



SCHOOL FOOD & BEVERAGE POLICYINFO

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PPM150 (SEPTEMBER 2011)

HALDIMAND-NORFOLK HEALTH UNIT • BRANT COUNTY HEALTH UNIT

Q&A: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



About the Policy

- The School Food and Beverage Policy ensures that all students in Ontario are exposed to healthy food and beverage choices and messages consistent with Canada's Food Guide correlating to the curriculum.
- The policy applies to food and beverages sold:
 - In all venues on school properties (e.g., tuck shops, cafeterias).
 - Through all programs, including catered lunch programs.
 - At all events on school property, including bake sales, fun fairs and sports events.
- **Exemptions:**

The policy does not apply to food and beverages:

 - Offered in schools to students at no cost.
 - Brought from home or purchased off school premises and not for resale in schools.
 - Available for purchase during field trips off-site.
 - Sold in schools for non-school purposes (e.g., sold by an outside organization using the gymnasium after school hours, for a non-school related event).
 - Sold off of school premises for fundraising activities.
- The *Grand Erie District School Board* has developed a Policy Statement which maintains the application of the legislation to all food and beverages that are sold within the school setting.
- The *Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board* is implementing an interim nutrition policy whereby the PPM 150 applies to all food and beverages that are offered and sold; includes fundraisers for school purposes, classroom celebrations, school events, classroom rewards.



Food From Home



The policy does not restrict the types of foods that parents provide for their child's own lunches and snacks

brought from home. Use Canada's Food Guide to plan healthy lunches and snacks for your children.

Interpreting PPM 150

Q: Is there a list of "Sell Most" and "Sell Less" foods and beverages that I can access?

A: There is currently no food list available. Maintaining an up-to-date list, particularly given the frequency in which food manufacturers alter their recipes, is a challenging endeavour. To assist you in the assessment process, the Ministry of Education has developed an online food calculator for analyzing foods with a nutrition facts table against the PPM 150 food standards. The *Nutrition Standards Tool* is available on the Ministry of Education Healthy Schools

Sell Most: Products that are the healthiest option, lower in fat, sugar and salt and higher in essential nutrients. At least 80% of all food and beverage choices must be offered from this category.

Sell Less: Products that may be slightly higher in fat, sugar and sodium. No more than 20% of all food and beverage choices can be offered from this category.

Not Permitted for Sale: Products containing few or no essential nutrients and are higher in fat, sugar, and salt. Products in this category cannot be sold.

website at <http://healthy.apandrose.com/nst>. For foods without a nutrition facts table, you can access the Recipe Analyzer tool on the Dietitians of Canada website at <http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Assess-Yourself/Recipe-Analyzer.aspx>. This will provide you with a nutrient profile that can be compared to the PPM 150 nutrition criteria.

Q: *If one classroom has a special food day in the morning, does this count as an entire special food day?*

A: According to the policy, each school is allowed ten special food days per year where the food and beverages sold to students may fall outside of the nutrition guidelines. If one classroom has a special food day in the morning, it would count as one special food day for the entire school. It is not ten special food days per classroom but rather for the entire school.

Q: *Is chocolate milk considered a "Sell Most" beverage?*

A: Yes, for both elementary and secondary schools, chocolate milk meets the requirements for a "Sell Most" beverage. However, in elementary schools, chocolate milk servings must be 250 mL or less in order to be considered a "Sell Most" beverage. In secondary schools, chocolate milk can be sold in 500 mL servings and still be considered a "Sell Most" beverage. Be cautious of chocolate-based drinks which typically do not meet the milk beverage requirements of $\leq 2\%$ milk fat or $\leq 5\text{g}$ of fat, and sugar $\leq 28\text{g}$, and calcium $\geq 25\%$ Daily Value.

Q: *For bread products, whole grains have to be the first ingredient on the ingredient list in order to be considered a "Sell Most" food. Does this apply to pasta as well?*

A: No. The food nutrition standards for Grain Products are divided into sub-categories, each with their own criteria. Bread is one sub-category. Pasta, Rice and Other Grains is another sub-category. For breads, whole grains must be the first item on the ingredient list (e.g. whole wheat, whole oats, etc). The remaining criteria would then be applied to determine which category it falls into. For pasta to be a "Sell Most" food item, it must

contain 3 g of fat or less, and 2 g or less of saturated fat and 240 mg or less of sodium. (Refer to *School Food and Beverage Policy, Quick Reference Guide, 2010*)

Q: *Can we still serve pancakes?*

A: Pancakes can be considered a "Sell Most" food if:

- 1) the Nutrition Facts Table on the pancake mix fits under the Baked Goods category, with no more than 5 g of total fat, $< 2\text{g}$ Saturated Fat, and at least 2 g of fibre per serving. There are pancake mixes currently on the market which meet this criteria.
- 2) the recipe for making the pancakes from scratch uses only Sell Most ingredients, and is prepared in a healthy way.

Serve pancakes with yogurt, unsweetened applesauce or limit the amount of syrup served to 1 tablespoon per 1 serving.

