identifying choices for their learning and health.

For example:

- ✓✓ *Choose Most* foods may be symbolized by two checkmarks.
- ✓ *Choose Sometimes* foods by one checkmark.

The checkmarks ✓ can be used to draw a student's attention to

healthier choices. If these symbols are used, it is important that they are used correctly. *Choose Least* and *Not Recommended* items sold in the

school setting (to August 31, 2008) should not be identified with any checkmark.

## Implementation

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Schools and districts are encouraged to continue working with students, teachers, parents, and others to develop strategies for implementing these Guidelines and meeting the minimum standards. Many schools have found the following four-step approach effective in promoting healthy eating environments:

1. Develop partnerships with key stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents, public health professionals, caterers, and vendors to determine the best ways to promote healthier choices in the school environment.
2. Develop policies to influence such things as the types of food sold on site and the types of food sold at fundraising events. Involve students and parents in policy making and communicate the policies effectively.
3. Develop transition plans to guide the change process and give all affected parties time to adapt.
4. Develop and implement marketing mechanisms to further encourage healthy choices. Marketing mechanisms may include such things as making healthier choices more plentiful, more visible and less expensive, compared to their less healthy counterparts.

Appendix B provides a more detailed overview of this approach to implementation.

For additional resources, visit the Ministry of Education's Healthy Schools' website: [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm) .

For additional support with nutrition information, call Dial-A-Dietitian, toll free, at 1-800-667-3438 (In Greater Vancouver, call 604-732-9191), or contact your local Community Nutritionist.

**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Grains</b></p> <p>Grains must be the first or second ingredient (not counting water)</p> <p>Grain ingredients may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- flours made from wheat, rye, rice, potato, soy, millet, etc.</li> <li>- rice, pasta, corn, amaranth, quinoa, etc</li> </ul>	<p>Some seasoned breads, commercial pancakes, biscuits, etc</p> <p>Very high fat/sugary/salty baked goods like some crackers, muffins, cakes, cookies, squares, doughnuts, pastries, danishes, and croissants</p> <p>Some sugary cereals</p> <p>Most seasoned noodle or rice mixes</p> <p>Most saltier grain and corn snacks, baked or fried (cereal mix, wheat chips, tortilla chips, popcorn, cheesies, etc)</p>	<p>Most loaves, muffins, cakes, cookies, squares, doughnuts, pastries, danishes, and croissants</p> <p>Some higher fat crackers</p> <p>Some sugary cereals</p> <p>Some instant noodle or rice mixes (not enriched or containing fats)</p> <p>Most pasta salads</p> <p>Most bags of grain and corn snacks, especially if deep-fried (cereal mix, wheat chips, tortilla chips, popcorn, cheesies, etc)</p>	<p>Many enriched breads, buns, bagels, tortillas, English muffins, pancakes, etc</p> <p>Some small baked lower fat items such as loaves, muffins, or crackers</p> <p>Most pastas (including those with added egg, spinach or tomato)</p> <p>Most cereals</p> <p>Some pasta salads with very little dressing</p> <p>Other rice, rice noodles, and wraps</p> <p>Very few lower fat grain and corn snacks (cereal mix, wheat chips, tortilla chips, popcorn, etc)</p>	<p>Many whole grain breads, buns, bagels, tortillas, English muffins, pancakes, etc</p> <p>Some small baked lower fat items with whole grains, fibre, fruit or nuts, such as loaves, muffins, or crackers</p> <p>Some whole grain cereals, cereals with fibre, fruit, or nuts</p> <p>Most whole grain pastas</p> <p>Brown/wild rice</p> <p>Very few whole grain and corn snacks (cereal mix, wheat chips, tortilla chips, popcorn, etc)</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b></p> <p>Calories: more than 400</p> <p>Fat: 15 g or more</p> <p>Saturated fat: more than 5 g</p> <p>Trans fat: 0.2 g or more</p> <p>Sodium: more than 450 mg</p> <p>Sugars: more than 28 g</p> <p>Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria</p> <p><b>AND has ANY of the following:</b></p> <p>Calories: 300-400</p> <p>Fat: 7-14.9 g</p> <p>Saturated fat: 3-5 g</p> <p>Sugars: 16.1 - 28 g</p> <p>Iron: 5% DV (0.7 mg) or less</p> <p>Sugars: are first ingredient</p> <p>Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only)</p> <p>Caffeine: 15.1 - 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least, but does not pass the Choose Most criteria May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria</p> <p><b>AND has ALL of the following:</b></p> <p>Fibre: 2 g or more</p> <p>Sugars: may have 12-16 g sugars IF fruit is the first or second ingredient</p> <p>Iron: 10% DV (1.4 mg) or more</p> <p>Does not contain artificial sweeteners</p>

Foods high in starches and sugars (natural or added) can leave particles clinging to teeth and put dental health at risk.

Grain choices of particular concern include some cereals, granola bars, crackers, cookies and chips (corn, wheat, rice, etc).

The BC Dental Public Health Committee suggests eating these clingy foods only at mealtimes, and choosing at snack time grain choices that clear quickly from the mouth.

