



ACT
Government

**fresh
TASTES**



Food for Sale

Action Planning Guide

A joint Australian, State and Territory Government initiative under the National Partnership Agreement on Preventive Health.

Food for Sale aims to ensure that food and drinks sold to students by the school, including through the canteen, fundraising activities and school events, meet the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*.

How this action area will make a difference

Food consumed at school

Australian children aged 5-16 years consume 32% of their total energy needs during school hours through meals, snacks and drinks.¹ This will either be food and drinks brought from home, purchased in the canteen, or provided through school activities such as catered events or classroom activities.

The Food for Sale action area will address food and drinks sold to students by the school including through P&C managed canteens, school managed canteens, external canteen providers, fundraising activities and school events.

Canteen Fresh ACT

A school canteen can set the tone for the whole school food and drink culture. School canteens in the ACT are implementing the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*. These Guidelines use a traffic light system to assess which foods are suitable every day (GREEN), occasionally (AMBER), and not at all (RED). Canteen Fresh ACT services provided by Nutrition Australia ACT will support schools working in this action area to focus on switching their canteen to a more nutritious menu by implementing the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*.

Healthy eating is encouraged in ACT public schools. School canteens promote and provide healthy food and beverages.

ACT Education and Training Directorate, 2013

A shift from unhealthy pre-packaged meals in school canteens to fresh foods or healthy pre-packaged foods, needs to be financially viable. It takes careful planning. Schools need creative and practical ideas. Canteen income can be a funding source for a school.

In working towards a healthier menu, Fresh Tastes acknowledges that school canteens need to remain financially viable. Fresh Tastes will work with the ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations' Canteen Support Service to introduce a number of measures that support canteen operations to be more efficient in business practices; for example, online ordering systems.

Food for Sale links strongly with other parts of school life. Healthy canteens can reinforce lessons learned in the classroom. Students can be involved in the canteen to support numeracy, planning, business and marketing skills. School canteens also offer opportunities for parents/carers to gain hands-on healthy cooking skills.





Water on Tap

Promoting tap water

The ACT Government has made an election commitment to phase out the sale of sugary drinks in schools, which is consistent with the implementation of the National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines in the ACT.

The ACT Education and Training Directorate (Schools Capital Works) will install water refill stations in active Fresh Tastes schools that implement the Food for Sale or Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines action areas.

Tap water is the preferred source of water in the ACT as it is a good source of fluoride for dental health.² The processing, manufacturing, distribution and disposal of soft drink or water containers can take its toll on the environment.³

Schools are encouraged to promote tap water and refillable bottles instead of selling or providing drinks high in sugar through the school canteen, fundraising activities and school events.

Fundraising

Schools should look at fundraising as part of Food for Sale. Schools will be supported to find ways of reducing the sale of RED foods through school fundraising. Schools are encouraged to explore profitable healthy alternatives. If you have not yet implemented whole school Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines, you may consider starting with Fundraising Guidelines.

School events

School events provide opportunities to influence food sold. Events can also be linked to other parts of the school environment, such as the canteen, garden and classroom. As with fundraising, school events would be covered in the Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines action area, or you could start with more limited guidelines covering school events.

Marketing healthy food

Effective marketing can create demand for new healthy food and drink items sold at school. Marketing strategies can be used in canteens to encourage the purchase of GREEN menu items. Schools will struggle to compete against the huge marketing campaigns of nutrient poor, unhealthy foods. However, effective marketing gathers interest, and is a proven way of increasing profit. Schools can explore ways to market healthy food (see *Activity Ideas to Market Healthy Food* later in this Action Planning Guide).

Food safety

School canteens are required to register as a food business (see Food Act 2001). There are obligations that refer to the Food Standards Code. Fact sheets with additional information are available at www.health.act.gov.au/food-safety. For more information contact the Health

1. Department of Health and Aging; 2007 Australian National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey – Main Findings. Commonwealth of Australia, 2008.
2. Royal Children's Hospital and Murdoch Children Research Institute: Tap into Water Background Information Paper. Victorian Government.
3. NSW Centre for Public Health Nutrition: Soft Drink, Weight Status and Health: A Review. NSW Department of Health 2009.

