

An Overview of the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools



HealthLink BC



Outline



1. What are the Guidelines?
2. Where do the Guidelines apply in schools?
3. Why have Guidelines in schools?
4. What's new in the 2013 edition of the Guidelines?
5. What resources are available to support implementation of the Guidelines?



In this broad overview of the Guidelines we will discuss the following topics:

1. What are the Guidelines?
2. Why have Guidelines in schools?
3. What's new in the 2013 edition of the Guidelines?
4. How do I apply the Guidelines?
5. What resources are available to support implementation of the Guidelines?

1. What are the Guidelines?



What are the Guidelines?



The Guidelines are one component of the Healthy Schools BC initiative, which supports schools in addressing all areas of health through education, policies, community partnerships and the surrounding school environment.

To access programs and supports for healthy schools, visit www.healthyschoolsbc.ca



What are the Guidelines?



The Guidelines define the **minimum nutrition standard** for the sale of healthy food and beverages in B.C. public schools.

The Guidelines support healthy eating at school by:

- Creating supportive environments that promote healthy eating
- Providing tools to help schools meet the nutrition standards



The Guidelines were first published in 2005 and mandated for all public schools since 2008.

The Guidelines define the minimum nutrition standard for the sale of healthy food and beverages in BC public schools. Schools and school districts are welcome to build on the Guidelines by implementing additional supportive food and nutrition policies, if interested.

The Guidelines apply to all food and beverages sold to students in BC public schools and at school-sanctioned events. Schools are expected to be applying the new Guidelines immediately with full implementation required by September 2014.

The intent of the Guidelines is to support healthy eating at school by: (1) creating supportive environments and (2) by providing tools to help schools meet the nutrition standards.

The Guidelines were developed in consultation with key stakeholders including community nutritionists, school meal coordinators, school administrators, the food and beverage industry, teachers, and parents.

What are the Guidelines?



The full version of the Guidelines, available at www.healthlinkbc.ca/foodguidelines, includes the following sections:



Overview



How to use the Guidelines



Optional Policies



The Checklist



Nutrient Criteria



Fact Sheets



The Guidelines manual can be accessed from the HealthLinkBC, Healthy Eating, For Schools and Communities page: www.healthlinkbc.ca/foodguidelines. You have the ability to print the entire manual (approximately 84 pages) or just the sections of most interest to you.

The Guidelines manual is divided into the following sections: Overview; How to Use the Guidelines; Optional Policies; The Checklist; Nutrient Criteria; Fact Sheets.

2. Where do the Guidelines apply in schools?



Where do the Guidelines apply?

Apply the Guidelines to all food and beverages sold to students at school and at all school sanctioned events.

Guidelines apply to:	Guidelines do not apply to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School vending machines, stores and cafeterias• Parent organized lunch sales• School organized fun fairs and bake sales• Food and beverages sold to students during sporting events or on field trips (even when off-campus)• Food and beverages sold as a fundraiser to students• All school meal programs including those sold at a subsidized rate• Food prepared by students as part of class projects and sold to students	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bagged lunches from home• Food and beverages brought to school by parents, which are not being sold to students• Food prepared by students as part of class projects and consumed by students without being purchased• Food and beverages sold to adults (non-students) as fundraisers• Fundraising by adults to adults



Where do the Guidelines apply in schools?

All B.C. public schools are required to apply the Guidelines to all food and beverages sold to students at school and at all school sanctioned events (both on and off school grounds). The table outlines the situations in which the Guidelines apply and do not apply.

3. Why have Guidelines in schools?



Why have Guidelines in schools?

- When students eat well at school they learn better and feel better.
- Schools provide many of the meals, snacks and beverages students consume in a day.
- Students learn best when the lessons they receive in the classroom are consistently reinforced outside of the classroom.



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Why have Guidelines in our schools?

Students learn better and feel better when they eat well at school. More specifically, research shows that eating well: supports healthy growth and development; improves learning ability, attention span and behaviour; reduces the risk of getting sick now and developing chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer and heart disease later in life; and sets the foundation for healthy eating behaviours as adults.

Since schools provide many of the food and beverages students consume in a day, it makes sense to ensure that healthy food choices are available. The Guidelines support the health of students by increasing access to healthy food while limiting access to unhealthy food.

Lastly, students learn best when the lessons they receive in the classroom are consistently reinforced outside of the classroom. Offering healthy food choices in the cafeteria, at school events, in vending machines and for fundraising contributes to a school environment that consistently supports students to develop the knowledge, skills and habits needed for lifelong well-being. The Guidelines support the health of students by increasing access to healthy food while limiting access to unhealthy food.

4. What's new in the 2013 edition of the Guidelines



What's new in the 2013 edition of the Guidelines?

Revised scoring categories

- **The Checklist** is used to score **freshly-made** food and beverages
 - Items score as Sell or Do Not Sell
- **The Nutrient Criteria** is used to score **prepackaged** food and beverages
 - Items score as Sell Most, Sell Sometimes or Do Not Sell



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Many revisions and improvements have been made to Guidelines to support student health and to ease implementation by schools. A major improvement is the new Checklist tool that allow users to score freshly made food and beverages. Previous editions of the Guidelines did not include a scoring tool for freshly made food and beverages.