For more information on how food and beverage choices can affect dental health, see [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

**Allergy awareness: these guidelines are not intended to address food allergy concerns in schools.**

**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Vegetables &amp; Fruit</b> A vegetable or fruit or fruit puree must be the first or second ingredient, not counting water. <i>(Juice and concentrated fruit juice does not count as a fruit ingredient for this food grouping - see "Vegetable &amp; Fruit Juices")</i></p>	<p>Pickles (see Condiments &amp; Add Ins Food Grouping) Most fries: if moderately salted, or if fried in fat containing trans fat Most candy and chocolate or 'yogurt' coated fruit Most fruit gummies (<i>note that concentrated fruit juice is considered an added sugar when it is not preceded by water in the ingredient list</i>) Most potato/vegetable chips, especially saltier flavours Some fruit chips (baked or fried)</p>	<p>Some canned vegetables, including regular sauerkraut Some fries: some small portions of deep fried potatoes, may be lightly salted Coated/breaded and deep fried vegetables Most jarred salsa (sodium) Some fruit gummies with pureed fruit as first ingredient Most fried fruit chips</p>	<p>Most fresh/frozen/dried vegetables and fruit, raw, cooked, moderately seasoned/dressed Most canned vegetables in broth Fruit canned in light syrup Fries: some baked frozen fries (without trans fats), may be very lightly salted Vegetables, breaded and baked Some lower sodium jarred salsa Some sweetened baked fruit slices Some fruit gummies with pureed fruit as first ingredient Some potato/vegetable chips, very lightly salted, baked</p>	<p>Most fresh/frozen/dried vegetables and fruit, raw, cooked, very lightly seasoned/dressed Canned vegetables or fruits (in water, juice) Some frozen fruit bars made with pureed fruit Some baked fruit slices</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b> Fat: 15 g or more Trans fat: 0.2 g or more Sodium: more than 450 mg Sugars: are first ingredient Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria <b>AND has ANY of the following:</b> Calories: more than 250 Fat: 5-14.9 g Sodium: between 300-450 mg Sugars: both the second and third ingredients are sugars Caffeine: 15.1 - 25 mg Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only)</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria, but does not pass the Choose Most criteria  May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria <b>AND has ALL of the following:</b> Sodium: less than 150 mg Sugars: are not the second ingredient Does not contain artificial sweeteners.</p>

Foods high in sugars and starches (natural or added) can leave particles clinging to teeth and put dental health at risk. Vegetable/fruit choices of particular concern include fruit leathers, dried fruit, and chips (potato or other). The BC Dental Public Health Committee suggests eating these clingy foods only at mealtimes, and choosing at snack time foods that clear quickly from the mouth, such as fresh/canned/frozen vegetables or fruit (raw or cooked). For more information on how food and beverage choices can affect dental health, see [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Vegetable &amp; Fruit Juices</b></p> <p>A vegetable or fruit juice or puree must be the first ingredient (not counting water):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- may be diluted with water or carbonated water</li> <li>- may have added food ingredients, e.g. Fruit pulp, fruit puree</li> <li>- may not be fortified with vitamins other than Vitamin C, or with minerals other than calcium.</li> <li>- some non-medicinal ingredients and herbs may not be acceptable. Check with Dial-A-Dietitian for safety in children.</li> </ul>	<p>Most “drinks”, “blends”, “cocktails”, “splashes” and “beverages” (if sweetened with added sugars)</p> <p>Most fruit smoothies made with any Not Recommended ingredients</p> <p>Slushy drinks and frozen treats with added sugars (see “Candies, Chocolates, etc” food grouping)</p> <p>Juice drinks with added caffeine, guarana or yerba</p>	<p>Some nectars or juice blends</p> <p>Most regular tomato juice</p> <p>Most regular vegetable juice</p> <p>Most fruit smoothies made with any Choose Least ingredients</p> <p>Slushy drinks and frozen treats made with concentrated juice</p> <p>Artificially sweetened juice drinks (Elementary/Middle schools)</p>	<p>100% juice, may be from concentrate (fruit, vegetable, or combination)</p> <p>Some lower sodium tomato and vegetable juices</p> <p>Diluted or sparkly juice drinks, no added sugars (only Secondary schools may have artificial sweeteners)</p> <p>Most fruit smoothies made with any Choose Sometimes ingredients</p> <p>Slushy drinks and frozen treats made with Choose Sometimes items (<i>note that concentrated fruit juice is considered an added sugar when it is not preceded by water in the ingredient list</i>)</p>	<p>None</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- may be artificially sweetened in Secondary schools only</li> </ul>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b></p> <p>Juice content: less than 50% AND has added sugars</p> <p>Size: more than 600 mL</p> <p>Trans fat: 0.2 g or more</p> <p>Sodium: more than 450 mg</p> <p>Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria</p> <p><b>AND has ANY of the following:</b></p> <p>Size: 361-600 mL</p> <p>Juice content: 50% or more AND has added sugars</p> <p>Concentrated fruit juice is first ingredient for slushies</p> <p>Fat: more than 5 g</p> <p>Caffeine: 15.1-25 mg</p> <p>Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only)</p> <p><b>AND ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria, but does not pass the Choose Sometimes criteria</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria</p> <p><b>AND has:</b></p> <p>Sodium: less than 200 mg</p> <p>No added sugars</p> <p>Caffeine: 15 mg or less</p> <p>Size: 250 mL or less for Elementary schools only</p> <p>May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p>No criteria</p>

