

# 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*

## Ideas for non-food rewards for students

Food preferences become established following our experiences with food and eating. Children are exposed to many different messages regarding food from a very early age.

Schools should provide an environment where positive messages regarding nutritional standards are modelled and reinforced through the curriculum and food services.

Using food and drinks of poor nutritional value as a reward for students can contradict the messages promoted in the school curriculum. Utilising such foods may reinforce students' preferences for them and prove counterproductive to learning programs that promote healthy eating.

Changing the practice of using food to reward good behaviour (especially confectionery) can initially be challenging. However, the move towards other non-food rewards can be worthwhile, especially when students are involved in the process of choosing alternatives.

Praise and positive reinforcement are the preferred methods in encouraging students to keep up their good work.

Some of the following non-food rewards are popular in schools:

- ✓ Correspondence with parents/carers
- ✓ Stickers
- ✓ Certificates
- ✓ Pencils, pens, erasers
- ✓ Stencils, stamps
- ✓ Ribbons
- ✓ Computer time
- ✓ Time to listen to music
- ✓ Going to library to select a book
- ✓ Playing a game or puzzle
- ✓ Yo-yos
- ✓ Temporary tattoos
- ✓ Hair accessories
- ✓ Hula hoop
- ✓ Water bottles
- ✓ Balls
- ✓ Skipping rope
- ✓ Discount vouchers (eg for surfshop, AFL shop, music shop, ten pin bowling, movies, or skating)
- ✓ Raffle tickets.