Step 1:

Goals for your Action Plan



Your working group may wish to consider the following to help provide a picture of where your school is at before deciding on your goals for Food for Sale.

NOTE

You do not need to answer all these questions. This is a list to help thinking and discussion. It may help prompt the type of work your school can do in this action area.

The Canteen

- Who runs the canteen?
- What is the purpose of the canteen?
- Is the canteen financially viable?
- What does your school community want from a canteen?
- Is canteen profit an important source of revenue?
- Are canteen facilities adequate for preparing fresh foods?
- Do students have a pleasant space in which to enjoy their meals?
- Are there queues to purchase food/drinks?
- Is there indoor space to eat comfortably in cold weather?
- Does the canteen actively support the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*?

- Is the school community supportive of a healthy canteen (providing no red food and drinks)?
- Are there enough staff or volunteers in the canteen?
- Do canteen staff feel connected to the wider school environment?
- Can parents and carers become more involved in the canteen?
- Can students and classes become more involved in the canteen?
- Can the canteen be linked with the school kitchen garden?
- Are there partner businesses or community organisations that can help with supplies or equipment?
- Does your canteen have a registered Food Safety Supervisor and is your canteen a registered Food Business?
*Please note this is required of all ACT school canteens.
Visit www.health.act.gov.au/foodsafety for more information.

Promoting Tap Water

- How will you promote tap water as part of this action area?
- How will you aim to stop the sale of sugary drinks in school?
- Will you be creating school guidelines around the promotion of tap water and preventing the sale of sugary drinks?
- Consider applying for funding through the ACT Health Promotion Grants Program to promote tap water as the drink of choice?
* Please note as the grants rounds are highly competitive there is no guarantee of funding.

Fundraising

- Is unhealthy (red) food and drinks used for fundraising?
- What parts of the school conduct fundraising?
- What are the most successful fundraising activities?
- How many fundraising activities are conducted each year – use a term by term count?
- Will you be creating school guidelines around healthy food and drinks in fundraising activities?

School Events

- What are the main whole school events? How are they catered? What food and drink is sold?
- Will you be creating school guidelines around healthy food and drinks at school events?

Marketing Healthy Food

- Are there members of the school community who can help with marketing healthy food?

Whole School Setting

- Has your school developed Healthy Food and Drink Guidelines? These can set standards for food for sale in the school setting.
- If no, will you develop and promote more limited guidelines in the meantime that cover fundraising, event catering and promotion of tap water?
- Are there any parts of the school environment which sell food and/or drink other than the canteen?
- How will you plan to continue any positive changes achieved in this action area beyond the first year of implementation.

Finally

- Are there any other questions important for your school about Food for Sale?
- What are your goals for Food for Sale?

“Healthy eating is encouraged in ACT public schools. School canteens promote and provide healthy food and beverages and limit the sale of foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt, such as cakes, chips or lollies. Schools welcome parents volunteering their time to assist with school canteens.”

Starting School: A Guide for Parents 2013-14.
ACT Education and Training Directorate



Step 2:

Strategies for your Action Plan



Here are activities, resources and ideas offered by Fresh Tastes partners to help you achieve your Food for Sale goals.

NOTE

Remember your strategies do not have to be limited to the ideas in this Guide. Your working group may have great ideas beyond the suggestions below.

Free and exclusive support for Fresh Tastes schools

Water Refill Stations

ACT Education and Training Directorate

The Water Refill Station program supports a number of ACT Government policies promoting healthy and sustainable ACT public schools. The ACT Education and Training Directorate will supply and install two water refill stations at eligible ACT public primary schools. Each student will also receive a refillable water bottle.

The Directorate's aim is to reduce the consumption of sugary drinks consistent with the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*, increase the consumption of tap water and reduce the amount of disposable drink containers and plastic waste in schools.

Schools will be eligible when they withdraw the sale of sugary drinks and pre-filled bottled water. Sugary drinks include carbonated drinks (soft drinks), drinks containing high caffeine, sports drinks and sweetened juice drinks. Juice and flavoured milk are not required to be removed from the canteen.