The BC Dental Public Health Committee recommends choosing plain water more often than juice. 100% juice and other fruit drinks contain sugars and acids (natural or added) that dissolve tooth enamel when sipped frequently. To avoid prolonged exposure to these sugars and acids, they suggest that only plain water be allowed in classrooms except at designated eating times. For more information on how food and beverage choices can affect dental health, see [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

<b>Food Grouping Criteria</b>	<b>Not Recommended</b>	<b>Choose Least</b>	<b>Choose Sometimes</b>	<b>Choose Most</b>
<p><b>Milk-based Foods</b> Milk must be the first ingredient; cream is NOT considered a milk ingredient</p>	<p>Most cream cheese and light cream cheeses and spreads Some candy flavoured ice creams and frozen yogurt Frozen 'yogurt' not based on milk ingredients (see "Candies, Chocolates, etc" food grouping) Most regular sized sundaes Most frozen novelties</p>	<p>Some higher fat cheeses Most processed cheese slices and spreads Some puddings/custards, etc. Some ice milks, ice creams, and frozen novelties Most cottage cheese</p>	<p>Some processed cheese slices Most flavoured yogurts Yogurt with artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only) Many puddings/custards Pudding/custards/ice milk bars with artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only) Small portions of some ice milks and frozen yogurts – simply flavoured</p>	<p>Most regular and light cheeses, cheese strings (unprocessed) Plain yogurt Some flavoured yogurts Some puddings/custards</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b> Calories: more than 400 Fat: more than 20 g Trans fat: 0.4 g or more, per 8 g of protein Sodium: more than 450 mg Sugars: are the first ingredient Calcium: less than 4% DV (44 mg) Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria <b>AND has ANY of the following:</b> Calories: 250 - 400 Fat: 15 - 20 g Sugars: 36 g or more per 175 mL Calcium: 5% DV or less for every 100 mg sodium Caffeine: 15.1 - 25 mg Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only)</p>	<p><b>AND any item that</b> passes the Not Recommended, and Choose Least criteria, but does not pass the Choose Most criteria</p> <p>May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended, Choose Least, and Choose Sometimes criteria, <b>AND has ALL of the following:</b> Sodium: less than 300 mg Sugars: 20g or less per 175 mL Does not contain artificial sweeteners</p>

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Milk- &amp; Alternatives-based Beverages</b></p> <p>Milk must be the first ingredient; cream is NOT considered a milk ingredient. However, <i>fortified</i> soy drinks contain protein and calcium and may be assessed in this food grouping. See "Other Beverages" for other <i>fortified</i> drinks (e.g. rice, potato based) and <i>non-fortified</i> soy drinks.</p>	<p>Most eggnogs Regular tea/coffee lattés Some blended sweetened coffee drinks Most hot chocolate mixes made with water (see also "Other Beverages")</p>	<p>Most candy flavoured milks Some decaf blended sweetened coffee drinks Smoothies made with Choose Least ingredients</p>	<p>Most basic flavoured milks and fortified soy drinks Yogurt drinks Some decaf flavoured tea/coffee lattés (eg. Chai, caramel) Smoothies made with Choose Sometimes ingredients Some eggnogs if lower in sugar Most hot chocolates made with milk Most artificially sweetened milk drinks (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p>Plain, unflavoured milk and fortified soy drinks Many milks modified with fatty acids Decaf unsweetened tea/coffee lattés Smoothies made with Choose Most ingredients Some hot chocolates made with milk and very little added sugar</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b> Size: more than 600 mL Calories: more than 600 Fat: more than 15 g per 250 mL Trans fat: more than 0.4 g per 250 mL Sodium: more than 450 mg Sugars: are the first ingredient Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria <b>AND has ANY of the following:</b> Size: 361-600 mL first ingredient is not a milk ingredient Calories: 400 - 600 Fat: 10 - 15 g per 250 mL Sugars: more than 36 g per 250 mL Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only) Caffeine: 15.1 - 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria, but does not pass the Choose Most criteria</p> <p>May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended, Choose Least, and Choose Sometimes criteria, <b>AND has ALL of the following:</b> Sodium: less than 200 mg Sugars: 20 g or less per 250 mL (if fortified soy drink, 8 g or less per 250 mL) Size: 250 mL or less in Elementary schools Does not contain artificial sweeteners</p>

To avoid prolonged exposure to the added sugars found in sweetened milk beverages, the BC Dental Public Health Committee suggests that only plain water be allowed in classrooms except at designated eating times. For more information on how food and beverage choices can affect dental health, see [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

