

# HEALTHY KIDS MENU

GUIDE FOR  
BUSINESSES



*A program delivered by*

**health+wellbeing**  
Queensland

*An initiative of*



**Queensland  
Government**





# THE QUEENSLAND HEALTHY KIDS MENU INITIATIVE

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Restaurants, hotels, clubs and cafés are integral to Queensland's vibrant communities. Eating out at local food venues is one of the ways we stay connected and socialise, especially with family and friends.

For parents and carers, having healthy food and drink options for their children is an increasingly important factor when choosing a venue. Parents expect to have healthier options available in restaurants, hotels, clubs and cafés – not just on main menus but on kids menus too.

Healthy kids menu options contribute to good nutrition in childhood, which supports healthy growth and development, helps kids learn about tastes and textures, and lays the foundations for future health and wellbeing. It sets kids up with healthy lifelong habits.

The trouble is, children are consuming too many unhealthy foods and drinks and not eating enough vegetables and fruit. This imbalance can make it challenging to maintain a healthy weight. In Queensland, one in four children live with overweight and obesity.

Queensland's food venues have an important role to play in supporting good nutrition during childhood. The Queensland Healthy Kids Menu initiative empowers venues to offer delicious and nutritious food choices for kids.

The Queensland Healthy Kids Menu Initiative is modelled on a separate and independent initiative of the Government of South Australia, The South Australia Healthy Kids Menu, a Partnership Between Industry and the Government of Australia, that was launched in 2017.

**Moral Rights  
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Acknowledgment**

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# FOREWORD

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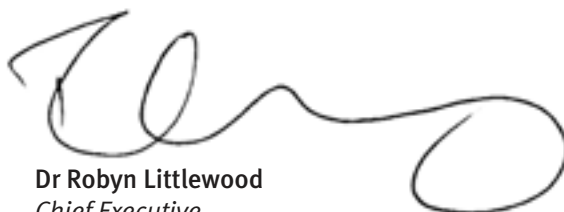
The Queensland Healthy Kids Menu Initiative is an innovative approach in making healthy happen for Queensland children when they are eating out. The initiative outlines a set of nutritional guidelines to help venues make healthy food and drinks options more readily available to children.

Childhood is a significant time for healthy growth and development, and in establishing the foundations of future health and wellbeing. Good nutrition is a vital part of this. But the reality is, too many children are consuming unhealthy food and drinks, and are not choosing enough vegetables and fruit. Given children are now eating and drinking more outside the home, increasing the availability and promotion of healthier menu choices in venues visited by children is so important.

This Guide for Businesses is a key tool for restaurants, pubs, clubs and cafés on how to make menu choices healthier and applicable to children – with plenty of taste and variety. Venues are encouraged to follow the Code of Practice – a series of simple nutritional guidelines to assist the development and introduction of healthy menu options, including drinks.

I am so pleased that Health and Wellbeing Queensland has adopted the Healthy Kids Menu Initiative, initially developed by the Government of South Australia. The initiative is a great opportunity to support local businesses to provide children's menus that are appealing, healthy and good for business. As more venues meet the criteria in the Healthy Kids Menu Code of Practice, making healthier menu choices for children will be easier for Queensland kids, parents and carers.

I look forward to continuing our partnership with industry, government and the community to drive the Queensland Healthy Kids Menu Initiative forward and support the health and wellbeing of children and families.



**Dr Robyn Littlewood**  
*Chief Executive*  
*Health & Wellbeing Queensland*



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## TO GET INVOLVED

visit [www.hw.qld.gov.au/healthy-kids-menu/](http://www.hw.qld.gov.au/healthy-kids-menu/)  
or contact us at [info@hw.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@hw.qld.gov.au)  
or phone us on 0467 830 979



# HEALTHY KIDS MENU



## CODE OF PRACTICE

A Healthy Kids Menu must have all of these features:

**1. Healthy drinks are offered to children**

- Water is available at no cost, is easily accessible and is served safely in line with current public health directives.
- Healthy drinks that may be listed on a kids menu are:
  - › water with no added sugar, artificial or natural sweeteners
  - › 250ml (max. serving) ›99% fruit and/or vegetable juice
  - › 375ml (max. serving) of reduced fat milk – plain or sweetened
  - › house made combinations of the above options, such as a 250ml fruit and milk smoothie.

