



Vitality Schools Programme

Healthy tuck-shop guidelines



The value of healthy eating for children

In recent years South Africa has seen a tremendous increase in the prevalence of childhood obesity. In addition to a lack of physical activity, the amount and type of food that children eat has an effect on their risk of developing obesity and chronic diseases in later years. Children who eat a variety of healthy foods, from all of the food groups, from an early age have a nutritionally adequate diet. Children with unrestricted access to any food usually eat a diet high in fat, sugar and salt, and low in fibre and nutrients.

It is therefore important to encourage children to make healthier food choices when buying foods and drinks from the tuck-shop.

Create a healthier tuck-shop: food swaps

Use the table below to guide you through the process of replacing the unhealthier foods (red) sold at the tuck-shop with the healthier options (green).

EAT MOST OFTEN ✓		EAT Rarely ✗	
 Homemade popcorn	 Water Milk (low fat/fat free)	 Chips	 Fizzy drinks Energy drinks Iced tea Milkshake Flavoured water
 Peanuts and raisins Nuts Dried fruit	 Low fat yoghurt Fresh fruit/ fruit salad Frozen yoghurt Ice-bites	 Sweets Chocolates Energy bars Fudge Coconut ice	 Burgers, hot dogs Pies, samosas Sausage rolls Hot chips, pizza White bread/ rolls/pita
 Bran muffins	 Whole-wheat roll bread/pita with tuna/chicken egg/cheese with salads/Homemade vegetable soup	 Biscuits Cakes Doughnuts Muffins	 Ice-cream Ice-lollies

It is also a good idea to position the healthier food options more prominently in the tuck-shop so the healthier choices become the easier choices.

Encourage children to make healthier food choices

Many South African children are being diagnosed with type-2 diabetes, a life-style disease previously associated with overweight adults.

Healthier food choices generally contribute a lower intake of energy (kilojoules), total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium (salt). Higher intake of these has been shown to increase the risk of developing lifestyle-related diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and obesity in later life. Healthier food choices also offer higher intake of beneficial nutrients such as vitamins, minerals and fibre, which have been shown to have health-promoting properties.

The importance of achieving the right energy balance

Balancing energy intake (through food and drink intake) and expenditure (through daily physical activities) helps maintain a healthy body weight. One way of doing this is to control the amount of kilojoules consumed daily. This can be achieved by decreasing the intake of foods containing high amounts of added sugar and fat.

Another important way of achieving this balance is by doing physical activity. For children, physical activity means playing and being active. Children should aim to do moderate to vigorous physical activity for at least one hour a day. The time children spend on sedentary activities like watching TV or playing computer games (screen time) should be limited to not more than two hours a day.

Portion distortion

Over the last few decades portion sizes have increased tremendously, resulting in an increase in the prevalence of obesity in adults and children. Eating larger portion sizes may contribute to energy excess, being overweight and obesity. All foods should be eaten in moderation.

For example, one portion of popcorn is healthy, but having more than one portion could lead to eating excess kilojoules.

Foods with a high sugar content but low nutritional value

Certain foods and drinks commonly sold in tuck-shops are high in energy (kilojoules) but low in nutritional value such as fizzy drinks, energy drinks and sweets. Eating excessive amounts of sugar can lead to children becoming overweight or obese. Therefore, limit the intake of foods and drinks containing sugar.

Foods high in fat

Eating excessive amounts of any kind of fat can cause one to become overweight or obese. Saturated and trans fats have the added danger of increasing the risk of developing coronary artery disease and type 2 diabetes. Therefore foods containing saturated and trans fats (for example, chips, chocolates, ice-cream, doughnuts) should rarely be eaten. Instead give preference to unsaturated fats such as nuts and seeds.

Foods low in fibre

A diet high in fibre is associated with a reduced risk of developing type 2 diabetes and coronary artery disease. Foods high in fibre like fruit, vegetables and wholegrain products (whole-wheat bread, popcorn and wholegrain breakfast cereals) slow down the digestive process. This means feeling fuller for longer which leads to less snacking on unhealthy foods.

Through small changes like creating a healthier tuck-shop and encouraging kids to be more active, you can make a big difference to the health of the learners in your school.

The Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for South Africa:

The Department of Health has adopted a core set of Food-Based Dietary Guidelines for South Africans. Here are 10 that you can implement in your school:

1. Enjoy a variety of foods
2. Be active
3. Make starchy foods the basis of most meals
4. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruits every day
5. Eat dry beans, peas, lentils and soy regularly
6. Chicken, fish, milk or eggs can be eaten daily
7. Eat fats sparingly
8. Use salt sparingly
9. Drink lots of clean, safe water
10. Use food and drinks containing sugar sparingly and not between meals.



 **Discovery**
Vitality

Discovery Vitality
155 West Street
Sandton

0860 109 939
vitalityschools@discovery.co.za

www.discovery.co.za