Q: *How do cereal squares or cereal bars fit?*

A: Cereal bars or squares would be classified under the Baked Goods sub-category of the nutrition standards in the School Food and Beverage Policy. They are assessed for total fat, saturated fat and fibre.

Q: *Where do processed cheese slices, cheese whiz, cream cheese and parmesan cheese fit?*

A: If you use 1 tablespoon or less then these choices can be considered a Miscellaneous Item, Minor Ingredient. If you use more than 1 tbsp these products would then be classified under the Cheese category and need to meet the nutrition criteria.

Q: *How is frozen yogurt classified?*

A: Frozen yogurt is classified as a Milk-Based Dessert, not as a yogurt.

Q: *Our school has a movie theatre-style hot-air popcorn machine which uses non-hydrogenated oil. Is this a Sell Most item?*

A: The kernels would be considered Sell Most by itself; the oil used has to be non-hydrogenated (trans-fat free). The serving size of popped corn and oil must be calculated, with no added salt as a topping. Ensure the oil (fat) of the popcorn serving is no more than 3 grams of fat if you

decide to classify as a grain-based snack. This would look something like 1-1.5 tsp oil per 4 cup bagged popcorn.

Q: *How is serving size taken into account when assessing foods?*

A: The Nutrition Facts table on a label indicates a suggested serving size. If the portion of food you will be offering is larger or smaller than the suggested size, then the amount offered needs to be adjusted to meet the nutrition criteria in the standards.

Q: *How do condiments and sauces such as ketchup and gravy fit into the nutrition standards?*

A: They are categorized as Miscellaneous Items, Minor Ingredients. Miscellaneous items are permitted for sale in limited amounts:

- Condiments and spreads (15 ml/1 tbsp)
- Gravies and sauces (60 ml/4 tbsp)
- Dips (30 ml/2 tbsp)
- Fats (5 ml/1 tsp)
- Oils and dressings (15 ml/1 tbsp)
- Other: chocolate chips, parmesan cheese, olives (15 ml/1 tbsp)

Q: *What is a whole grain flour?*

A: "Whole grain" must be the first ingredient listed to fit in the Sell Most category, i.e. "whole wheat flour with added germ".

Q: *Our school is looking for packaged foods for a snack shop. Are baked chips and fruit gummies an alternative for regular chips and candy?*

A: Candy, chocolate bars, gummies and other confectionary items are categorized in the "Not Permitted for Sale" category. However, there are packaged/vendable snack foods that do fit within the Sell Most and Sell Less nutrition standards. Baked chips, under the Vegetable and Fruit Chips category can be a Sell Most if low enough in Fat and Sodium. Fruit Gummies, fruit leathers or dried fruit chips may only qualify if the product fits the Sell Most or Sell Less nutrition criteria. Use the Nutrition Standards Tool at <http://healthy.apandrose.com/nst> to see what food products comply with the nutrition standards.

Q: *My school has a cafeteria and vending machines. Do I count both the cafeteria and the vending machines together when applying the 80/20 rule?*

A: No. Each venue, program, or event where food and beverage is sold is assessed independently. Furthermore, foods and beverages must be assessed separately when applying the 80/20 rule.

Q: *How do I apply the 80/20 rule?*

A: The 80/20 rule applies to products available for sale in each venue, program or event; not actual products sold. When assessing the food and beverage choices offered for sale remember food choices are assessed separately from beverage choices.

If there are fewer than five food or beverage choices offered for sale, all products must be Sell Most choices. If there are more than five choices, then some items can be Sell Less, according to the 80/20 rule. Check out <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/policy.html>, go to Tools and click on Online Modules, then Healthy Venues, Programs and Events for ideas on how to apply the 80/20 rule.

Q: *Can vending machines be filled with diet pop?*

A: Regular (caffeinated) diet pop falls under "Not Permitted for Sale" in both elementary and secondary schools. In secondary schools, diet pop that is caffeine-free would qualify as a "Sell Less" beverage. To sell this product in a secondary school, it would need to comply with the 80/20 rule. This means that for every one caffeine-free diet pop offering, four beverage offerings would need to be "Sell Most" so only a limited amount of diet, caffeine-free pop is permitted.

Q: *Our school's largest fundraiser is our pizza days. Can we still regularly sell pizza?*

A: If only one type of pizza is offered for sale then the pizza must be a Sell Most choice. Pizza can be made in a healthy way and can fit into the "Sell Most" category. Most pizza providers can make a healthy pizza if you ask that they make changes. For example, insist on having a whole grain pizza crust, low-sodium pizza sauce (≤ 480 mg of sodium), part-skim milk cheese

(20% milk fat or less), lean meat (e.g. grilled chicken) and vegetable toppings. (Refer to *School Food and Beverage Policy, Quick Reference Guide, 2010*).

Food Service Providers

Q: *Is it possible to obtain a list of pre-approved vendors from the school board?*

A: Each school board is determining how to best manage this request. Some school boards have a list of pre-approved vendors (typically the larger providers, such as Chartwells); others are gathering a list of food vendors currently in use by their schools. A pre-approved list is difficult because menu items and recipes change frequently and there are many food vendors. Please contact your school board or principal to see if they have compiled a list of pre-approved vendors.