**2. At least half of the meals on the kids menu are healthy**

- Healthy meals:
  - › include at least half a cup of vegetables or one cup of salad; and
  - › are prepared using small quantities of healthy fats and oils; and
  - › do not include any shallow or deep fried foods, high-fat processed meats or savoury pastries.

**3. If desserts are offered on the kids menu, at least half of the options are healthy**

- Healthy desserts are based around fruit (fresh, dried, tinned, grilled, baked or poached) and/or dairy (yoghurt, custard, ricotta).
- Healthy desserts prepared in-house can include:
  - › additions such as nuts, seeds, coconut, cocoa powder, egg, vanilla and spices
  - › up to two teaspoons (10g) of added sugar per serve.

**4. If kids meal combinations are available**

- All meal combinations offer healthy drinks, with water as a minimum.
- If dessert is included, at least half of kids meal combinations offer healthy meals and a healthy dessert.

**5. If kids menu options are promoted, only the healthy options are promoted**

- An important consideration in the implementation of your Healthy Kids Menu is to encourage the ordering of healthy food and drink choices.

For more information, visit [www.hw.qld.gov.au/healthy-kidsmenu/](http://www.hw.qld.gov.au/healthy-kidsmenu/)

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# ACHIEVING A HEALTHY KIDS MENU

THIS SECTION DESCRIBES WHAT IS NEEDED  
TO ACHIEVE EACH FEATURE OF  
THE HEALTHY KIDS MENU.

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# 1 HEALTHY DRINKS ARE OFFERED TO CHILDREN



**Water is available at no cost and is easily accessible.**

Most food businesses already do this – free access to drinking water is a requirement under liquor licensing laws. Water should be served safely in line with current public health directives.

## **Healthy drinks that can be listed on a kids menu:**

A healthy kids menu can list the following drinks for sale or include them in a kid's meal combination:

- **Plain water**
  - › Can contain essences, fresh fruit or herbs (i.e. mint or slices of lemon), but cannot contain sugar or artificial or natural sweeteners
  - › Water (tap or bottled) should always be available as a choice in a healthy kids menu combination or meal deal

**TAP WATER PROVIDES FLUORIDE FOR HEALTHY TEETH.**

**MILK IS RICH IN CALCIUM NEEDED FOR STRONG BONES.**

## **DRINKS THAT CANNOT BE LISTED ON A HEALTHY KIDS MENU**

- Sugar – sweetened or artificially or naturally sweetened: soft drinks, cordials, sports drinks, flavoured mineral waters, fruit drinks or juices.
- Products containing caffeine or coffee flavours such as teas, coffees, energy drinks and guarana



- **Up to 250ml of >99% fruit and/or vegetable juice (no added sugar)**
- **Up to 375ml plain or flavoured reduced fat milk**
  - › may be plain or flavoured with added sugar or artificial sweeteners
  - › if prepared in-house, up to 15ml or 3 teaspoons of syrup or flavoured powder can be added to 375ml of milk.
  - › Reduced fat, calcium-fortified dairy substitutes, or dairy substitutes, such as soy may also be used
  - › no coffee-based flavours
- **House made drinks combining the above options, for example:**
  - › 250ml milk, fruit and yoghurt smoothie

**SMALL SERVES (E.G. 250ML) OF >99% FRUIT JUICE CAN ALSO BE PART OF A BALANCED EATING PATTERN FOR CHILDREN.**



# 2 AT LEAST HALF OF THE MEALS ON THE KIDS MENU ARE HEALTHY

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## What is a healthy kids meal?

There is no simple definition of a healthy meal. The Healthy Kids Menu Initiative aims to be as flexible as possible and have the simplest guidelines. It focuses on the most important aspects that will have the most benefit – boosting veggies and reducing saturated fat, salt and excess kilojoules. Some meals that don't have these healthy features can stay on your kids menu but they must represent no more than half of the kids meals on offer.

You can create winning appeal with quality produce, kid-friendly preparation and simple presentation. Salad and vegetables add colour and crunch to meals. Varieties that are in season will taste best and cost less. Frozen or low-salt tinned vegetables can be convenient supplements to fresh produce.

## Healthy kids meals include at least half a cup of vegetables or one cup of salad.

For example:

- half a cup of steamed peas and corn
- half a cup of steamed broccoli and cauliflower florets
- half a cup of blanched green beans
- one cup of mixed raw salad items, such as grated carrot, cherry tomatoes, raw snow peas, cucumber.
- one cup or more of vegetable soup
- half a cup or more of a vegetable-based pasta sauce
- one medium potato: roasted, mashed, hand-cut oven-baked wedges
- half a cup of lentils, beans and legumes.

## DIFFERENT WAYS TO PRESENT VEGETABLES



Rather than adding a standard side salad to all healthy kids meals, experiment with different ways to present vegetables.

**Try these options:** raw veggie sticks, finely shredded salad vegetables, blanched crudites, cooked vegetables, roasted vegetables, or chop vegetables finely and mix in to pasta sauces or soups.

# 2 AT LEAST HALF OF THE MEALS ON THE KIDS MENU ARE HEALTHY

Healthy meals are prepared using small quantities of healthy fats and oils.



**These healthy fats can be used in Healthy Kids Menu meals:**

- Canola oil
- Olive oil
- Rice bran
- Peanut oil
- Soybean oil
- Sunflower oil
- Sesame oil



**These fats cannot be used in Healthy Kids Menu meals:**

- Butter
- Lard
- Dripping
- Rendered animal fats
- Coconut oil
- Palm oil

**Ideas for using healthy fats in healthy kids meals:**

- use margarine, avocado, nut butters, low fat ricotta or dips like hummus as spreads on sandwiches, toasted sandwiches, rolls and wraps
- choose a plant-based oil like canola, olive, soybean, rice bran or sunflower oils when grilling, pan frying or roasting foods
- use small amounts of olive oil or margarine for finishing dishes like steamed vegetables
- do not use fatty meat juices in gravies or sauces.

## IS COCONUT OIL HEALTHY OR UNHEALTHY?

Coconut oil is 92% saturated fat.

Saturated fats raise total blood cholesterol.

Research suggests coconut oil is not as healthy as other unsaturated plant oils like olive or canola oils and is therefore not recommended to include in children's menu choices.

## WHAT ABOUT UNHEALTHY TRANS FATS?

Although trans fats are found naturally in some foods, in Australia most are eaten from processed foods.

This includes deep-fried foods, biscuits, cakes and pastries; butter; takeaway foods such as burgers, pizza and hot chips; and food that list 'hydrogenated oils' or 'partially hydrogenated vegetable oils' on the ingredients list.

It is important to replace trans fats with healthy fats.



HOUSE-MADE CHICKEN NUGGETS  
OR FISH FINGERS CAN BE MADE  
IN BULK AND FROZEN READY  
TO DEFROST AND OVEN BAKE.

Healthy meals do not include any shallow or deep fried foods, high-fat processed meats or savoury pastries.

	Replace these foods	With these healthy alternatives
Deep or shallow fried foods*	Fried potato chips	House-made, oven-baked chips or wedges
	French fries	Pasta, rice, couscous or potato salads
	Wedges	Wholemeal and wholegrain bread or rolls
		Mashed or baked (jacket) potato, sweet potato or pumpkin
		Extra vegetables
	Chicken nuggets	Oven-baked, house made chicken nuggets or grilled chicken breast strips
	Crumbed or battered fish	Grilled, pan-fried, poached or oven-baked fish
	Shallow or deep fried fish fingers	House-made, oven-baked crumbed fish
	Fried schnitzel/crumbed meat	Grilled, roasted or stir fried meat
High fat processed meats	Bacon, ham, salami, prosciutto, fritz or devon, mettwurst	Top pizza with roasted chicken and extra vegetables Fill sandwiches with salad, roasted meats, boiled eggs or reduced fat cheese
	Hot dogs, sausages	House-made burger patties or meatballs using lean mince and finely grated vegetables
Pastries	Sausage rolls	Sushi, cold rolls, wraps, sandwiches and rolls
	Pies, pasties	Make pie filling using lean meat and vegetables, served in individual portions (such as ramekins), topped with mashed potato
	Quiche	Frittata