The Checklist tool can be found in the Guidelines manual. The tool scores freshly made foods and beverages score as either Sell or Do Not Sell. Only products that score as Sell are eligible for sale to students. Freshly made food and beverages are defined as items that do not come with nutrition information for the finished product. Examples of freshly made items could include: meals made from scratch by cafeteria staff; homemade baked goods donated by parents for fundraising; hot lunch meals from a local caterer.

Similar to previous editions of the Guidelines, prepackaged food and beverages continue to be scored using the Nutrient Criteria found in the Guidelines manual. The scoring terminology for these products has been changed from “Not Recommended”, “Choose Least”, “Choose Sometimes” and “Choose Most” to “Sell Most”, “Sell Sometimes”, or “Do Not Sell”. Only “Sell Most” and “Sell Sometimes” products are eligible for sale in schools. To use the Nutrient Criteria for scoring, the product must have nutrition information available. An example would be a granola bar with a Nutrition Facts table and Ingredient List on the wrapper.

5. What resources are available to support implementation of the Guidelines?



The screenshot shows the HealthLinkBC website interface. At the top, the URL www.healthlinkbc.ca/foodguidelines is displayed. The navigation menu includes 'Healthy Eating' (circled in red), 'Common Health Concerns', 'Medical Tests A-Z', 'Medications A-Z', 'Public Health Alerts', 'Health Topics A-Z', 'Services and Resources', and 'Tools and Videos'. The 'For Schools and Communities' tab is also highlighted. The main content area features a section titled 'For Schools and Communities' with a link to 'Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools' (circled in red). A sidebar on the left lists various health topics, with 'For Schools and Communities' (circled in red) and 'Brand Name Food List' (circled in red) highlighted. A 'Contact a Dietitian' box on the right provides contact information and a link to 'Email a HealthLinkBC Dietitian' (circled in red).

- New and revised resources have been developed to help support the implementation of the Guidelines. The HealthLinkBC Schools and Communities page is the hub for accessing these resources. This URL for the page is: www.healthlinkbc.ca/foodguidelines. You can access this page through the HealthLinkBC homepage (www.healthlinkbc.ca) by clicking on ‘Healthy Eating’ and then the ‘For Schools and Communities’ tab under the menu on the left side of the page.
- For individualized support over the phone, call the Registered Dietitians at HealthLinkBC by dialing 8-1-1 anywhere in the province. This is a free service for all residents of BC. HealthLinkBC dietitians are available Monday to Thursday 8am to 8pm and Friday 8am to 5pm. Alternatively, you can email a HealthLinkBC dietitian by clicking on “Email a HealthLinkBC Dietitian” under “Contact a Dietitian”. HealthLinkBC dietitians can answer questions about the Guidelines as well as any other questions about healthy eating, food and nutrition. They can offer assistance when using the Nutrient Criteria or Checklist and provide suggestions for recipe reformulation and menu planning.
- Additional support from the Provincial Food Policy Service dietitians at HealthLinkBC can be requested to fill gaps in communities. Schools can request an orientation to the Guidelines and training on using the new Checklist tool for scoring freshly made food and beverages. Call Dietitian Services at 8-1-1 to submit a specific training request.

Resources that support implementation of the Guidelines

- The following resources can be accessed from the HealthLink BC “For Schools and Communities” page:
 - Guidelines Manual & Guidelines at a Glance resources
 - The Checklist Scoring Summary Reports
 - 7 new fact sheets with additional information
 - Brand Name Food List
 - Tips and Recipes for Quantity Cooking & Bake Better Bites (cookbooks with pre-scored recipes)



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The resources listed here can all be accessed from the HealthLinkBC “For Schools and Communities” landing page.

The Guidelines Manual is only available electronically. However, users have the option of printing the entire manual (approximately 84 pages) or individual sections if interested. No print copies are available for mail out.

The Guidelines at a Glance document provides a brief overview of the Guidelines including information about additional resources.

The Checklist Scoring Summary reports are of most use to people who prepare freshly made foods for sale to students. For example, caterers who sell freshly made hot lunch items to students. The reports can be used to document the score of freshly made menu items, providing proof to schools that the items meet the Guidelines.

Included in the Guidelines manual are 7 new fact sheets with supplementary information. Examples of these fact sheets include: Food Fundraising Ideas, Boosting the Sale of Nutritious Food in Schools, and Making Bake Sales Delicious and Nutritious.

The Brand Name Food List (www.brandnamefoodlist.ca) is a tool that helps users of the Guidelines find prepackaged food and beverages that meet the nutrition standards for schools. The tool, originally launched in 2008, has been updated to reflect the 2013 nutrient criteria. The dietitians at HealthLinkBC continue to manage the Brand Name Food List database. You can speak with a HealthLinkBC dietitian by calling 8-1-1 for help using the Brand Name Food List, including how to search the database and how to submit products for scoring.

The Tips and Recipes for Quantity Cooking and Bake Better Bites cookbooks include pre-scored recipes that meet the 2013 Guidelines.

**Dietitian Services at
HealthLinkBC**

Call 8-1-1
to speak to a Registered Dietitian

Monday to Friday: 9am - 5pm

Translations services are available in more than 130 languages
HealthLink BC Dietitians can also answer your questions by email

www.healthlinkbc.ca



Remember to call 8-1-1 and ask to speak with a dietitian if you need any help with the Guidelines.