Healthy School Food

A booklet for students, parents, and schools

Elkhart County Childhood Obesity Initiative

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The following guide is the result of a collaborative effort of the School Food Workgroup* of the Elkhart County Childhood Obesity Initiative.

Mission Statement

To provide schools and parents with information that will enable them to improve the eating behaviors of students by creating an environment where healthy food and beverage choices are offered in all areas of the school, especially areas that are outside federally regulated child nutrition programs. These areas include, but are not limited to vending machines, ala carte sales, food rewards, fundraisers, concessions, school stores, school parties, after-school activities, and meetings.

All of us as adults, including parents, teachers, coaches and mentors need to be role models for students. By promoting healthy behaviors, we can all help:

- Increase students' level of alertness and ability to learn
- Reduce absences
- Improve behavior
- Teach lifelong healthy eating and physical activity habits
- Prevent premature onset of chronic diseases such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, respiratory complications and orthopedic problems
- Improve self image
- Improve overall quality of life

** The School Food Workgroup includes representatives from Elkhart General Hospital, Goshen General Hospital, Elkhart County Health Department, Purdue Extension and the following school systems: Baugo, Concord, Elkhart, Fairfield, Goshen, Middlebury, and Wa-Nee.*

Menu

Beverages

All beverages sold in the school environment will qualify as a "better choice beverage" in accordance with Public-Law 54-2006 (Senate Enrolled Act 111). The following choices are approved for sale as a "better choice beverage":

- Fruit or vegetable based drinks that contain at least fifty percent (50%) real fruit or vegetable juice, and do not contain additional caloric sweeteners
- Water and seltzer water that do not contain additional caloric sweeteners
- Low fat and fat free milk, including chocolate milk, soy milk, rice milk and other similar dairy and nondairy calcium fortified milks
- Isotonic beverages, i.e., Gatorade, PowerAde
- Any beverage items available for sale at school may not exceed a 20 ounce serving size.

***At this time, this beverage policy does not apply to after school events where parents and other adults constitute a significant portion of the audience or are selling beverages as boosters. Please refer to the section on concession stands for further guidance.*

Vending Foods

All items sold in school vending machines will qualify as a "better choice food" in accordance with Public-Law 54-2006 (Senate Enrolled Act 111). Single serving food items meeting all of the following standards are approved for sale as a "better choice food":

- 210 or fewer calories
- 30% or less total calories are from fat
- 10% or less total calories are from saturated and trans fat
- Not more than thirty-five percent (35%) of their weight is from sugars that do not occur naturally in fruits, vegetables or dairy products

To determine if a snack meets these criteria, check the Nutrition Facts Label on the package (see page 12 for Food Label example).

"Better choice foods" meeting the above criteria include**:

- Motts Applesauce – any variety (4 ounces)
- Dole Fruit Bowls – any variety (4 ounces)
- Dole Fruit Parfaits – any variety (123 grams)
- Frito Lay Baked Chips – any variety (28 grams)
- General Mills Chex Mix – Traditional (28 grams)
- Kellogg's Raisin Bran Crunch Bar (28 gram bar)
- Kellogg's Special K Snack Bites – Strawberry (23 grams)
- Kellogg's Nutri-Grain Muffin Bars – Banana (45 grams)
- Quaker Chewy Granola Bars – any variety (One 28 gram bar)
- Nabisco 100 Calorie Pack Wheat Thins (One 22 gram package)
- Quaker Breakfast Bites – Strawberry/Apple Crisp (37 grams)
- Nabisco Teddy Grahams (One 35 gram package)
- Snyder's Pretzels (One 44.8 gram bag)
- Sun-Maid Raisins (One 28 gram box)
- Sunshine Right Bites CHEEZ-IT (One 22 gram pouch)
- Quaker Trail Mix Bars – Cranberry, Raisins & Almonds (One 35 gram bar)
- Nature Valley Crunchy Granola Bars – Cinnamon / Oats & Honey (Two bars/42 grams)

(Numbers in parentheses denote the serving size of the product.)

