

Nutrition Guidelines Quick Facts

Student Nutrition Program Guidelines assist programs in the planning and purchasing nutritious food. Following the release of the updated Canada's Food Guide in 2020 the nutrition guidelines for SNPs were also updated to align with the changes that were made. These changes include:

Food Groups: The new guidelines emphasize fruits and vegetables, whole grains and protein foods as the main components meals and snacks.

Vegetables and Fruits



Protein Foods



Whole Grain Foods



Sodium Threshold: Items served contain no more than 10% Daily value of sodium per serving size. This threshold has been changed from 140 mg per reference amount.

Cheese Milk Fat: Cheeses with less than or equal to 20% milk fat can be served.

Yogurt: Yogurts served should not have more than 11 grams of sugar per 100 gram serving of yogurt.

Beverages: Flavoured milk and 100% fruit and vegetable juice are now under the do not serve category.

Minimally Processed Foods: Increased emphasis on minimally processed foods as they contain less added sodium, sugar and saturated fat.

Dairy and Alternatives: Emphasis on dairy foods and alternatives as good choices for protein foods.

Vegetable and Fruit Guide

Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh vegetables• Frozen vegetables with no added salt or sauce• Potatoes, boiled, baked or mashed with no added salt• Canned vegetables with sodium less than or equal to 10% DV (daily value) per serving, drained and rinsed to lower the sodium content further• Canned tomatoes and tomato-based pasta/pizza sauces with less than or equal to 10% DV (daily value) sodium per serving
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh fruits• Frozen fruits with no added sugar• Unsweetened applesauce or fruit purées• Canned fruit in water or 100% juice, drained• Dried fruit with no added sugar

Whole Grain Guide

Whole grain foods are a good source of dietary fibre. Examples include whole wheat flour, buckwheat, barley, corn, oats, quinoa, spelt, bulgur, farro, whole wheat couscous, wheat berries, and brown rice.

- ✓ Whole grain, whole wheat or bran is first on the ingredient list
- ✓ Sodium is less than or equal to 10% DV (daily value) per serving
- ✓ Sugar is less than or equal to 8 grams per 30 gram serving

Example products include: Bread products, cereals, baked goods, grain-based snacks, noodles, rice and other grains

Protein Guide

Protein foods are good sources of protein and certain vitamins and minerals (e.g. vitamin D and calcium) that are needed for overall health.

Dairy foods are good choices for SNPs. Cow's milk is an excellent source of calcium and vitamin D. Yogurt and cheese are good sources of calcium. These foods are nutritious and well accepted by most children and youth. They are easily included in meals and snacks.

Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain skim, 1%, or 2% cow's milk
Milk Alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsweetened/unflavoured, fortified soy beverage • Unsweetened/unflavoured plant-based beverages with at least 6 grams protein per 250 ml and at least 30%DV for calcium and 30%DV for vitamin D per 250 ml
Yogurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain yogurt, soy yogurt and kefir with less than or equal to 2% milk fat • Flavoured/sweetened yogurt, soy yogurt and kefir with less than or equal to 11 grams of sugar per 100 gram serving and less than or equal to 2% milk fat
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard and soft, non-processed cheese made from pasteurized milk with less than or equal to 20% milk fat (when possible) • Cheese sticks, cheese curds with less than or equal to 20% milk fat (when possible) and less than or equal to 10%DV sodium per serving
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eggs purchased from an approved source (or 'graded' eggs) • Plain pasteurized liquid whole egg • Pre-boiled hard cooked eggs
Nut, Seed, and Legume Butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nut, seed and legume butters (including peanut, almond, walnut, sesame, sunflower, pea and soy butters) • Whole nuts and seeds (dry roasted or unroasted, with no added salt, sugar, oil)
Tofu, Beans and Lentils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried beans, lentils, peas • Humus or other bean dips, plant based pastas, canned beans, tofu, tempeh, textured vegetable protein plant based burgers and meatballs with less than or equal to 10% DV sodium per serving
Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen, or canned fish with less than or equal to 10% DV sodium per serving, drained and rinsed to lower sodium content further, and low in mercury
Meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh, frozen, ground or pre-cooked with less than or equal to 10% DV sodium per serving

Types of Student Nutrition Programs

MEAL

1 SERVING FROM
3 FOOD GROUPS



BREAKFAST

Served in the morning prior to the start of the school day

MORNING MEAL

Served in the morning once school has officially started

LUNCH

Served in the middle of the school day

SNACK

1 SERVING FROM
2 FOOD GROUPS



Can be served in the morning or afternoon

Vegetables and Fruits:



Protein Foods:



Whole Grain Foods:



*Drinking water should be available with every Meal or Snack.

*For information about the foods that fall within the 'Serve' and 'Do Not Serve' categories, please see pages 6-17 of the 2020 Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines.

Highlights - Updated Student Nutrition Program Nutrition Guidelines (2020)

Minimally Processed Foods

- The Guidelines place a greater emphasis on serving minimally processed foods.
- These foods have less added sodium, sugar and saturated fat.

Dairy Foods and Alternatives – Dairy now changes to a protein as a category

- Dairy Foods no longer have their own food group, and have been merged with the protein category. The Guidelines emphasize dairy foods and alternatives as good choices for protein foods.
- The vitamins and minerals provided by milk, yogurt, cheese and fortified soy beverage are important for children's growth and development.
- Many children and youth do not meet the Recommended Dietary Allowance (RDA) for calcium and Vitamin D.

Dairy Fat Limit

- New guidance on dairy fat limits recommend choosing cheese with less than or equal to 20% milk fat when possible.
- This guidance aligns with the 2019 Canada Food Guide and other guidance for child nutrition.
- The Guidelines do not provide guidance on % milk fat for fluid milk but they indicate that fat-free milk should not be offered.

Sugar Limit in Yogurt

- Sugar limit in yogurt is set to **11 grams of sugar per 100 gram serving of yogurt**.
- This aligns with Health Canada's recommendations to reduce intake of food high in added sugar and the Guidelines' existing limit on sugar for grain products.

Sodium Threshold

- Sodium threshold has changed from 140 milligrams per reference amount to less than or equal to 10%DV per serving size. This change will:
- Make it easier to find healthy choices that meet the threshold, including greater options for low-cost, nutritious protein options such as **canned tuna and canned legumes** that were difficult to find under the 2016 Guidelines sodium threshold.
- Make it easier for programs to interpret food labels and not have to calculate the number of milligrams per serving