

Healthy food and drink choices in schools

GREEN
Fill the
menu



AMBER
Select
carefully



RED
Off the
menu



Australian Better Health Initiative: A joint Australian, State and Territory initiative. Acknowledgement NSW Health

'Red' foods and the curriculum

The school curriculum is an ideal place for teachers to model healthy eating practices and demonstrate how healthy foods can be introduced into the diet.

Teachers can engage students in curriculum activities that promote the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* (AGHE). A powerful way to do this is to involve students in preparing and tasting nutritious foods that are also appealing in taste and presentation.

'Red' foods should only be included as part of the curriculum in line with the AGHE, that is, on limited occasions and in small amounts across the course of study. Including the preparation and presentation of 'red' foods can indirectly promote consumption of these foods and should be avoided where possible.

Where student engagement with 'red' foods is essential, consideration should be given to the connection to other learning outcomes of the Curriculum Framework and the importance of students' learning to make healthy food choices.

This means:

- ✓ In any food preparation activity, all categories of food such as appetisers, main course and dessert should reflect a focus on healthy foods recognising that, for students to prepare and serve a range of foods and use a range of techniques, they may on limited occasions be preparing and serving 'red' foods and/or preparing foods in such a way that renders them 'red' foods.
- ✓ Making and tasting small quantities of 'red' foods can increase students' understanding of the properties of food and the related food science. This understanding should be used to justify that only small amounts of 'red' foods should be eaten.

- ✓ In instances where it is necessary for students to engage in comparative food studies that involve 'red' foods, and there is a need to taste these foods, then it should be in small taste testing experiences. The focus of the curriculum is for students to develop an understanding of the reasons for national differences in food behaviours due to, for example, food availability, social, economic, cultural, environmental, political and technological factors.
- ✓ Food is often used to reflect a particular cultural context such as Oktoberfest or Bastille Day. It is acknowledged that some of these foods may be 'red' foods, however these occasions should be limited and the 'red' foods should be kept to small amounts.
- ✓ Food preparation techniques such as deep frying and pastry making are essential competencies of the vocational curriculum. The technique should only be practised until the required level of competency has been achieved.
- ✓ In meal preparation activities where a variety of techniques are necessary, those that are associated with 'red' foods, such as deep frying, should be balanced by a focus on techniques that encourage the use of 'green' and 'amber' foods.