*** These are examples of snacks that meet the above guidelines. The Elkhart County Childhood Obesity Initiative does not endorse any of the above products.*

Concession Stands

At least 50% of single serving packaged items offered at concession stands must meet the same criteria as the "better choice foods" approved for sale as vending and ala carte options:

- 210 or fewer calories
- 30% or less total calories are from fat
- 10% or less total calories are from saturated and trans fat
- Not more than thirty-five percent (35%) of their weight is from sugars not occurring naturally in fruits, vegetables, or dairy products

Additional healthy options that schools can offer at games and other school events with concessions include:

- Trail mix
- Low-fat crackers
- Air popped popcorn
- Soy nuts
- Fruit cups
- Low-fat yogurt
- Fresh fruit
- Low-fat string cheese
- Chili
- Baked chips, pretzels
- Animal crackers
- Low-fat granola bars
- Soft pretzels with mustard
- Bagels with light cream cheese
- Baby carrots and low-fat dip
- Single serving low-fat milk
- Single serving 100% fruit juice
- Bottled water

(also see food options for vending)

Ala Carte Foods

In accordance with Public-Law 54-2006 (Senate Enrolled Act 111), at least 50% of food items available must qualify as a "better choice food". Food items meeting all of the following standards are considered a "better choice food".

- 30% or less total calories are from fat
- 10% or less total calories are from saturated and trans fat
- Not more than thirty-five percent (35%) of their weight is from sugars not occurring naturally in fruits, vegetables, or dairy products
- If the food item contains more than 210 calories, it may not exceed the following portion sizes:
  - Potato chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mixes, seeds, nuts, dried fruit, jerky = 1.75 ounces
  - Cookies, cereal bars = 2 ounces
  - Bakery items, pastries, muffins, donuts = 3 ounces
  - Frozen desserts, ice cream = 3 ounces
  - Non-frozen yogurt = 8 ounces
  - Entrée items, side dish items, french fries, or onion rings = may not exceed the portion of the same entrée item or side dish item served as part of the school lunch or breakfast program

Fundraisers for Healthy Schools

It is recommended that fundraising not involve selling food items of limited nutritional value, such as candy. When healthy food choices, such as fresh fruit, are used as fundraising items, the healthy eating message presented in the schools is reinforced with students, parents, and community patrons.

If a school chooses to sell food of limited nutritional value, it should not be sold during the school day.

Recommended Food Fundraisers

- Bottled water with school name/logo
- Gift baskets with fruit/cheese
- Specialty shaped pastas
- Boxes of citrus fruits
- Popcorn
- Cheese
- Apples
- Nuts

Items to Sell for Fundraisers

- Candles
- Jewelry
- First aid kits
- Pens and pencils
- Bath accessories
- Home decorations
- Holiday ornaments
- Plants, flowers, bulbs
- Greeting cards and stationary
- Stone/brick memorials
- Books, calendars, magazines
- Cookbooks (featuring healthy foods!)

Show-Your-School Spirit Fundraisers

School name / logo on

- Mugs
- Scarves
- Megaphones
- Bumper stickers
- T-shirts, sweatshirts, hats
- Spirit/seasonal flags
- Frisbees
- License plate frames
- Stadium cushions
- Buttons, pins, magnets

Fun and Entertainment Fundraisers

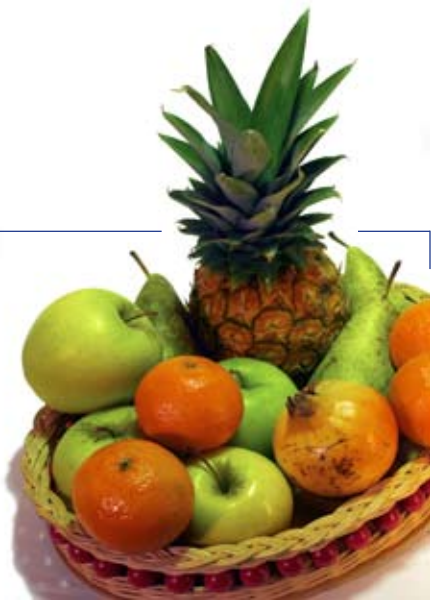
- Dances
- Magic shows
- Balloons
- Holiday flowers
- Talent shows
- School art displays
- Singing telegrams

Community-Related Fundraisers

- Recycling
- Car washes
- Family portraits
- Holiday gift wrapping
- Customized signs
- Emergency kits for cars

Activity-Related Fundraisers

- Skate night
- Walk-a-thons
- Jump-a-thons
- Bowling night
- Fun fairs



Alternatives to Using Food as a Reward

These ideas can be modified for different ages. Be creative and don't forget the simple motivation of recognizing students for good work or behavior!

- Finding alternatives to food rewards is an important part of providing a healthy school environment.
- School staff should not offer food as a reward to students.