Your school will be eligible for two free water refill stations and a water bottle for each student when your school:

1. Phases out the sale of sugary drinks through the canteen, fundraising activities and school events; and
2. Promotes tap water as the drink of choice.

NOTE

This offer is available under two action areas, however, schools will be eligible once only. The water refill stations are limited to public schools only, provided under the ACT Government's 2013-14 Budget.

**Discounts
for Canteens**



**SUPERFRUITS
SUPER STORE**

Tom's Super-fruits will provide vegetables and fruit to canteens of active Fresh Tastes schools at wholesale prices.

Canteen Fresh ACT Nutrition Australia ACT

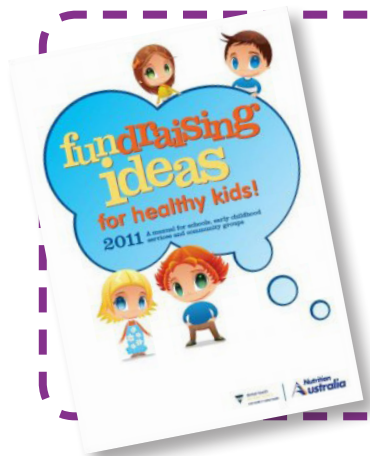
Active Fresh Tastes schools will be given priority to access a suite of services from Nutrition Australia ACT, including:

- initial and follow up canteen menu reviews with recommendations on how to implement the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*;
- subsidised canteen manager training for schools that undertake a menu review (including training for a Food Safety Supervisor; small business management training; and training on the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*);
- regular newsletters and information sharing events;
- access to a specialist canteen advisory service for ongoing support.

Visit www.nutritionaustralia.org/act
for contact information or phone 02 6162 2583.



**CANTEEN
FRESH ACT**



Book of Fundraising Ideas Nutrition Australia

The *Fundraising Ideas for Healthy Kids 2011* book includes a wealth of healthy fundraising ideas. Fresh Tastes will provide all schools with a copy of this book as they implement this action area.



Traffic Light Food Training

Nutrition Australia ACT

The *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines* traffic light system provides a great overview of which foods are suitable in the school environment every day (GREEN), occasionally (AMBER), and not at all (RED). As well as the canteen, these Guidelines are also useful to assess food and drinks for other parts of the school environment such as events, fundraising or food from home. The Fresh Tastes team can arrange training for staff, students and the community by Nutrition Australia ACT on how to assess foods using the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines* traffic light system.

For more information about the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*, visit the Department of Health and Aging website at www.health.gov.au and search for: school canteens.



NOTE

This training session appears in a number of Fresh Tastes Action Planning Guides. However, each school will be entitled to have this training funded once only.

School Canteen Support

ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations

The ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Associations have received funding from the ACT Government to deliver activities that support the sustainability of ACT public school canteens, improve business practices and increase healthy eating options in the school community. Activities will complement Canteen Fresh ACT services. For more information about this school canteen support, please phone (02) 6241 5759.



Online Forum and Buddy School Workshops

An online Fresh Tastes forum is under development which will enable schools to post and share great fundraising ideas.

Buddy school workshops will be part of Fresh Tastes for schools to support and learn from each other.



Additional strategies

These strategies are available to **all** schools and may be of use when developing your Action Plan to help you achieve your goals.

Make the Most of a Fresh Food Market Tour ACT Health

This ACT Health publication helps ACT preschool and primary school teachers, their students and market tour operators get the most out of a school excursion to a fresh food market. It can also be used to learn about fresh food in the classroom.

Useful activities, such as fruit and vegetable diaries, help raise student's awareness of how many serves they should be eating a day.

To download the publication, visit www.health.act.gov.au and search for: *make the most of a fresh food market tour.*

Funding Opportunities ACT Health

Healthy Canberra Grants and the Health Promotion Innovation Fund are available to community-based groups, schools, early childhood services, not for profit organisations and government agencies. These grants support health promotion projects or programs which contribute to the achievement of ACT Health's strategic priorities, particularly in relation to tackling overweight and obesity in children.

Further information is available from www.health.act.gov.au/hpgrants.

Active Fresh Tastes schools may choose to apply for funding through these grants to support their delivery of Fresh Tastes Action Plans. As the grants rounds are highly competitive there is no guarantee of funding.

