

Healthier Eating and Nutrition in School Food Categories¹

The following table is meant to serve as a general guide and is not exhaustive in its categorization of foods. 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](#).

Also, remember that food preparation plays a role in the categories found below. 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, the nutritional value decreases.

When serving *combination foods or mixed dishes*, consider in which categories the main ingredients belong. Desirable combination foods contain at least 1 food from the maximum nutritional value category and at least 1 additional item from either the maximum or moderate nutritional value categories.

Here are a few tips to facilitate the use of these categories:

1. Try to opt for foods that are not pre-packaged.
2. Meat should be broiled or baked instead of deep fried or battered.
3. Allergies should always be kept in mind when serving food in public schools.
4. Sauces/spreads used to complement foods should be low in fat and used in moderation. For example, ketchup, mayonnaise or sour cream.

Food Category	Maximum Nutritional Value	Moderate Nutritional Value	Minimum Nutritional Value
Grain Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whole grain products including: breads, rolls, bagels, pita, pancakes, English muffins, tortillas, crackers, pasta and rice ▪ Whole grain, unsweetened cereals (hot or cold) ▪ Homemade² noodle and rice soups ▪ Low fat, high fibre muffins <p><i>When whole grain is not available, choose white flour based options. Even though these foods are lower in fibre, they still have maximum nutritional value.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low fat loaf breads (banana, zucchini, pumpkin, etc.) ▪ Granola-type cereals ▪ Whole grain waffles ▪ Cereal bars ▪ Canned noodle or rice soups ▪ Whole grain, pre-sweetened cereals (hot or cold) ▪ Popcorn – low fat ▪ Low fat cookies ▪ Homemade² pizza (see note on combination food above) ▪ Crunchy granola bars ▪ Fruit crisp (apple, rhubarb, etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pastries, pies and cakes ▪ High fat muffins ▪ Doughnuts ▪ Pre-packaged cookies ▪ Pre-sweetened cereals ▪ High fat crackers ▪ Chocolate/yogurt covered chewy granola bars ▪ Commercial waffles, not whole grain

¹ Developed in partnership with the Department of Health and Wellness.

² Homemade is defined as foods made from ingredients from the maximum and moderate food categories rather than commercially prepared.

New Brunswick
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Appendix A

POLICY 711

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Food Category	Maximum Nutritional Value	Moderate Nutritional Value	Minimum Nutritional Value
Vegetables and Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fresh fruit and vegetables, including potatoes ▪ Frozen fruits and vegetables without added salt or sugar ▪ Fruit canned in fruit juice ▪ Homemade vegetable soups ▪ Vegetable stir fries ▪ 100% fruit juice or vegetable juice ▪ Frozen fruit juice bars with 100% real juice ▪ Salads made with fresh fruit or raw vegetables ▪ Fruit compote, without sugar ▪ Salsa 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fruit in light syrup ▪ Canned vegetables ▪ Canned vegetable soups ▪ Oven baked French fries ▪ Dried fruit ▪ 100% fruit leathers or bars – no sugar added ▪ Frozen fruit snacks ▪ Fruit compote with sugar added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fruit drinks and juice with less than 100% real fruit juice ▪ Poutine ▪ Deep fried french fries ▪ Canned fruit in heavy syrup ▪ Processed fruit snacks
Milk Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ White milk (2% MF or less) ▪ Flavoured milk³ (2% MF or less) ▪ Yogurt, 2% or less MF, fresh or frozen ▪ Homemade milk based soups or chowders ▪ Hard cheeses ▪ Cottage cheese (2% MF or less) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yogurt drinks ▪ Homemade puddings ▪ Processed cheese slices ▪ Homemade yogurt dips for fruit and vegetables ▪ Homemade milkshakes ▪ Frozen yogurt ▪ Ice cream – plain flavours such as vanilla, strawberry, chocolate, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercial milkshakes ▪ Packaged puddings
Meat and Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Chicken, turkey (unbattered) ▪ Lean or extra lean beef or pork ▪ Fish or seafood (unbattered) ▪ Canned fish in water ▪ Legumes (beans, peas, lentils) ▪ Eggs or egg substitute ▪ Tofu and soy products ▪ Peanut butter ▪ Unsalted nuts and seeds (<i>where allergies permit</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Commercially breaded, baked meat, chicken, turkey or fish (not fried or previously fried) ▪ Baked ham ▪ Lean cold cuts (ham, chicken or turkey) ▪ Salted nuts and seeds (<i>where allergies permit</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Processed meats (pepperoni, salami, bologna, etc.) ▪ Fried or previously fried, battered or breaded meat, fish, chicken or turkey ▪ Hot dogs
Other			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Candy ▪ Chips ▪ Soft drinks (carbonated soda) ▪ Sweetened beverages (commercially prepared iced teas, lemonades, sports drinks, etc.) ▪ High sugar syrups and toppings ▪ Deep fried products of any kind ▪ Chocolate (bars or candy) ▪ Commercially prepared cookies

³ It should be noted that the nutritional value (protein, calcium, vitamin A and D, etc) of flavoured milk is the same for both white milk and most flavoured milks. However, there is significantly more sugar in flavoured milks and therefore, they contain more calories. In addition, the caffeine contained in some flavoured milks is also a concern and should be taken into account when selecting flavoured milks.

The following food options (belonging to either maximum or moderate food categories) can be considered for vending machines and canteens. This list is not exhaustive and each item should be evaluated based on fat, sugar, salt content and its number of calories. If you have questions or require further information, please contact your local Public Health Nutritionist.

OPTIONS FOR SCHOOL CANTEENS AND VENDING MACHINES⁴

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% fruit juice • 100% fruit snacks/leathers/bars or fruit and veggie bars • Baked rice chips • Baked tortilla chips • Bottled water • Breadsticks and cheese • Canned fruit, in their own juice • Cereal bars • Cereal containing at least 2 grams of fibre per serving • Cereal snack mix • Cheese strings / portions • Crackers containing less than 6 grams of fat per serving • Crackers, whole grain, with less than 30% of calories from fat • Crunchy granola/trail mix bars • Date, raspberry or fig cookies • Dried fruit • Fresh fruit • Fruit bowls • Fruit sauces – unsweetened (tube or container) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juice boxes (not fruit drinks or fruit punches) • Low fat, whole grain muffins • Milk – 2% MF or less, white or flavoured • Nuts and seeds (peanuts, sunflowers, pumpkin seeds, almonds, cashews, etc.) • Pita puffs/pita minis • Popcorn, with less than 30% calories from fat • Pretzels • Homemade pudding • Raisins • Raw vegetables and dip • Rice cakes • Rice crispy squares • Salsa portion cups • Sliced apples • Soy beverage • Trail mix (combination of dried cereal, dried fruit, nuts and seeds) • Vegetable juice • Whole grain bread, bagels, muffins and rolls • Yogurt bowl, tubes or yogurt drink
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⁴ Source: Adapted from *Options for School Canteens and Vending*, Department of Health and Wellness, March 2005