Elementary School Students

- Make deliveries to office
- Sit by friends
- Eat lunch with teacher or principal
- Lunch or breakfast in the classroom
- Stickers, pencils, bookmarks
- Extra recess
- A physical activity break
- Show-and-tell
- Earn play money for privileges

Middle School Students

- Eat lunch outside or conduct class outside
- Allow extra reading time
- Award extra credit
- Provide added computer time
- Sit with friends
- Provide five minute chat-break at end of class
- Show an interesting, funny, special video
- Offer field trips
- Hand out budge passes

High School Students

- Provide free passes to school events or games
- Offer free-choice time at the end of class
- Award donated coupons to video stores, music stores, movies
- Hand out prizes for students meeting a certain grade standard
- Sit with friends

Classroom Snacks

Classroom snacks are only recommended for special circumstances as determined by staff.

Offering healthy snack choices in the classroom is an important part of creating a healthy school environment. **Due to food safety and other concerns, parents and school staff are strongly encouraged to bring in snacks pre-packaged as single servings.**

All parents and school staff who supply snacks for the classroom are encouraged to provide healthy food choices. By doing this, you are reinforcing the importance of healthy eating and contributing to the improved eating habits of students!

Try these healthy snack ideas for the classroom:

- Pre-packaged fresh fruits and vegetables with low-fat dip
- Single serve bags of animal crackers
- Individual low-fat yogurt cartons
- Single serve packages of trail mix
- Single serve low-fat pudding cups
- Single serve bags of baked chips
- Single serve applesauce cups
- Single serve bags of pretzels
- Single serve low-fat milk
- Single serve 100% juice
- Single serve fruit cups
- Low-fat string cheese
- Low-fat granola bars
- Raisins/dried fruit
- Low-fat popcorn
- Graham crackers
- Nuts & seeds
- Rice cakes
- Water

Classroom Parties

Schools can help promote a positive learning environment by providing healthy celebrations that shift the focus from the food to the child. Consider combining student birthday parties into one monthly event which incorporates physical activity.

Here are a few ideas for school parties

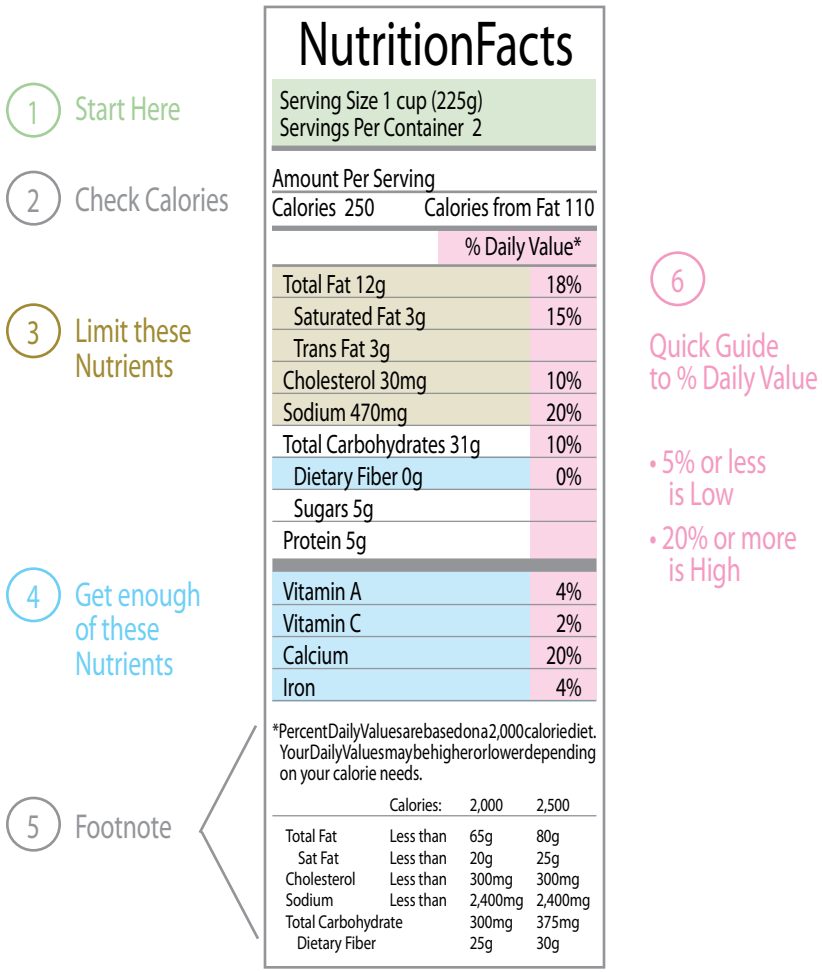
- Create a healthy party idea book. Ask school staff members and parents to send in healthy recipes and ideas for activities, games, and crafts. Compile these ideas into a book staff members and parents can use.
- Plan a special craft children can create. Ask parents to provide craft supplies instead of food.
- Give children extra recess time instead of a class party. For birthdays, let the birthday child choose and lead an active game for everyone.
- Instead of food, ask parents to purchase a book for the classroom or school library in the birthday child's name. Read it to the class or invite the child's parents to come in and read it to the class.
- Create a "Celebrate Me" book. Have classmates write stories or poems and draw pictures to describe what is special about the birthday child.
- Create a special birthday package. The birthday child wears a sash and crown, sits in a special chair and visits the principal's office for a special birthday surprise (pencil, sticker, birthday card, etc.).
- The birthday child is the teacher's assistant for the day doing special tasks like making deliveries to the office, leading the line, starting an activity, and selecting a game or story.
- Classroom parties can include foods that are delicious, nutritious, and special. Many varieties of pre-packaged or fresh foods are available. Please refer to the list of healthy classroom snack options for possible food choices.