Q: *How will I know if the offerings provided by my food vendor are in compliance with PPM 150?*

A: Schools are encouraged to begin engaging with their food vendors as soon as possible so that offerings can be adapted to meet the PPM 150 food standards. Ask your food vendors to sign letters of compliance, provided by your school board. Work with your vendors to make adjustments; you may be surprised to learn what is possible by simply asking. Schools are also encouraged to set up a committee with representatives from across the school community that can assist in keeping an eye on the offerings in your school.

Q: *My lunch vendor needs assistance interpreting the policy. How can our vendor get this information?*

A: Please direct them to the Ministry of Education's website for information at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/policy.html>. There are free on-line tools they can utilize including the *Creating a Healthy Menu Tool* and the *Nutrition Standards Tool* where they can input and assess products and recipes with or without a nutrition facts table. To further analyze recipes from scratch, you can look up nutrient information from Health Canada's Nutrient File at <http://webprod3.hc-sc.gc.ca/cnf-fce/index-eng.jsp> or utilize the Recipe Analyzer on-line tool from

Dietitians of Canada at <http://www.dietitians.ca/Your-Health/Assess-Yourself/Recipe-Analyzer.aspx>. Additionally, your vendor can contact your public health unit dietitian for guidance.

Monitoring & Implementation

Q: *Who is in charge of enforcing PPM 150?*

A: School boards are responsible for ensuring that all schools are in compliance with PPM 150 by September 1, 2011. School boards will ask each principal to sign a letter at the beginning and end of the school year indicating that their food offerings will be in compliance with the policy by September 1, 2011.

Q: *As a school principal, how do I manage the expectations of PPM 150 in and amongst other priorities?*

A: The short answer is, you are not alone. The training you and some teachers and parents received was a first step in providing your school community with information, ideas, tools and resources to set you up for success in meeting PPM 150 standards and establishing healthy nutrition environments in your schools. Here are some ways to get started:

- Establish a school committee that includes parents, teachers, public health, and other community members.
- Begin the dialogue with your food providers.
- Share the resources provided in your training with others.
- Begin with one small change, e.g. one day of your weekly lunch menu, and build additional changes over time.

Financial Implications

Q: *Will PPM 150 increase the cost of food sold in schools?*

A: Healthier food does not necessarily cost more. A study done by the University of Minnesota found that more nutritious lunches don't necessarily cost more to produce. It also found that school lunch sales don't decline because healthier meals are served. Source: Ontario Ministry of Education website www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/faqs.html.

Q: *As a secondary school principal, one of my concerns is students leaving school property to purchase foods, which impacts the revenue from our cafeteria and vending machine sales. How do we compensate for this?*

A: This is a reality that school principals will have little to no control over. What is within your control is the offerings provided to your students for the time that they are in school. Soliciting students' input and involvement in the change process will help in establishing food offerings that are both palatable and profitable. Parents will also be assured to know that a healthy meal is consistently available to their children while at school. These changes will slowly integrate as part of the school culture, and the desired choices of students can change over time as well.

Q: *I am concerned about the impact of the new food standards on our school's fundraising initiatives. How can we address this?*

A: Ontario is not the first province to implement food standards in schools. British Columbia implemented their standards in 2005; a recent evaluation showed that over half of schools reported no change in their revenue from fundraising when they switched to healthier options. As with any change, there will be challenges in the early days. The good news is that many alternative fundraising activities have emerged that are both healthy and profitable. Refer to the

Healthy School Fundraising fact sheet from the Brant County and Haldimand Norfolk health units for ideas as well as a listing of non-food and healthy food product vendors. Another resource: Act Now BC. School food sales and policy report II, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, 2008.

Q: *I am not confident that students will purchase or eat these healthier foods. How can we make it work?*

A: There is a misconception that students will not eat healthy foods. Exposing children to a variety of foods is a good way to expand their taste preferences. We may actually be making assumptions about what they will like or eat before providing them with sufficient opportunities to try different foods. When seeking to make changes to your food offerings, engage children in the process. Here are some ideas:

- Hold a taste testing with new meals from your food provider and ask students to vote on their favourite.
- Consider a theme day around the food offering to engage the students and make it fun.

Community Engagement

Q: *How do we engage our communities around the issue of healthy eating?*

A: Engaging your community is essential when creating a healthy school nutrition environment. Provide ongoing communi-

cation to all staff, students, parents, community partners, food service providers and other members of the community about the policy and implementation plan. Some practices that can help engage your school community:

- Ask parents, teachers and students to get involved with your school to help promote healthier choices. Form a school nutrition committee to identify key nutrition priority areas for action.
- Send out key messages about the policy in newsletters, and e-mails.
- Display the information about the School Food and Beverage Policy on a healthy eating themed bulletin board and/or on the school website.
- Provide regular updates at staff and school council meetings.
- Work towards integrating a comprehensive approach to the healthy eating environment within your school setting using the *Foundations for a Healthy School Framework* (<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/foundations.pdf>). Creating a healthy school nutrition environment looks at these same four components: Quality instruction and programs; healthy physical environment; supportive social environment; and community partnerships.

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