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Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Meat &amp; Alternatives</b></p> <p>A meat or meat alternative must be the first or second ingredient (excluding nuts and seeds*).</p> <p>Meat and meat alternatives include: beef, pork, poultry, fish, game meats, eggs, soybeans, legumes, tofu.</p> <p><i>*See the "Nuts &amp; Seed Mixes or Bars" category for guidelines on these items.</i></p>	<p>Many products deep fried in hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils or in vegetable shortening</p> <p>Some wieners with more filler than meat</p> <p>Some heavily seasoned chicken or tuna salads</p> <p>Most jerky</p>	<p>Many cold cuts and deli meats (deli chicken, deli beef, pepperoni, bologna, salami, etc) if high in salt</p> <p>Some seasoned chicken or tuna salads</p> <p>Some breaded and fried chicken/fish/meat</p> <p>Most regular wieners, sausages, smokies, bratwurst</p> <p>Fattier pepperoni/chicken sticks</p> <p>Some jerky</p>	<p>Some marinated poultry</p> <p>Some fish canned in oil</p> <p>Marbled or fatty meats</p> <p>Some deli meats if not too salty</p> <p>Some chicken or tuna salads, lightly seasoned</p> <p>Some breaded and baked chicken/fish/meat</p> <p>Some lean wieners, sausages</p> <p>Lean pepperoni/chicken sticks</p> <p>Some jerky, lightly seasoned</p> <p>Some egg or legume salads, lightly seasoned</p> <p>Some dessert tofu</p> <p>Some refried beans</p>	<p>Chicken, turkey</p> <p>Fish, seafood, fresh or canned in water/broth</p> <p>Lean meat (beef, bison, pork, lamb)</p> <p>Lean game meats and birds (venison, moose, duck, etc)</p> <p>Some chicken salads if lower salt</p> <p>Eggs and some egg salads</p> <p>Some lean wieners if lower salt</p> <p>Jerky (plain)</p> <p>Tofu</p> <p>Most legume salads if lower salt</p> <p>Dal</p> <p>Falafel</p> <p>Some refried beans</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b></p> <p>Calories: more than 400</p> <p>Fat: more than 20 g</p> <p>Saturated fat: more than 10 g</p> <p>Trans fat: 0.4 g or more, per 8 g of protein</p> <p>Sodium: more than 600 mg</p> <p>Iron: less than 1% DV (0.14 mg)</p> <p>Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only)</p> <p>Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria</p> <p><b>AND has ANY of the following:</b></p> <p>Fat: more than 16 g per 60 g portion</p> <p>Saturated fat: 8 - 10 g</p> <p>Sodium: 451-600 mg</p> <p>Protein: 5 g or less</p> <p>Artificial Sweeteners are present (Secondary schools only)</p> <p>Caffeine: 15.1-25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria but does not pass the Choose Most criteria</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria</p> <p><b>AND has ALL of the following:</b></p> <p>Fat: less than 12 g per 60 g portion</p> <p>Saturated fat: less than 5 g</p> <p>Sodium: less than 375 mg</p> <p>Sugars: no more than 1 g per gram of protein</p> <p>Iron: 3% DV or more (.42 mg)</p>

**Allergy awareness: these guidelines are not intended to address food allergy concerns in schools.**

**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Nuts &amp; Seeds (Mixes or Bars)</b> Peanuts, nuts or seeds must be the first or second ingredient.</p>	<p>Most chocolate or 'yogurt' covered nuts</p>	<p>Some salty or sugary nut/seed bars and mixes (e.g. sesame snap bars)</p>	<p>Nuts/seed bars and mixes with nuts/seeds or fruit as the first ingredient; may contain candy, 'yogurt', or chocolate if sugars are not the second and third ingredients</p>	<p>Nut/seed bars and mixes with nuts/seeds or fruit as first ingredient, and no candies or chocolate Peanut butter and other nut/seed butters, e.g. tahini</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b> Calories: more than 400 Trans fat: 0.2 g or more Sodium: more than 450 mg Sugars: are the first ingredient AND item has more than 250 calories Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that passes the Not Recommended criteria AND has ANY of the following:</b> Calories: 300 – 400 Sodium: 300 – 450 mg Sugars: are the first ingredient AND item has 250 or fewer calories Sugars: are more than 10 g AND fruit is not the first or second ingredient (<i>count all nuts/seeds listed consecutively as a single ingredient</i>) Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only) Caffeine: 15.1-25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria but does not pass the Choose Most criteria</b></p> <p>May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p><b>ANY item that passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria AND has ALL of the following:</b> Sodium: less than 200 mg Sugars: are neither the first nor second ingredient Sugars: are not both the second and third ingredient Does not contain artificial sweeteners</p>

Nut and seed mixes or bars containing dried fruit, sugars, crackers or other sugars/starches (natural or added) can leave particles clinging to teeth and put dental health at risk. The BC Dental Public Health Committee suggests eating these clingy foods only at mealtimes, and choosing at snack time foods that clear quickly from the mouth, such as plain nut/seed choices (may be savory seasoned).