Before- and After-School Programs

Many schools sponsor or host before-school programs and after-school programs. Whether operated by the school district or by another entity, these programs are encouraged to follow the same healthy school procedures, practices, and directions provided throughout this document.

Food Label Example

Sample label for
Macaroni & Cheese



Note to Parents & School Staff:

Remember the role models students look to are – YOU!!

The behaviors you model for kids send them a very powerful message. The School Food Workgroup encourages all parents and school staff to follow the recommendations outlined in this booklet when in the school environment. Creating an environment at home to support healthy behaviors is also important.

There are many ways that parents and school staff can model healthy behaviors for youth:

- Have healthy food and drink choices for meals and snacks.
- Do not consume foods of limited nutritional value (pop, candy, chips) in front of kids at school. Limit your family's consumption of these at home as well.
- Kids need at least 60 minutes of physical activity everyday. Encourage them to be active during breaks, recess and at home. Give them ideas about how to be active. Become involved and play with them!
- Talk with kids about the importance of healthy eating and physical activity.
- Serve healthy food and drink choices at staff/PTA meetings, school events, and at-home. Use the suggestions in this booklet for ideas.
- Follow these 4 simple steps to assure food safety at home and school:
  - Wash hands and surfaces often.
  - Don't spread bacteria between foods. Store and prepare raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separately from other foods.
  - Cook foods to proper temperatures.
  - Refrigerate foods quickly, i.e., after purchasing, leftovers.

For more information or resources on healthy eating, physical activity, and childhood obesity, please contact the Elkhart County Childhood Obesity Initiative at either 574-524-7511 or 574-535-2448 or email: childobesity@elkhartcountyhealth.org.

The Link with Physical Activity

It is important to remember the connection between healthy eating and physical activity. Both are needed to better achieve good health for children, youth, and adults.

Why do we need to exercise?

Benefits of regular exercise include: increased endurance and energy, reduced risk of developing heart disease, diabetes, cancer and other chronic conditions, increased confidence and self-esteem, healthy weight maintenance and improved stress-coping

How often should we exercise?

Choose a variety of activities you enjoy doing. Kids should aim for at least 60 minutes of physical activity on most days of the week. Adults should aim for a minimum of 30 minutes of activity. Make sure to exercise at the right intensity level – not too easy and not too hard. Consult with your healthcare provider if you have not been active in a long time.

What are some easy, low cost, family-friendly physical activities?

Jumping rope, biking, skating, walking, swimming, raking leaves, walking the dog, building a snowman, sledding, shoveling snow, rollerblading, dancing, playing Frisbee, mowing the lawn, gardening, and playing a variety of sports such as ping pong, soccer, basketball, baseball, horseshoes, croquet, and touch football

Create a Healthy Home Environment

Establishing healthy eating and exercise habits at an early age are important steps in assuring your child will live a long, healthy life. Here are some additional ideas to help keep your family on track to good health:

- Eat a healthy, balanced breakfast every day.
- Choose healthy drinks like water and low-fat milk.
- Eat a variety of colorful fruits and vegetables every day.
- Limit foods that are high in fat and sugar.
- Choose healthy snacks.
- Watch portion sizes.
- Exercise every day.

Nutrition and Physical Activity Website Resources

Dairy Council	www.nationaldairycouncil.org
Nutrition Explorations	www.nutritionexplorations.org
Dole 5-A-Day	www.dole5aday.com
My Pyramid	www.mypyramid.gov
Kidnetic	www.kidnetic.com
Kids Health	www.KidsHealth.org
Nutrition.gov	www.nutrition.gov
Recreation.gov	www.recreation.gov

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Publishing funded in part by: