

# **Food at School**

Food Safety & Nutrition Guidelines  
for **Food Served and Sold at School**

---



Thunder Bay District  
**Health Unit**

# Food at School

Many schools offer meal and snack programs and include food in fundraising activities like hot lunch days, barbecues and tuck shops.

Whether you are a teacher, a parent or a volunteer, these healthy food guidelines from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit (Health Unit) have been developed to make sure the food you serve and sell is both safe and healthy for the benefit of the whole school community.

## Getting Started

If your school serves or sells meals or snacks, operates a tuck shop or is holding a special event such as a barbecue please complete a Food at School form and submit it to the Health Unit. The form is available from the Health Unit website or by calling a Public Health Inspector (Health Inspector). This form should be submitted BEFORE the event.

Health Unit staff are available to provide education sessions and/or consultations on food safety and nutrition. Please contact your school nurse or the Health Unit for more details. Here's what you will find inside:

- School Nutrition Programs (meal and snack)
- School Milk Programs
- Special Lunches
- Barbecues
- Field Days and Sports Events
- Meetings and School Events
- Tuck Shop Sales
- Bake Table Sales
- Vending Machines
- Fundraising
- Classroom Rewards



# Keeping Food Safe

Be sure to read this section before you start planning so you know what you need in order to prepare, serve and store food safely.

Schools should be using the equipment and facilities mentioned in this booklet. If your school does not meet the criteria, contact a Health Inspector at the Health Unit for guidance in helping you plan to use the facilities currently available.

## Facilities and Food Source

1. Prepare all food in a facility approved by a Health Inspector. These facilities might include a school kitchen, a community kitchen, a restaurant or a private home. A Health Inspector is available to discuss options for your specific activity.
2. Pick food items that have been inspected or graded and come from an approved/inspected source. For example, all eggs and all meats, including wild game, must be inspected by the appropriate government agency.

## Food Storage and Refrigeration

1. Store pre-packaged, non-hazardous food (e.g. bread, cereal, cookies, crackers) off the floor in a dry, clean area.
2. Keep all foods covered or in a container with a tight fitting lid.
3. Make sure the facility has enough fridge space to store all food. All fridges must be equipped with a thermometer.
4. Check the internal temperature of all hazardous food to make sure the right temperature is maintained.
  - Keep cold hazardous food (e.g. meat, dairy, eggs) at a temperature of 4°C (40°F) or less
  - Keep hot hazardous food (e.g. cooked meat, soup, chili) at a temperature of 60°C (140°F) or greater

# BEFORE handling food, wash your HANDS.

## Food Preparation

1. Cook all foods as close to serving time as possible.
2. Be sure to cook foods to the proper temperature needed to kill bacteria. The chart below lists the final internal cooking temperatures.
3. Use a thermometer to check that the internal temperature is reached for at least 15 seconds.

### FINAL INTERNAL COOKING TEMPERATURES (USING A FOOD THERMOMETER)

<b>Poultry</b>	Whole Poultry, Individual Pieces	<b>82° C</b> <b>74° C</b>	<b>180° F</b> <b>165° F</b>
<b>Mixtures</b>	Containing poultry, egg, meat, fish or other hazardous food	<b>74° C</b>	<b>165° F</b>
<b>Beef &amp; Veal</b>	Hamburger, deboned and rolled roasts	<b>71° C</b>	<b>160° F</b>
<b>Pork</b>	All Products	<b>71° C</b>	<b>160° F</b>
<b>Lamb</b>	Ground, deboned and rolled roasts	<b>71° C</b>	<b>160° F</b>
<b>Fish</b>	All Products	<b>70° C</b>	<b>158° F</b>
<b>Eggs</b>	All foods containing eggs	<b>63° C</b>	<b>145° F</b>

## Serving Requirements

1. Time the delivery of food (e.g. subs, pizza, milk) so that it is served within 30 minutes of arriving at the school. If the person receiving the food has any concerns, the food should not be accepted.
2. Use equipment (e.g. coolers, burners) to keep food safe if it will sit out for more than two hours.
  - Keep cold food cold at 4°C (40°F) or less
  - Keep hot food hot at 60°C (140°F) or greater
3. Wash hands right before touching or serving food. If a sink is not available in the room where food is served, hands can be washed in another room and then hand sanitizer used immediately before handling the food.
4. Use napkins or tongs to handle food. Non-latex gloves are an option.

