



Healthy food and drink choices in schools

GREEN
Fill the menu



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

AMBER
Select carefully



Acknowledgement NSW Health

RED
Off the menu



Recommended serving sizes - It's all about balance

Energy In = Food and drink consumed

Energy Out = Physical activity and body functions

Getting the right balance of energy in, versus energy out is essential to maintaining a healthy body.

If a student consumes more energy (ie kilojoules) than they use, that extra energy is stored as body fat. Therefore, if we consume more energy than we are able to burn up, we put on weight, but if we consume less, we lose weight.

Children can consume up to one third of their daily nutritional intake while at school. As many children regularly purchase food from canteens, it is important that the canteen promotes and models healthy food and drink choices.

How many serves per day?

The number of serves of the five food groups children and adolescents need to eat each day depends on their body size and activity level.

Table 1 provides a guide to the recommended number of servings that children and adolescents should consume each day. Very active children may need more each day than shown in the table.

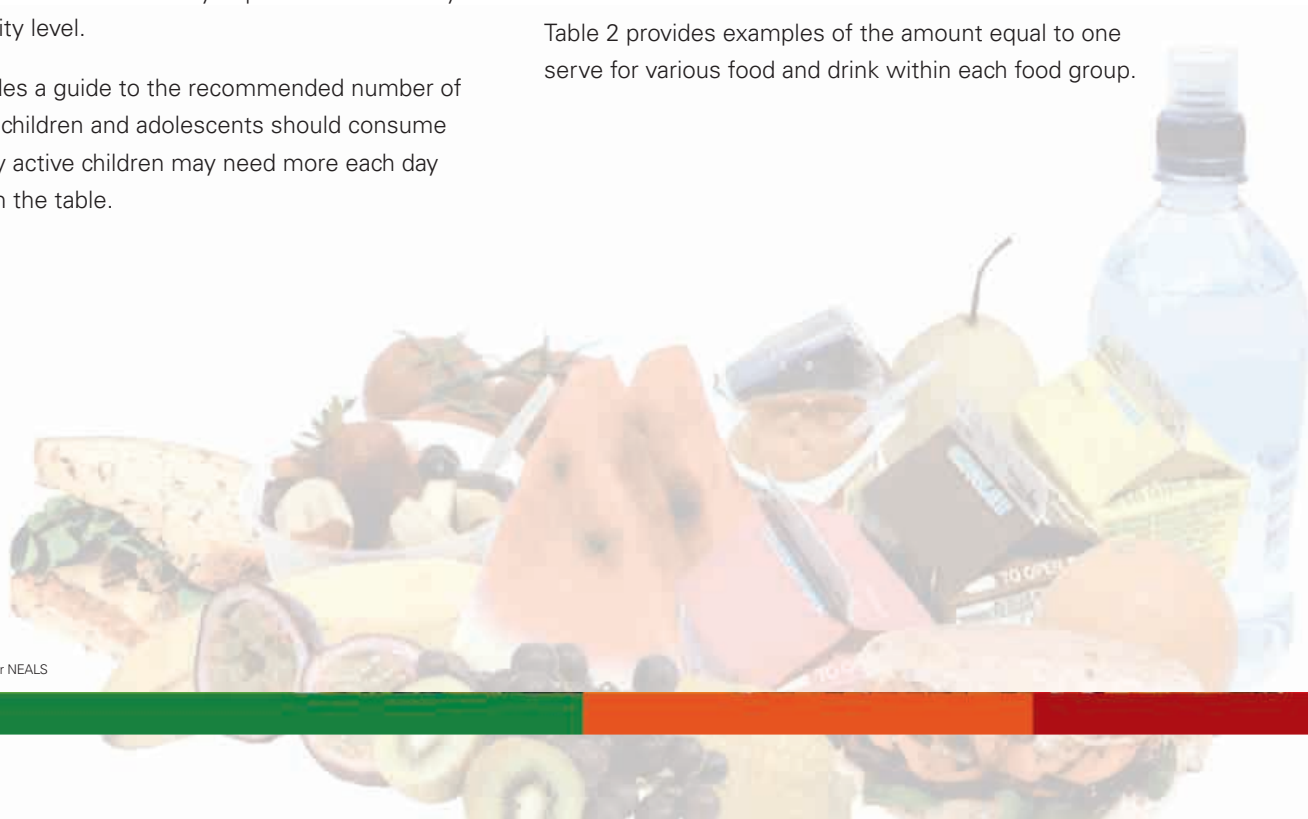
Table 1: Recommended number of daily serves for children and adolescents

Food Group	4-7 years	8-11 years	12-18 years
Cereals (inc. breads, rice, pasta, noodles)	5-7	6-9	5-11
Vegetables, legumes	2	3	4
Fruit	1	1	3
Milk, yoghurt, cheese	2	2	3
Lean meat, fish, poultry, nuts and legumes	½	1	1

How much is one serve?

The amount of food or drink that equals one serve can vary depending on the type of food or drink. For example, two slices of bread or one medium bread roll is equivalent to one serve.

Table 2 provides examples of the amount equal to one serve for various food and drink within each food group.



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Table 2: Examples of one serve

Bread and cereals
2 slices of bread
1 bread roll
1 cup of rice, pasta or noodles
1 cup porridge
1 cup breakfast cereal
½ cup muesli
3-4 dry biscuits
Vegetables and legumes
Starchy
1 medium potato
½ medium sweet potato
1 medium parsnip
Dark green leafy
½ cup cabbage, spinach, silverbeet, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts
Legumes and other vegetables
1 cup lettuce
½ cup broad beans, lentils, peas, green beans, zucchini, salad vegetables, mushrooms, tomatoes, capsicum, cucumber, sweetcorn, turnips, swede, celery, eggplant, sprouts, etc.
Fruit
1 piece of medium sized fruit (apple, mango, orange, mandarin, banana, pear etc.)
2 pieces of smaller fruit (apricot, kiwi, plum, fig etc.)
8 strawberries
20 grapes or cherries
½ cup fruit juice
¼ cup melon
4 dried apricots
1 ½ tbsp sultanas
1 cup diced dried fruit

Milks, yoghurt, cheese and alternatives
250ml glass milk or one cup fresh, longlife or reconstituted
½ cup evaporated milk
40g (2 slices) cheese
250ml (1 cup) custard
200g (1 small carton) yoghurt, plain or fruit
1 cup soy milk (calcium fortified)
1 cup almonds (as alternative)
½ cup pink salmon with bones (as alternative)
Meat, fish, poultry and alternatives
Cooked meat/chicken 65-100g (eg ½ cup cooked mince/2 small chops/2 slices of roast meat)
Cooked fish fillet 80-120g
2 small eggs
½ cup cooked dried beans, lentils, chickpeas, split peas or canned beans, cup peanuts*/almonds

*Food allergies are the most common triggers for anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) in children. Eight foods cause 90 per cent of food allergies: peanuts, cow's milk, egg, wheat, soybean, tree nuts (eg cashew), fish and shellfish. Schools should be aware of the risk of hidden allergens and can find further information by referring to the Department's Anaphylaxis Advice Paper available on the Inclusive Education website; <http://www.det.wa.edu.au/inclusiveeducation/detcms/inclusiveeducation/public/caring-and-protecting/promoting-student-health-care/health-care-advice-papers.en?oid=Article-id-254997>.

Sources:

- *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing, 1998.
- *Right Bite Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for South Australian Schools and Preschools*. South Australian Department of Education and Children's Services and SA Health, 2008.