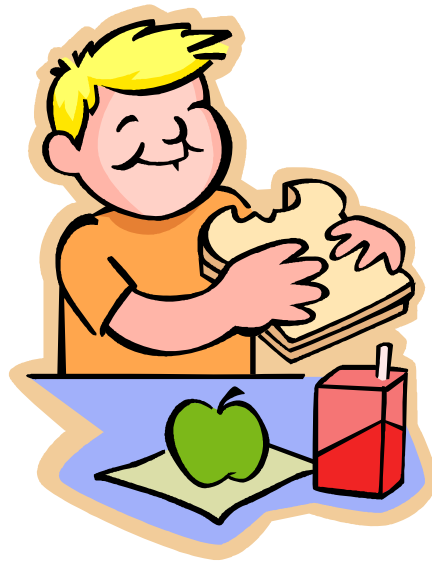


February 2011

Nutritious Lunch Ideas for Your School



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INTRODUCTION

This resource was made to help schools run healthy hot lunch programs, following the Red Deer Public Schools' Nutrition Policy. The Nutrition Policy is in place for all Red Deer Public Schools.

Background Information

In November 2007, Red Deer Public Schools passed a nutrition policy to encourage healthy eating habits for students. Nutrition guidelines have also been created that are linked with the nutrition policy. The nutrition guidelines are called *Standards for the Sale and Distribution of Food and Beverages in Red Deer Public Schools*. A copy of the Nutrition Policy and *Standards for the Sale and Distribution of Food and Beverages in Red Deer Public Schools* is available at <http://www.rdpsd.ab.ca/MAIN/Nutrition>. The *Standards* contain nutrition criteria for calories and such nutrients as fat, salt, iron and calcium. Based on their nutrient content, foods and beverages are classified into four categories:

Choose Most

Choose Sometimes

Choose Least

Not Recommended

Only "***Choose Most***" and "***Choose Sometimes***" foods can be offered to students in Red Deer Public Schools.

Please contact Alberta Health Services (Nutrition Services) in Red Deer at 403-356-6373 if:

- You have any nutrition related questions
- You need assistance planning your lunch program
- You would like a nutrition workshop or presentation at school (for parents and/or staff)

TIPS FOR SUCESSFUL SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMS

General Information

- All menu ideas in this resource are classified as “**Choose Most**” (CM) or “**Choose Sometimes**” (CS) foods (foods *must* fit into these two categories to meet the nutrition standards).
- *At least* 50% of the lunch items offered at each meal must be CM. The rest of the food items can be CS.
- A CM entree requires *at least* 3 food groups. One of these food groups must be a vegetable or fruit.

Steps and Ideas

- Aim for 3 to 4 food groups from *Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide* for your lunches.
- Start by choosing the main entrée. The entrée may be either prepared at school or ordered from local caterers/restaurants.
- Side items may then be added to the entrée so that at least 3 out of 4 food groups are included in the lunch. When an entree item is CS, serve with CM side items.
- Make lunch a fun food event! Create a school-wide theme around your special lunch. Examples include:
 - Mexican Theme on Taco Day
 - Italian Theme on Pizza Day
- Look for creative ways to include more vegetables and fruit into lunch. Examples include:
 - Cut veggies into different shapes (carrot coins)
 - Serve veggies and fruit with a healthy dip
 - Add veggies to wraps, burgers, and sandwiches
- Don’t forget food safety:
 - **Consult your local Alberta Health Services Public Health Inspector (403-356-6366) to make sure proper food safety measures are in place.** This is especially important if you are preparing school meals and/or snacks on school property.

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- If you are ordering lunches, only work with restaurants and caterers that have food operating permits. Serve these foods immediately after they arrive at school.
- The following pages have information on:
 - Restaurant and Homemade Lunch Ideas for Schools
 - Recipes for Homemade Lunches
 - *Sample* list of entrée ideas from restaurants
 - *Sample* list of side items and single serving packaged food ideas

Consider contacting other Red Deer Public Schools to obtain new ideas for hot lunches for *your own* school!

Remember:

- Any caterer or vendor who provides meals/snacks to schools in the Red Deer Public School District must have menu items that comply with the *Standards for the Sale and Distribution of Food and Beverages in Red Deer Public Schools*.
- Allergies and intolerances were not taken into account when this resource was developed. Please read food labels and contact restaurants/caterers to find out more information on specific ingredients if any student(s) has/have allergies and/or intolerances in your school.
- Several restaurants and vendors have been mentioned in this resource as they have foods available that meet the nutrition criteria from RDPSPD's nutrition policy. There may be *additional* restaurants or vendors not mentioned that also have appropriate food items.

Alberta Health Services (*Nutrition Services*) and the Red Deer Public School District do not endorse specific restaurants or vendors.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP PLAN HEALTHY LUNCHES

- Brand Name Food List (www.brandnamefoodlist.ca): This is a very helpful website that will place brand name foods and franchised restaurant foods into nutrition categories (i.e. Choose Most, Choose Sometimes) based on Red Deer Public Schools' Nutrition Standards.
- Healthy Eating at School (www.healthyeatingatschool.ca; click on "resources"). This web site contains numerous resources including:
 - *Healthier Foods – How to Make Fun Fast Food Healthier for Students* – if you do not have nutrition information about the foods you are serving (e.g. catered meals, home prepared meals), this handout will help you make sure healthier foods are provided.
 - *Tips and Recipes for Quantity Cooking* (for school food services)
- Recipe Analyzer (www.dietitians.ca/eatwell): This website will analyze your recipes to see if they meet the nutrition criteria for RDPSD's nutrition policy.
- Alberta Health Services also has nutrition resources for schools. They can be found at:
<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/2925.asp>

Alberta Health Services (Nutrition Services) would like to thank Fraser Health Authority in British Columbia for allowing us to use their recipes and nutrition information to create this manual.