## Handwashing Facilities

1. Make sure the sink has both hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper towel in a dispenser. This sink cannot be used for anything else (e.g. washing dishes).



## Dishwashing Facilities

1. Cutlery and dishes used for preparing food must be washed and sanitized following the two-compartment sink method. See the Health Unit's dishwashing poster for step-by-step instructions.
2. Utensils and dishes used for eating food must be washed and sanitized following the three-compartment sink method. See the Health Unit's dishwashing poster for step-by-step instructions.
3. Use disposable dishes for eating if a three-compartment sink or dishwasher is not available.

# AFTER handling food, wash your HANDS.

## Clean-up

1. Clean all work surfaces after each use.
2. Wash surfaces with hot, soapy water and then rinse.
3. Sanitize by spraying with a sanitizing solution of chlorine (bleach). Mix 1/4 tsp bleach with 1 litre of water.

## Barbecuing...

### Special Considerations

Raw meat is only allowed in the barbecuing area IF handwashing facilities consisting of running water (e.g. portable sink with pump action), liquid soap and paper towel are provided.

For pre-cooked meat (e.g. not raw) and all other foods, make sure the following are available in the barbecuing area:

- Water in a jug (with a spout), placed above a bucket for wastewater
- Liquid soap in a pump dispenser
- Paper towel
- Hand sanitizer and/or moist hand towelettes



# Keeping Food Healthy

Ideally, food served or sold at school should reinforce classroom lessons on healthy eating. Read on for tips.

## School Nutrition Programs (Meal and Snack)

Provide students with accessible, healthy breakfasts, snacks and/or lunches by starting a school nutrition program based on the Nutrition Guidelines released by the Ministry of Child and Youth Services. Public Health Dietitians and Nutritionists can provide information to help start a program, plan a menu and find funding.

## School Milk Programs

Provide students with daily access to reasonably priced milk by starting a School Milk Program. Contact your Public Health Dietitian or Nutritionist for suggestions on starting and promoting this important program.



## Special Lunches

Include a serving from each of the four food groups and limit highly processed, high-fat foods (e.g. hot dogs) to serve up a well-balanced lunch. Some healthy menu ideas include:

- Cheese, Hawaiian or vegetarian pizza on a whole wheat crust with mini-carrots and water
- Turkey, chicken, roast beef or ham on a whole wheat bun/pita/wrap with a Clementine and chocolate milk
- Spaghetti and meatballs with veggie sticks and milk
- Grilled chicken/bean burrito or soft taco with salsa, a fruit salad and milk
- Chili with a tossed salad, a whole wheat bun and 100% unsweetened fruit juice

## Barbecues

At your next cookout:

- Choose a lower-fat meat product and serve it on a whole grain bun
- Skip the potato chips and consider fruit trays, a frozen fruit/yogurt bar or a lower-fat oatmeal cookie
- Serve a healthy beverage like water, milk or 100% unsweetened fruit juice



## Field Days and Sports Events

Promote healthy eating while promoting healthy activity! Provide water at all times and sell nutritious food that fuels up the engine and improves performance like:

- 100% unsweetened fruit juice
- Chilled, juicy fruits like watermelon, oranges or canned fruits
- Other fruits like bananas
- Whole grain subs, sandwiches, bagels, pitas or wraps
- Whole grain cereal bars (oats/whole grains as first ingredient)

## Meetings and School Events

Take this opportunity to show parents and visitors that, day or night, your school supports healthy choices. Dump the donuts and try:

- Water, milk or 100% unsweetened fruit juice
- Lower fat muffins, smaller muffins or larger muffins cut in half
- Fresh fruit and low fat yogurt
- Cheese and whole grain crackers or mini whole bagels with low fat cream cheese
- Vegetable or fruit trays to complement meals
- Sandwich trays with whole grain breads/wraps (avoid high fat spreads or processed meat)

## Tuck Shop Sales

Choose healthy alternatives to the regular chips and chocolate bars. If your current supplier doesn't carry these foods, support local businesses and contact a grocer in your community. Ask for:

- 100% unsweetened fruit juice, water, white and chocolate milk
- Yogurt tubes and cups
- Pudding, fruit or unsweetened applesauce cups
- Cheese strings, mini-cheese portions or cheese cubes
- Whole grain cereal bars (oats/whole grains as first ingredient)
- Fresh fruit or mini-veggie cups (e.g. carrots) and dip
- Fig/fruit bars, oatmeal cookies, low-fat mini-muffins or whole grain English muffins
- Baked tortilla chips with salsa
- Pre-portioned whole grain cereal
- Fruit kabobs or veggie/cheese kabobs

## Bake Table Sales

Make it easy for parents to make healthy choices by sending home a suggestion list with items like:

- Small packages of popcorn or homemade “bits and bites”
- Mini-muffins
- Oatmeal cookies
- Rice Krispie® squares
- Slices of banana, lemon or fruit loaf
- Fruit kabobs or veggie/cheese kabobs
- Roasted pumpkin seeds
- Homemade whole grain rolls or bread



## Vending Machines

Restocking the “pop” machine with super-sized, sugary drinks like Gatorade®, Powerade® and Fruitopia® does not solve the problem. Instead, consider:

- Water, milk, fortified soy beverages, yogurt-drinks, 100% unsweetened fruit and vegetable juices
- Low-fat, high-fibre bars, muffins, cookies, crackers, pretzels or baked chips
- Fresh or canned fruit and fresh veggies with dip
- Low-fat yogurt, cheese and pudding

To review the *Nutrition Guidelines for Food and Beverages Sold in Ontario Elementary School Vending Machines*, check out: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/135.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/135.html).

## Fundraising

Hold fundraising to a new, healthy standard by steering campaigns away from chocolate bars and Persians and moving toward healthier options like a service auction or a dance-a-thon. Here are a few basics:

- Sell food that promotes safe, healthy eating
- Support local foods, products and businesses when possible
- Look for ways to fundraise using non-food items

## Classroom Rewards

Don't send mixed messages to students by using food or candy as a reward. If you do use food, make choices that promote healthy eating habits and support the curriculum. Some non-food ideas include:

- Stickers, bookmarks, pencils
- Treasure chest with games
- Class walk/hike
- Class party

## Need more ideas to promote healthy eating habits at your school?

Please contact your school nurse or a Public Health Dietitian or Nutritionist to learn more about additional resources, like the Nutrition Tools for Schools toolkit.

## Bill 8: Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act

In an effort to make schools healthier places for students to learn, the Ontario government passed the **Healthy Food for Healthy Schools Act** in April 2008. The Act promotes healthy eating in schools and includes a regulation to limit trans fats in any food or beverage sold in schools (with some exemptions for special events). To view the regulation visit [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca).

In addition, health and education stakeholders are currently working together to create more comprehensive school nutrition standards that may apply to food and drinks sold at school. Contact your Public Health Dietitian or Nutritionist at the Health Unit if you would like help in complying with Bill 8.



For additional Food Safety information please  
contact your Public Health Inspector

For additional Healthy Eating information please  
contact your Public Health Dietitian  
or Nutritionist

**Thunder Bay District Health Unit**  
**999 Balmoral Street**  
**Thunder Bay, ON P7B 6E7**  
**625-5900**  
**toll-free 1-888-294-6630**



Thunder Bay District  
**Health Unit**  
[www.tbdhu.com](http://www.tbdhu.com)