For more information on how food and beverage choices can affect dental health, see [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Mixed Entrée Foods</b></p>	<p>Some pizzas, e.g. with double cheese Some pastry based pizza pockets Some meat pot pies <i>Note: Some trans fats occur naturally in meats like beef, lamb, goat, deer, moose, elk, and buffalo</i></p>	<p>Most sandwiches made with deli or processed meats Some pizzas, e.g. meat lovers Some pastry based pizza pockets Most meat pot pies Most stir fries if made with salty sauces Some sausage/vegetable rolls Some pasta with a cream based sauce Most frozen entrees unless lower in sodium</p>	<p>Most sandwiches, short (e.g. 10 cm) submarine sandwiches, and burgers made with lean roasted meats (turkey, chicken, beef), but few vegetables Some cheese or meat pizzas Pizza bagels Baked pizza pockets, pizza pretzels Some meat pot pies Most stews served without a grain food Some stir fries Most sushi Pilaf (rice and meat) Some pasta with a milk based sauce Some curries, moderately salted Hard tacos with meat or bean filing</p>	<p>Most sandwiches, short (e.g. 10 cm) submarine sandwiches, and burgers made with lean meats (turkey, chicken, beef) and plenty of vegetables and whole grain breads/buns Some pizzas with vegetables Some stews, chillies, curries, lower sodium, if served with a grain food Some meat/tofu and vegetable stir fries served on rice, if sauce is lower in sodium Pilaf (with vegetables) Most pasta with vegetable based sauce (may have meat) Burritos (bean or meat) Soft tacos filled with Choose Most ingredients Falafel in pita with tomatoes and tzatziki Some low sodium frozen entrees</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b> <i>Schools should ask caterers and suppliers for items that meet the Choose Most and Sometimes criteria. Note: for Mixed Entrée items that do not have Nutrition Facts tables (eg. meals from small caterers) please use the "Healthier Foods Fact Sheet" on the bced website as a guide</i></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b> Calories: more than 1,000 Fat: more than 25 g Saturated fat: 12 g or more Trans fat: 0.4 g or more, per 8 g of protein Sodium: more than 1,200 mg Iron: less than 5% DV (0.7 mg) Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only) Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria <b>AND has ANY of the following:</b> Calories: 700 - 1,000 Fat: 16.1 - 25 g Saturated fat: 8 - 11.9 g Sodium: 1,000 - 1,200 mg Sugars: more than 24 g Artificial Sweeteners are present (Secondary schools only) Caffeine: 15.1 - 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria, but does not pass the Choose Most criteria</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended, and Choose Least criteria <b>AND has ALL of the following:</b> Ingredients: contains at least one-third of a food guide serving from at least three food guide food groups (a vegetable/fruit must be one of these) Sodium: less than 750 mg Fibre: 3 g or more Iron: 10% DV (1.4 mg) or more</p>

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

<b>Food Grouping Criteria</b>	<b>Not Recommended</b>	<b>Choose Least</b>	<b>Choose Sometimes</b>	<b>Choose Most</b>
<b>Soups</b> Includes dry, canned, and fresh	Some instant soups, plain or seasoned Regular canned soups, broth or milk based	Some instant soups, plain or seasoned Many canned soups, broth or milk based	Some soups without meat, or beans/lentils Some low-sodium canned or instant soups	Some soups made with meat or beans/lentils Some low-sodium canned or instant soups made with meat or beans/lentils
<b>Nutrition Criteria</b>	<b>ANY of the following:</b> Fat: 15 g or more Trans fat: 0.4 g or more per 8 g of protein Sodium: more than 750 mg Iron: less than 2% DV (0.28 mg) Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only)	<b>ANY item that passes the Not Recommended criteria AND has ANY of the following:</b> Fat: 10 – 14.9 g Sodium: 600 - 750 mg Artificial Sweeteners are present (Secondary schools only)	<b>ANY item that passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria, but does not pass the Choose Most criteria</b>	<b>ANY item that passes the Not Recommended, and Choose Least criteria AND first ingredient must be a food guide food (not counting water)</b> Sodium: less than 450 mg Iron: 5% DV or more (0.7 mg)

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	
<b>Candies, Chocolates, etc.</b>	Most regular packages	Most very small packages of candies/chocolates Very small portions of dessert gelatins	Sugar-free gum or mints or cough drops (Secondary schools only) Diabetic candies (Secondary schools only)	None
<b>Nutrition Criteria</b>	<b>ANY of the following:</b> Calories: 100 or more Sugars: more than 12 g Sodium: more than 175 mg Caffeine: more than 25 mg	<b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria <b>AND has ANY of the following:</b> Calories: 50 - 99 Sodium: 50 - 175 mg Sugars: 5 - 12 g Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only) Caffeine: 15.1 - 25 mg	<b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)	No criteria

Candies, chocolates, etc. that are high in sugars and starches (natural or added) can leave food particles clinging to teeth that can put dental health at risk. The BC Dental Public Health Committee suggests eating these clingy foods only at mealtimes, and choosing at snack time foods that clear quickly from the mouth. For more information on how food and beverage choices can affect dental health, see [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Energy Bars</b> Includes meal replacement bars, sports bars, and snack bars. If a bar has fruit or vegetables as the first or second ingredient, it may score better in the Vegetable and Fruit grouping. If a bar has nuts, nut butter or seeds as the first or second ingredient, it may score better in the Nuts and Seeds food grouping.</p>	<p>Super-sized bars Low protein bars</p>	<p>Bars with sugars as first ingredient Many bars with added fats Many "low-carb" bars</p>	<p>Most bars made with a whole grain and/or fruit base</p>	<p>Some bars made with a whole grain and/or fruit base</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b> Calories: more than 300 Trans fat: 0.2 g or more Sodium: more than 450 mg Protein: less than 4 g Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria <b>AND has ANY of the following:</b> Calories: 250 - 300 Fat: more than 5 g of fat Sodium: 300 - 450 mg Protein: 4 - 5.9 g Sugars: are first ingredient Sugars: 16 g or more AND fruit is not the first ingredient Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only) Caffeine: 15.1 - 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Choose Least and Not Recommended, but does not pass the Choose Most criteria May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended, and Choose Least criteria <b>AND</b> Fibre: 2 g or more Sodium: less than 200 mg Does not contain artificial sweeteners</p>

