



NSW HEALTHY SCHOOL CANTEEN STRATEGY

A very 'Fresh' 4 page issue!

Welcome to the fifth edition of the Fresh Tastes @ School newsletter! Joining the Fresh Tastes team is Nicole Stacey as Project Co-ordinator of the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy.



This edition is a special 4 page issue with 2 additional inserts regarding food safety in school canteens and important information regarding the sugar sweetened drink ban for 2007.

Overwhelming support for Fresh Tastes!

In 2005, NSW Health conducted an evaluation of the Healthy Canteen Strategy to assess the implementation, quality and impact of the Strategy so far. Interviewing a random sample of over 500 canteen managers and principals from schools all over NSW, the results are very encouraging!

Remember that a **Canteen Improvement Checklist** can be found on the CD located in the back of the *Fresh Tastes Tool Kit* resource. With a list of key features of successful canteens, the Checklist is a great tool to assess your canteen no matter what stage you are at in implementing the Strategy!

The key findings of the survey were:

- 98% of canteen managers surveyed had made some or all of the changes required for them to meet the requirements of the Strategy.
- Of those that had made the changes, 82% had limited the sale of all foods and drinks that fit into the RED segment of the Canteen Menu Planner.
- The vast majority of canteen managers surveyed were very satisfied with the Fresh Tastes resources finding them "useful", "helpful" and "accurate".

It is great to hear of so many schools enthusiastically embracing the Strategy within their communities.

How is your school going? How "green" is your canteen?

CANTEEN IMPROVEMENT CHECKLIST		
Key elements of success	Yes	Areas that need improvement (provide details)
Vending machines stock only foods and drinks that fall into the GREEN or AMBSC segments of the Canteen Menu Planner.		
The canteen menu is planned with student input and includes food choices acceptable to the students.		
The canteen offers foods and drinks at breakfast, recess and lunch in response to the needs identified in the school.		
POLICY The canteen has a comprehensive policy developed in consultation with the school community that includes information on foods sold, canteen operations and management.		
The canteen policy is regularly reviewed and updated.		
CLASSROOM LINKS Students receive nutrition messages throughout the school that are consistent and reinforce each other (eg fundraising, classroom menus).		
The canteen includes the nutrition education messages students have been learning in the classroom.		
PROMOTION The canteen offers daily/weekly specials that are well promoted and feature healthy foods and 'meatless' days.		
Feedback is sought from members of the school community when introducing new foods.		
Healthier food choices are well promoted to students.		
The menu is clearly displayed in the canteen and advertised to students, parents and carers.		

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Issue 5

- This newsletter is for circulation to:**
- Principals
 - Canteen managers and volunteers
 - Students (SRC)
 - Food Manufacturers
 - Distributors
 - Lessees & catering companies
 - Parent organisations
 - Teachers
 - Parents & Carers

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Have you 'notified' your school canteen?

Can canteens sell food prepared or cooked at home?

For the answers to these questions and more see the *Food Safety in School Canteens* fact sheet inserted into this Fresh Tastes @ School newsletter. Developed by the NSW Food Authority with the Fresh Tastes team, the fact sheet provides essential reading for all involved with school canteens! Add this to the hygiene section of your *Fresh Ideas for Healthy School Canteen Folder*.

The NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy is a partnership between the NSW Department of Education and Training, the NSW Department of Health, the Catholic Education Commission and the Association of Independent Schools.



What's New?



at the NSW School Canteen Association

Fresh Tastes Resources, a new telephone "Hotline" and the chance to "chat" about canteens!

The NSW SCA has just launched an online forum. With the chance to ask questions, swap recipes and get useful hints and tips from other canteen operators. Check it out!

Fresh Tastes Resources

The 3 Fresh Tastes resources: the *Canteen Menu Planning Guide*, *Fresh Tastes Tool Kit* and the *Fresh Ideas for a Healthy School Canteen* folder (with DVD "Come into my Canteen") will now be available for purchase from the NSW SCA.

The order form can be accessed from the NSW SCA home page.

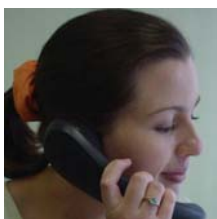
(The resources can also be downloaded in PDF format from the Health and various education sector websites- see page 4).

