

Healthy food and drink choices in schools

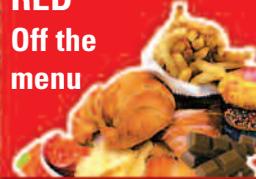
GREEN
Fill the
menu



AMBER
Select
carefully



RED
Off the
menu



Australian Better Health Initiative: A joint Australian, State and Territory initiative.

Acknowledgement NSW Health

Obesity in Western Australia

Childhood obesity is now recognized as a world wide epidemic. The number of Western Australian children who are overweight or obese has tripled in the last twenty years with a quarter of boys and a third of girls aged 7 – 15 years being overweight or obese in 2003¹.

Weight gain and obesity is usually the result of eating too much food, or the wrong types of food, combined with doing too little physical activity. This is a serious health concern as people with excess weight and obesity have a much greater risk of immediate and long-term health problems.

For this reason, the Western Australian Government has placed a high priority on developing government policies to address obesity and improve people's health outcomes. As part of a whole school approach to addressing weight gain and obesity, students in Years 1 to 10 will undertake at least two hours of structured physical activity each week.

The policy and standards for healthy food and drink choices is also an essential building block to begin turning the tide against the alarming increase in children who are overweight and obese. This policy covers food services provided by school canteens, Parents and Citizens' Associations, external contractors and local caterers/shops. It also extends to areas in the school where the principal is directly responsible for the supply of food and drinks including classroom rewards, school camps and excursions.

Children and adolescents vary in the amount they rely on food services in schools. These food services, particularly school canteens, are an integral part of schools and they have an important role to play in setting a standard for healthy eating for the whole school community.

For example, the school canteen can reinforce nutrition messages being taught in the classroom by modeling healthier food and drink choices that are tasty, interesting and affordable. This has the potential to influence food choices by students at school and in the wider community, and help to equip students with the knowledge to continue to make healthy choices throughout their adult lives.

For more information, including other publications on obesity, visit the following websites:

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
aihw.gov.au

Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing
health.gov.au

Building a Healthy, Active Australia Initiative
healthyactive.gov.au

Department of Education and Training Physical Activity Initiatives
det.wa.edu.au/education/physicalactivity

¹ Hands, B., Parker, H., Glasson, C., Brinkman, S. & Read, H. (2004) *Physical Activity and Nutrition Levels in Western Australian Children and Adolescents: Report*. Perth, Western Australia: Western Australian Government.