Energy bars high in sugars and starches (natural or added) can leave food particles clinging to teeth that can put dental health at risk. The BC Dental Public Health Committee suggests eating these clingy foods only at mealtimes, and choosing at snack time foods that clear quickly from the mouth. For more information on how food and beverage choices can affect dental health, see [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Other Beverages*</b> (Non-Juice/ Non-Milk based)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- May not be fortified with vitamins other than Vitamin C, or with minerals other than calcium, or with ingredients such as creatine, taurine, etc.</li> <li>- Some herbs may be acceptable. Check with Dial-A-Dietitian for safety in children.</li> <li>- May not be fortified with vitamins other than Vitamin C, or with minerals other than calcium.</li> <li>- Some non-medicinal ingredients and herbs may not be acceptable. Check with Dial-A-Dietitian for safety in children.</li> </ul>	<p>Most drinks with sugars as the first ingredient (not counting water) – e.g. iced teas, fruit ‘aides’, pops</p> <p>Most sport drinks*</p> <p>Most unfortified flavoured rice, soy or potato drinks</p> <p>Most hot chocolate mixes made with water</p> <p>All regular coffee/tea drinks</p> <p>Most mixed decaf coffee drinks with sugar and cream</p>	<p>Some fortified flavoured (and most unfortified plain) rice drinks</p>	<p>Most fortified flavoured potato drinks and some fortified rice drinks</p> <p>Some unfortified soy drinks</p> <p>Water (flavoured or not) minimally sweetened</p> <p>Water (flavoured or not) with artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p> <p>Diet decaf soft drinks and diet non-carbonated drinks (Secondary schools only)</p> <p>Most unfortified plain soy or potato drinks</p>	<p>Water, plain</p> <p>Sparkling/carbonated water or water with added flavours (no added sugar and/or no artificial sweeteners)</p> <p>Soda water</p> <p>Fruit/mint flavoured unsweetened teas</p> <p>Decaf tea or coffee</p> <p>Most fortified plain potato drinks (see “Milk Beverages” for fortified soy drinks)</p>
<p><b>Nutrition Criteria</b></p>	<p><b>ANY of the following:</b></p> <p>Size: more than 600 mL</p> <p>Calories: more than 300</p> <p>Fat: more than 15 g per 250 mL</p> <p>Trans fat: 0.2 g or more</p> <p>Sodium: more than 450 mg</p> <p>Sugars: more than 16 g per 250 mL</p> <p>Sugars: 8 – 16 g per 250 mL AND there is less than 5% calcium (55 mg) per 250 mL</p> <p>Caffeine: more than 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended criteria <b>AND has ANY of the following:</b></p> <p><b>Fat: 10 - 15 g fat per 250 mL</b></p> <p>Sodium: 200 - 450 mg</p> <p>Sugars: 8 - 16 g per 250 mL AND calcium is 5 - 20% (55- 220 mg) per 250 mL</p> <p>Sugars: between 2-8 g per 250 mL AND calcium is less than 5% (55 mg) per 250 mL</p> <p>Artificial Sweeteners are present (Elementary and Middle schools only)</p> <p>Caffeine: 15.1 - 25 mg</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria but does not pass the Choose Most criteria</p> <p>May contain artificial sweeteners (Secondary schools only)</p>	<p><b>ANY item that</b> passes the Not Recommended and Choose Least criteria <b>AND:</b></p> <p>Sodium: 50 mg or less</p> <p>Sugars: no added sugars if there is less than 20% DV calcium per 250 mL</p> <p>Sugars: may have less than 8 g per 250 mL IF there is at least 20% DV calcium (220 mg) per 250 mL</p> <p>Does not contain artificial sweeteners</p>

\*Sport/electrolyte drinks containing added sugars are not recommended for routine sale in schools. However, the BC Community Nutritionist Council School Food Advisory Committee suggests that Middle/Secondary schools can make these drinks available for students actively participating in endurance or performance sports.

“Other Beverages” may provide excess liquid calories, caffeine, artificial sweeteners, or acids and often displace healthier food/beverage choices in students’ diets. The BC Community Nutritionist’s Council School Food Advisory Committee suggests that portion sizes of “Other Beverages” (except plain water) be limited to: 250 mL or less for Elementary schools and 360 mL or less for middle/Secondary schools.

The BC Dental Public Health Committee suggests choosing plain water more often than “other beverages”.

Whether they contain sugars or not, almost all “Other Beverages” contain acids (natural or added) that may dissolve tooth enamel when sipped frequently.

To avoid prolonged exposure, the committee recommends that only plain water be allowed in classrooms except at designated eating times.

For more information on how food and beverage choices can affect dental health, see [www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health\\_publications.htm](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm)

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**2007 Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools  
Nutrition Criteria for Each Food Grouping**