\*Foods fried during manufacturing, such as commercial potato chips, wedges, hash browns, chicken nuggets and fish fingers are also excluded.

# 3 IF DESSERTS ARE OFFERED ON THE KIDS MENU, AT LEAST ONE HALF OF THE OPTIONS ARE HEALTHY

If your kids menu includes desserts, at least half the options need to be healthy. Healthy desserts are based around fruit (fresh, dried, tinned, grilled, baked or poached) and/or dairy (yoghurt, custard, ricotta)

Healthy dessert can include:

- healthy additions such as nuts, seeds, coconut, cocoa powder, egg, vanilla and spices
- up to two teaspoons (10g) of added sugar, honey, syrups or topping per serve.

A healthy dessert cannot include: cream, ice cream, gelati, biscuits, cakes or pastry, or confectionery.

For desserts that do not meet the healthy guidelines:

- consider reducing the serving size of ice cream; two scoops or 75 grams maximum of regular ice cream is a good guide
- house-made desserts could be reformulated for less sugar, healthier fats, or smaller portions.



**FRUIT HAS A NATURAL SWEETNESS AND IS PACKED WITH FIBRE AND VITAMINS.**

**YOGHURT PROVIDES CALCIUM FOR HEALTHY BONES.**



**WHAT ABOUT ICE CREAM AND GELATO?**

Even though ice cream and gelato have become staples on kids menus, they do not count as healthy sources of dairy because they are low in calcium and high in added sugars.





# 4 IF MEAL COMBINATIONS ARE AVAILABLE, AT LEAST HALF ARE HEALTHY

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Healthy Kids Menus do not have to include meal combinations or 'meal deals'. Some food businesses choose to offer them because customers like their simplicity and value.

If meal combinations are offered in a Healthy Kids Menu:

- all meal combinations offer healthy drinks, with water as a minimum
- if dessert is included, at least half of the kids meal combinations offer healthy meals and a healthy dessert.

For more information on healthy drinks, meals and desserts, refer to the previous section of this guide.

There are many different ways to offer meal combinations. Here are some healthy options.



Healthy burger + fruit salad



Mint infused water + Healthy meal + yoghurt and fruit based dessert

# 5 IF KIDS MENU OPTIONS ARE PROMOTED, ONLY THE HEALTHY OPTIONS ARE PROMOTED OR ADVERTISED

An important consideration in the implementation of your Healthy Kids Menu is to encourage the ordering of healthy food and drink choices by parents and children.

## THE 4 P's OF MARKETING

Consider the 4 P's of marketing when developing your healthy kids menu:

- ✓ **P**RODUCT
- ✓ **P**RISE
- ✓ **P**LACE
- ✓ **P**ROMOTION

Examples of how businesses can do this include:

- Using the Healthy Kids Menu icon on your children's menu to identify the healthy options
- Including the healthy options as the first options on your children's menu
- Highlight the healthy options across your venue through menu boards, banners, stickers, flyers, posters
- Focus on promoting new healthy options when available through 'dish of the day/week' at the front counter
- Offer incentives for purchasing the healthy options, such as a kids activity pack with coloured pencils and colouring in sheets
- Ensuring the Healthy Kids Menu is up on your website
- Encourage uptake by promoting healthy options through your social media platforms
- Connect with parents and children by asking for feedback; and
- Use innovative menu designs to engage with children (and parents).