Step 3:

Evaluating your Action Plan



It is important to track your progress and to show what has changed in your school as a result of implementing your Action Plan. The Fresh Tastes team will work with you to help build evaluation questions into your Action Plan.

Questions to consider

- How will you know you have achieved your Action Plan goals?
- What information do you already have that can be used?
- What new information do you need to collect?
- Who will do the evaluation?
- How will you communicate the results to the school community?
- How will you use the results?

Step 4:

Planning for the long term



Action in your school needs to continue well beyond involvement with Fresh Tastes to embed long term culture change.

Questions to consider:

- What will happen in this action area the year after this Action Plan has been implemented?
- How will you make sure progress in this action area continues after Fresh Tastes support has finished?

Step 5:

Final checklist



For the best results look at this checklist before confirming your Action Plan.

Checklist

- What are your school's goals for this action area?
- Who will be responsible for making this Action Plan happen?
- Will planned activities continue beyond the first year?
- How are parents, carers and families involved?
- How are students involved?
- How are business and community partners involved?
- How will you know if you have achieved your goals?
- How will you make sure the strategies are inclusive for all?
- How have you planned for long term change?

Additional resources

Here is a list of resources that can help you implement the strategies in your Action Plan.

Resources to Promote Health

ACT Health

Free resources including posters, brochures, and magnets that promote healthy lifestyles are available to strategically support activities. Also, portable water dispensing units are available for events actively promoting tap water. Go to www.health.act.gov.au, 'population health' then 'health promotion' or search for: resource order form.

Food Safety Supervisors Information

ACT Health

Registered ACT food businesses are required to appoint a Food Safety Supervisor (FSS) to supervise and give direction about safe food handling.

ACT Health is providing access to free online food safety training through the I'M ALERT Food Safety website. This training is available to food handlers and any other interested members of the public. The online training is designed to provide a basic understanding of safe food handling practice. The training contains interactive quizzes to test your knowledge. A certificate is issued on completion of the training. For more information about food safety or to access the I'M ALERT training visit www.health.act.gov.au/foodsafety.

National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines

Australian Government

There is a wide range of resources to support canteens to implement the Guidelines.

Visit www.health.gov.au and search for: *canteen guidelines*.

Fundraising Ideas

Heart Foundation

The *A – Z of Fundraising Ideas* publication is available online. It provides a list of fundraising activities that promotes a healthy balanced lifestyle.

Visit www.heartfoundation.org.au and search for: *fundraising ideas*.

School Canteen Policy

ACT Education and Training Directorate

The ACT Education and Training Directorate's school canteen policy can be viewed at: www.det.act.gov.au, search for: *school canteens*.

The ACT Government is currently developing an *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy*. Most jurisdictions across Australia have whole school food and drink policies in place to guide schools on suitable food and drinks so this action area brings ACT schools into alignment with other jurisdictions.

Marketing Tools for School Canteens

NSW Healthy Kids Association

Schools can access excellent resources to help canteens and schools with marketing healthy food.

Visit www.healthy-kids.com.au and go to '*school canteens*' and '*marketing and promotion*'.

Fundraising Tools

NSW Healthy Kids Association

Schools can access some great tips and tools for healthy school fundraising.

Visit www.healthy-kids.com.au and go to '*school community*' and '*healthy school fundraising*'.

Online Resource

Making it Happen

This American resource has some really useful tips for marketing health food. There is also a section on fundraising tips and tools.

Visit www.fns.usda.gov and search for: *making it happen*.

Activity Ideas to Market Healthy Food



The following tips and ideas are here to spark your thinking. Marketing Food for Sale can make a big difference to overall success.

Marketing is anything the school or canteen can do to create a demand or increase an uptake for healthy food and drinks. It can also increase profits (HICA website 2013).

Your working group should consult and decide who in the school community can lead marketing activities, and which parts of school life will be the focus of a new marketing campaign. Areas for improved marketing may include: the canteen, school events, healthy fundraising, or increased promotion of tap water.

Decide who will lead marketing activities

- Form a committee with students, parents/ carers, and teachers.
- Explore who, in your school community, has marketing expertise.
- Decide whether marketing could be a project for the Student Representative Committee, or a classroom project.