Food Grouping Criteria	Not Recommended	Choose Least	Choose Sometimes	Choose Most
<p><b>Condiments &amp; Add-Ins</b></p> <p>Portions have been estimated to limit the amount of salt, fat, and/or sugar to approximately:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 100 - 200 mg sodium;</li> <li>- 5 - 10 g total fat; and/or</li> <li>- 4 - 8 g added sugars (or artificial sweetener equivalent)</li> </ul>	<p>Condiments or add-ins containing trans fat (from partially hydrogenated oils or vegetable shortening) AND more than 0.2 g trans fat per serving</p>			<p>Condiments and add-ins can be used to enhance the flavour of Choose Most and Choose Sometimes items.</p> <p>Condiments and add-ins should be served on the side whenever possible.</p> <p>If condiments or add-ins are served <i>in</i> a food or beverage, then that item needs to be assessed <i>as served</i> in the appropriate food grouping (e.g. A sandwich with mayo would be assessed as the sandwich plus the mayo in the "Mixed Entrée" food grouping).</p> <p>Encourage students to limit their choices to one to two portions:</p> <p>Herbs and salt-free seasonings, garlic, pepper: no limit</p> <p>Soy sauce: 2 - 3 mL</p> <p>Hot sauce: 5 - 10 mL</p> <p>Table salt: ¼ - ½ mL (do not serve potassium based salt substitutes in schools)</p> <p>Soft margarine, butter: 5 - 10 mL</p> <p>Cream cheese or processed cheese spread (regular/light): 5 - 15 mL</p> <p>Sour cream: 15 - 30 mL</p> <p>Cream: 5 - 15 mL</p> <p>Whipped Cream (from cream): 15 - 30 mL</p> <p>Low fat spreads, dips, dressings: 5 - 15 mL</p> <p>Regular spreads, dips, dressings: 5 - 10 mL</p> <p>Oil for sautéing or dressing: 5 - 10 mL</p> <p>Ketchup, mustard, pickles, relishes, olives: 10 - 15 mL</p> <p>Horseradish: 10 - 45 mL</p> <p>Jarred salsa, sauerkraut: 10 - 30 mL (fresh salsa can fit into the Vegetables and Fruit food grouping)</p> <p>Salad toppers (e.g. Bacon bits): 5 - 10 mL</p> <p>Croutons: 25 - 50 mL</p> <p>Sugars/honey: 5 - 10 mL</p> <p>Flavoured syrups (e.g. For lattes): 1 pump (10 mL)</p> <p>Artificial sweeteners: 1 packet (Secondary schools only)</p>

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## 1. Understanding Ingredient Labels

Every product has an ingredient list. For small bulk items, it might be on the carton rather than the individual package. Ingredients are listed in descending order -- as you read through the list, the amounts by weight get smaller and smaller. Usually the first three to five ingredients (not including water) tell you the most; however, artificial sweeteners and caffeine don't weigh very much so they are usually near the end of the ingredient list.

**Milk Ingredients: Milk needs to be the first ingredient for the Milk-based foods and Milk-based beverages categories. Look for these words:**

- Milk (whole/2%/1%/skim, non fat)
- Evaporated Milk
- Skim Milk Powder
- 'Milk Ingredients', Milk Solids (may be modified)

**Trans fats are strictly limited in the Guidelines. If there is no Nutrition Facts Label, these words in the ingredient list give you an idea of how much trans fat might be in the product:**

- Shortening
- Margarine (not all have trans fat)
- Partially hydrogenated oil

**Artificial sweeteners: Artificial sweeteners are safe for children and adolescents to consume in small quantities. The 2007 Guidelines allow artificial sweeteners in the *Choose Sometimes* category and as a condiment in Secondary schools, but not in Elementary and Middle schools. Look for these names in the ingredient list:**

- Splenda (Sucralose)
- Nutrasweet (aspartame, Sweet'n Low, Sugar Twin)
- Acesulfame Potassium (Ace-K)
- Cyclamate (Sugar Twin, Sucaryl)
- Sugar alcohols (maltitol, sorbitol, xylitol, etc, also polydextrose, hydrogenated starch hydrolysates, isomalt)

*(Note: Some foods are sweetened with stevia. Stevia is an herb that is not approved by Health Canada.)*

**Sugars can be from many sources and in many forms. Look for these words on the ingredient list for added sugars:**

- "Ose" words: sucrose, fructose, dextrose, maltose, etc
- Syrups: cane syrup, rice syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, etc
- Concentrated fruit juice (used to sweeten many products other than 100% fruit juice, but adds very few nutrients to the products)
- Honey, molasses

**Salt can be from these sources, but check the Nutrition Facts Label for total sodium:**

- Salt, Sea Salt
- Sodium
- Sodium chloride
- Soy sauce
- MSG (monosodium glutamate)
- Baking soda, baking powder

**Caffeine is listed as an ingredient only if it is *added* to something. Coffee drinks would not list caffeine as an ingredient, but cola drinks would. Cocoa contains caffeine but is unlikely to exceed the caffeine restrictions in the Guidelines. If the following ingredients are present, caffeine levels are likely to exceed the restrictions in the Guidelines:**

- Caffeine
- Coffee (not coffee flavouring)
- Tea (black or green or white)
- Matè, Yerba, Yerba Matè
- Guarana

For more help in reading ingredient lists and determining caffeine content, contact your local Community Nutritionist or call Dial-A-Dietitian at 604-732-9191 (toll free in BC at 1-800-667-3438).

## 2. Understanding Nutrition Facts Panels

The Nutrition Facts Panel is used to classify a food or beverage as “Choose Most,” “Choose Least,” “Choose Sometimes,” or “Not Recommended.” Most foods and beverages were required to have a Nutrition Facts Panel by December 12, 2005. Small manufacturers have until December 12, 2007. For small bulk items the panel might be on the carton rather than the individual package.

Compare this amount to the size of the package being sold. Is it the same or is it smaller, bigger?

In the Guidelines, the amount of a nutrient allowed is always based on the total package size you are selling (unless otherwise specified). In this example, if the package was 250 mL, it would contain twice what the Nutrition Facts Label shows, e.g. 36 g of carbohydrate.