A new toll free 'hotline'

In addition to their regular number, the NSW SCA now has a 'hotline' for schools outside the Sydney metropolitan area. For the cost of a local call, this toll free number will be handy for those *Fresh Tastes* and canteen queries!

The new telephone hotline is

1300 724 850



www.schoolcanteens.org.au

What is a food allergy and what are some symptoms?

A food allergy occurs when the body's immune system over reacts to a food which is normally harmless for most people. While a mild food allergy may cause skin irritation on the face and arms, a more marked reaction may cause an acute rash around the mouth, redness and swelling of the face and a breakout of hives all over the body.

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction which occurs when a person is exposed to an allergen such as a food or an insect sting. Reactions usually begin within minutes of exposure and can progress rapidly. Anaphylaxis is potentially life threatening and always requires an emergency response.

What are the most common food triggers?

While any food can trigger anaphylaxis, the most common foods are: milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, crustaceans and soy.

Some extremely sensitive individuals can react to skin contact and to trace amounts of food including inhaling air borne food particles e.g. peanut oil from stir frying.



So what can the school canteen do to minimise risk?

These precautions apply to all schools whether or not any student is known to be at risk of anaphylaxis.

- Review the canteen menu and provide healthy alternatives for students with allergies.
- Ensure food handling and hygiene procedures are in place and are practised by all canteen staff including volunteers.

These procedures could include:

- thorough hand washing before and after handling high risk foods
- use of different utensils and equipment for preparing high risk foods
- careful cleaning of food preparation areas including bench top areas and utensils after use
- ensuring that the promotion and encouragement of new foods, including any taste testing, be properly supervised to avoid pressure on students to try foods known to contain common food allergens.

Does the school canteen need to ban peanuts and peanut products?

A ban on peanuts and peanut products is not required but this may be agreed to by a school and its community. If a school does decide to ban peanuts or peanut products, it should nevertheless not claim to be "peanut free" as such a claim can not reliably be made and, if made, may lead to a false sense of security about exposure to peanuts and peanut products.

Should canteen managers receive training?

It is important that all canteen managers be involved in anaphylaxis awareness training with other school staff. Canteen managers should then seek to increase the awareness of their staff including their volunteers.

Where schools have students diagnosed with anaphylaxis it is important canteen managers be included in any specialist training for school staff.

What other information is available?

The *Anaphylaxis: Guidelines for schools* provide a step by step guide for principals to assist them in providing a safe and supportive environment for students at risk of an anaphylactic reaction.

They can be accessed directly at

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/student-support/studenthealth/

“Lucky we’ve got Amy”



That’s the tune of students at Dulwich Hill Public School in response to their friendly Canteen Manager Amy! Since taking over the canteen midway through 2005, Amy, with the support of the school community has transformed “The Dully” into a fun and healthy *Fresh Tastes* canteen.

To effectively implement the Strategy, the canteen committee realised it was essential to invest money into upgrading the canteen and its equipment. The canteen was painted with bright vivid colours and the purchase of new knives, chopping boards and a dishwasher are just some of the items that have made preparation easier (as has the repair of a donated food slicer and a cappuccino machine for the volunteers!).



An interesting and diverse menu is one of the strengths of the canteen. As well as a daily menu of appetising, well presented sandwiches and rolls, the canteen operates a cyclical menu beginning with “Aussie Mondays” through to “Asian Food Fridays”. The menu is a multicultural taste sensation! “Everything Thursdays” also gives Amy the chance to reduce stock wastage by using up ingredients and products that there isn’t enough of for one day.

Priced from 10 cents, the canteen also has a great range of snack foods such as yoghurt shots, frozen orange, popcorn, pizza fingers and fruit kebabs. Rather than a set menu of snacks, something different is on offer each day keeping it interesting enough so the students never know what is on offer until they get there.



And Amy’s advice is to not have too many choices available each day as she believes students will buy what you have as long as it’s tasty and well presented.

Amy and her team constantly evaluate their menu to make it interesting and keep up with the changing tastes of students. New ideas are sourced from TV shows, magazines and recipe books after first being assessed for their healthiness. If a food does not appear to be selling well, they firstly change the packaging. Recently when homemade fried rice was not selling so well, the packaging was changed to noodle boxes and it became an instant hit with the kids again!