The 4 Ps - the classic marketing mix

- Identify and offer PRODUCTS that meet students' needs.
- PLACE products where they are easy to see and choose.
- PROMOTE products so students know about them and are motivated to try them.
- PRICE the products so students want to buy them.

Market Research - find out what your customers want

- Market research can include face to face surveys, written questionnaires, focus groups and suggestion boxes.
- Students are more likely to use their own language if they are interviewed, or in a focus group, led by other students.
- Ask basic questions about student and parent/carers attitudes and beliefs, what they want out of a canteen, what they think of current canteen items, what they would like on the menu, what prices they expect to be charged.
- Ask people to describe their favourite foods. What words do they use to talk about food? Food needs to be described in an appealing way.
- Include taste testing of menu items in the research. If students use words to describe menu items they like, use the same language to promote the product.
- Try to find out the level of understanding about food and nutrition. If the current knowledge of students does not support healthy menus you may have to phase changes slowly.

- **Some useful questions to ask include:**
- *“Tell me something that your parents made you eat that you were surprised you liked.”*
- *“Tell me about something that someone told you was good for you that actually tasted good.”*
- Ask parents/carers how they like to get information about what is happening at school. For example newsletters, notes home, emails or billboards at school. Ask the same of students.

Language - deciding words to market foods

- The market research will tell you about the attitudes, assumptions, likes and dislikes of children and parents/carers.
- Use messages that speak their language.
- Based on what parents/carers and children have told you about how they like to receive information, decide how you will deliver the messages.
- Messages should be catchy, easily remembered, and repeated frequently.

Special deals and other ideas

- Donate a percentage, from the sale of certain green items, to a selected charity or to the garden project at school.
- Use a rewards card or stamp system.
- Use incentives, such as a free drink bottle, with any green purchase.
- Offer taste testing for green items.
- Provide parent samples of school meals from the canteen at parent events/meetings.
- Provide teachers incentives to eat at the canteen to promote positive role modeling.

Pricing - a part of the marketing mix

- Price is a major factor affecting food choices.
- Children and young people are very sensitive to price differentials.
- Try discount coupons, introductory sales, meals deals.
- Consider charging less for healthy choices and more for unhealthy choices.

The dining experience

- Fast food companies talk more about how it feels, not what the food tastes like.
- Is the canteen and dining area a place students want to be? Consider the social experience, the atmosphere. Present the food in a fun way or give it fun names.

Choose how you communicate the message to your customers

- School newsletters
- E newsletters
- Website and social media
- Notes home
- At the canteen, through enthusiasm of canteen workers for green items
- Canteen menu
- Announcements
- Posters, display at the canteen
- Classroom reward prizes
- Competitions
- Point of sale – display the green items clearly, at the front. Make them attractive.
- Remove red items from view
- Word of mouth is the most powerful medium – face to face, email recommendations

Case studies



In 2011, North Ainslie Primary School found itself with no canteen.

The parent who had run it for over a year moved on to do other things, and no-one else took their place. North Ainslie Primary School found it difficult for the canteen to make enough money to pay a manager.

Eventually the students took action. The student leadership team began to make and sell food once a week. Students flocked to the new canteen and the food would often run out.

An interested parent offered to help. The P&C Association saw this as a great opportunity to promote healthy eating, and increase the engagement between parents/carers, teachers and students. The school decided to enrich this experience by starting a garden so students could be involved in growing food. They secured a health promotion grant through ACT Health to make this happen.

The school now has a student canteen committee. They have a small group of regular parent helpers, a larger group who come occasionally, and an even larger group who work in the garden or help during cooking sessions with students. The school has embraced what is known as their 'healthy eating hub'. It has become a teaching tool.

The canteen is only open one day a week. Orders are boxed and delivered straight to the classroom.

On average about 75 students order lunches each week. The canteen menu is kept limited. Students and families are asked what they would like to see on the menu. To promote vegetables, free vegetable sticks are given to every class, and the menu is 90% vegetarian. The canteen often uses excess produce from the garden and aims to be 100% green foods (from the *National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines*).