Sodium mg/portion sold is restricted for many of the food groupings.

% Daily Value:

The % refers to the proportion of the total recommended daily amount for someone with the highest needs.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 125 mL (87 g)*	
Amount	% Daily Value**
<b>Calories 80</b>	
<b>Fat 0.5 g</b>	<b>1 %</b>
Saturated 0 g + Trans 0 g	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Cholesterol 0 mg</b>	
<b>Sodium 0 mg</b>	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrate 18 g</b>	<b>6 %</b>
Fibre 2 g	<b>8 %</b>
Sugars 2 g	
<b>Protein 3 g</b>	
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 10 %
Calcium 0 %	Iron 2 %

This is the TOTAL amount of fat.

This is where you can find the amount of trans fat in a product. Some meats and milk products have low amounts of naturally occurring trans fats.

Naturally occurring sugars (like those from fruit or milk) are shown together with added sugars.

For more help in interpreting Nutrition Facts panels or items without a Nutrition Facts panel, contact your local community nutritionist or call Dial-A-Dietitian toll free at 1-800-667-3438. In Greater Vancouver call 604-732-9191.

For more information on reading nutrition fact labels and ingredient lists:  
[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/index\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/index_e.html)

### Strategy for Change

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The *Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools (2007)* are one tool for enhancing the capacity of schools to promote healthier learning environments. To maximize their impact, you may want to use them as part of a broader strategy for change. Many schools have had good results from following the four steps outlined below.

#### Step 1: Develop Partnerships

Key stakeholder groups, including students, teachers, parents, public health professionals, caterers, and vendors, meet to determine the approaches best suited to the needs of the school and its students. The *School Food Sales and Policies Provincial Report (2005)* found that BC schools that had formal groups focused on nutrition were more likely to offer more healthy choices and were more likely to implement policies encouraging healthy eating at school.

Partners share information on:

- The impact of nutrition on student health and learning;
- The influence of the school environment on food selection;
- What makes an item a healthy choice; and
- Marketing strategies to affect healthy choices.

School food and nutrition resources can be found on these websites:

- About School Health and Nutrition Programs in BC [www.dashbc.org](http://www.dashbc.org)
- Eat Well, Play Well [www.dietitians.ca/child](http://www.dietitians.ca/child)
- Making It Happen: Healthy Eating At School [www.knowledgenetwork.ca/makingithappen](http://www.knowledgenetwork.ca/makingithappen)

## **Step 2: Develop Policy**

BC schools are in various stages of developing and implementing policies that influence the types of foods sold on site, the types of foods sold at fundraising events, and students' access to foods and beverages throughout the school day.

Student and parent involvement is very important in developing school policies, if they are to be effective. Policies are also more effective when communicated clearly to staff, students, and parents. Communication can take place through:

- Student, staff, and family handbooks and/or newsletters;
- Staff orientation and meetings;
- Student orientation;
- Announcements at school events; and
- Community meetings.

Examples of existing school food policies can be found on the BC School Trustees' Association website at: <http://www.bcsta.org/policy/polindex.htm> .

## **Step 3: Develop Transition Plans for Full Implementation**

Healthy food policies provide direction that translates into practice over time. Transition plans give schools a map to follow to help students, parents and other key stakeholders learn about, adapt to, and in time embrace the healthy changes. Transition plans also provide time to work with vendors on product, pricing, and promotion changes. Some schools may also need a transition phase to honour or adapt existing contracts.

It is recommended that schools require food/beverage suppliers to assess what categories their products fit into. Schools should ask vendors for an inventory list classified by category (*Choose Most, Choose Sometimes, Choose Least, Not Recommended*) and whenever possible have a Registered Dietitian review the vendor's list. Members of the food and beverage industry are very familiar with the BC Guidelines, and together with food safety requirements, the Guidelines should form the foundation for food and beverage providers.

Healthy beverage choices can be offered without delay, since there is a wide variety readily available. Healthy snacks for vending machines are available but not as plentiful, so a little more time may be needed for manufactures to provide different options.

As in policy development, student and parent involvement is very important in developing strong transition plans to achieve sustained change.

## **Step 4: Develop and Implement Marketing Mechanisms**

When promoting healthier food and beverage choices to students, schools can consider these marketing mechanisms:

### **Variety**

Providing a variety of healthy food and beverage choices encourages consumption of healthier food products.

### **Stocking**

Healthier food choices should be more plentiful and more visible than less healthy choices. Vendors and caterers are a good source of information and can assist schools in finding healthier products. Vending machines can make healthier beverage options more visible by placing these at eye level. Cafeterias can also display healthier food more prominently.

### **Marketing**

In Secondary schools, there are many examples of business teachers and student councils undertaking marketing campaigns to promote healthier food/beverage products in school stores, vending machines, and cafeterias. In Elementary schools, newsletters have been effective in communicating healthy eating campaigns to parents.

### **Pricing**

Price is the most important factor in helping students make healthier choices. Where healthier items cost less, students are more likely to choose them over their more expensive, less nutritious counterparts. The School Food Sales and Policies Provincial Report (2005) found that schools under-use this strategy. It also identified a number of other opportunities for action that schools may wish to consider.

A decreased profit margin on healthier products can be compensated by raising the prices of less healthy products during the transition to full implementation of the Guidelines. BC schools using this strategy have not reported an overall loss of revenue.