The response to the changes at the “Dully” has been overwhelming. As school principal Cath Gilkes says, “Amy has really turned the Dully Canteen around! The students are thrilled with the new menus and the variety of healthy snacks on offer. Amy has clearly demonstrated that healthy foods are not only good for you, but can look good and taste good too.”

Likewise Amy says the positive support of the school principal has been fantastic, encouraging her canteen team to think of even more great ideas. With plans to introduce alfresco dining and Japanese foods one day of the week, lunching on healthy foods at “The Dully” will clearly never be dull!

Fresh Tastes Tips

- Negotiate with the school the financial commitment required of the canteen. It may be more valuable initially to invest in upgrading equipment to make it easier to prepare healthy GREEN food and drink items.
- Think about purchasing equipment from 2nd hand commercial catering suppliers or consider asking members of your school community if they may be able to assist in sourcing catering equipment at a more competitive price.
- Where possible, change the packaging before you change or delete a healthy item from the menu.
- Place GREEN foods where they are more highly visible and accessible to students—such as eye level on the counter top. Put less healthier options where they are less visible and accessible.



No Canteen?

Follow the light of Buronga!

Aboriginal for *light*, Buronga Public School in far west NSW is implementing a variety of healthy eating strategies despite having no canteen. With a population of just over 90 students, the school is promoting good nutrition using the guiding principles of the NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy.

After noticing that “a lot of children had fruit for recess, but it got thrown out after a couple of bites”, the school recently began a “Fruit club”. With a donation of \$2 per week, a Teacher’s Aide with a food handling license prepares platters of fruit. Clearly, “Fruit Club” is a hit with both the parents and students. It has grown from 10 students to 30 (over one third of the school!). While the school manages to get some of the fruit donated, they find they can purchase quite a bit with the donated money.

On most days, children are able to order lunch from the local shop selecting from the healthier options on the menu like delicious sandwiches, wraps and rolls. Only a couple of times per term on “Fast Food Fridays” are children allowed to order from the full menu which includes ‘occasional’ red foods.

“Healthy Lunch Days” are also a chance to promote good nutrition and teach children valuable skills in preparing their own healthy lunches. Children donate \$1 or \$2 dollars and make their own sandwiches with the school providing a variety of bread, wraps and nutritious fillings. As principal Cathy Eddie says “The children love making their own lunch and the parents who come to help are amazed at what their children will try!”



The programs at Buronga are all just about self supporting, although the Federal “Healthy Active Schools Grant” helped them “kick it off!” Of the Federal grant, the principal cannot believe all schools have not applied for the grant. “They must be made of money!”

\$1500 Healthy School Communities Grant still available!

As part of the Federal Government’s “Building a Healthy Active Australia”, all schools in Australia are invited to apply for one \$1500 grant per school.

The grant is to assist schools in promoting healthy eating within their community. Canteens are encouraged to consider ways that the grant would assist them in implementing a Fresh Tastes canteen. There are some great ideas in Issue 3 of the Fresh Tastes newsletter.

The grant is available until funds are gone so get in quick! For more information look at www.healthyactive.gov.au or call toll free: 1800 805 172

Hot food and drinks can burn!

While it might seem obvious to adults, the message that hot food and drinks can burn is one which needs to be constantly emphasised with students. Burns and scalds can happen in a matter of seconds from a variety of hot foods and drinks. In accordance with advice provided by the Children’s Hospital at Westmead, school canteens are advised to:

- Avoid serving hot drinks to children
- If hot drinks are served, always use well-fitting lids (ones that also allow steam to escape are the best)
- Evaluate the suitability of the packaging for the food or drink product e.g. serve hot soup in well insulated mugs or cups
- Avoid heating student lunches brought from home-it is difficult to judge the heating time required when you don’t know what is in it!
- Encourage staff to be positive role models in their safe handling of food and drinks.
- Promote care and safety by displaying posters which highlight the issue around the canteen area.

Developed by the Children’s Hospital at Westmead, 5 posters can be downloaded from:

www.schoolcanteens.org.au



WEB LINKS

Department of Education & Training
<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/schoolcanteen/index.php>

Catholic Education Commission
www.cecnsw.catholic.edu.au

Association of Independent Schools
www.aisnsw.edu.au

For other helpful information visit:
The NSW P&C Federation
www.pandc.org.au

NSW School Canteen Association
www.schoolcanteens.org.au

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