# 6 WHAT DOES A HEALTHY KIDS MENU LOOK LIKE?

This is an example of a Healthy Kids Menu



Fish and chips and ice cream options do not meet criteria to be classed as healthy items, and therefore both items do not receive a tomato logo.









# 7 GETTING STARTED

How the Healthy Kids Menu initiative is put into practice

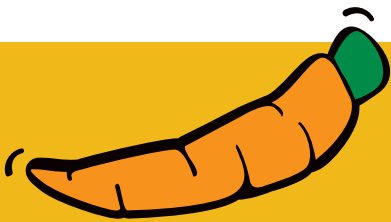


## IS THIS FOR YOU?

Participation is voluntary.  
Find out more about the program at  
<https://hw.qld.gov.au/healthy-kids-menu/>

## REVIEW

Review the Code of Practice and Guide for Business available online.  
These documents will give you the information you  
need to get started and review if this initiative is for you.



## GET IN TOUCH

Contact your local Healthy Kids Menu team to find out more about  
the initiative and what support is available to help you register:  
[info@hw.qld.gov.au](mailto:info@hw.qld.gov.au)

## UPDATE YOUR KID'S MENU

Update your children's menu to align with the  
*Healthy Kids Menu Code of Practice*. Most venues are able  
to do this with a few small, simple changes.



## REPORT BACK

Email us a copy of your revised kid's menu or upload it online.  
We will confirm with you that it meets the Code of Practice, and  
that your business is now listed on the Healthy Kids Menu website.

## PROMOTE

Once approved, you can promote your children's menu  
as a Healthy Kids Menu. If you have a website or use social media,  
upload your updated menu online.



# 8 INSPIRATIONAL HEALTHY KIDS MENU IDEAS

Examples for creating new kids meals



Meat/protein	+	Vegetables	+	Carbohydrate
Grilled chicken strips or tenderloins		Coleslaw or Greek salad		Hand-cut, oven-baked wedges
Grilled or pan-fried lean beef meatballs		Smooth or chunky soups <i>(served warm)</i>		Wholegrain or wholemeal bread roll
Oven-baked, house-made chicken nuggets or crumbed fish		Crunchy batons of carrot, celery, cucumber, capsicum		Pasta salad
Grilled or pan-fried lamb cutlets		Steamed corn cob and green beans		Rice (white or brown)
Stir-fried strips of beef, pork, chicken, or tofu		Crunchy stir-fried vegetables		Asian noodles
Slices of roast meat or chicken		Roasted pumpkin and steamed peas		Mashed or roasted potato
Grilled, pan-fried or oven-baked fish		Steamed broccoli and cauliflower 'tree tops'		Couscous or quinoa salad





**Breakfast ideas** – include half a cup of vegetables, fruit or beans

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pancakes with ricotta, strawberries and banana

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wholemeal or grain toast with grilled cheese and baked beans

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breakfast burrito with omelette, tomato salsa, cheese

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fruit toast with ricotta and banana

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breakfast parfait with fruit, yoghurt and muesli

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boiled egg with wholemeal or grain toast soldiers  
a side of fresh fruit

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omelette with wholemeal or grain toast  
and wilted spinach

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# 8 INSPIRATIONAL HEALTHY KIDS MENU IDEAS

CONTINUED...

## Side dishes



### Healthy alternatives to a bowl of chips

house-cut, oven baked potato chips/wedges – try a mixture of white and sweet potato

bowl of lightly steamed vegetables

bowl of corn cobs

mini mugs of warm soup and toast

wholegrain or wholemeal toast served with margarine

serve of roast vegetables

### Light meals, snacks and sharing plates

*kids grazing plate:* offer any combination of carrot, celery and cucumber sticks, cherry tomatoes, cheddar cheese cubes, vegetable-based dips, fresh fruit, dried apricots and sultanas, crackers or toasted pita bread

platter of steamed or raw vegetables served with simple dipping sauce, such as low salt soy sauce

vegetable dips, like beetroot, pumpkin, carrot or hummus, with bread or crackers

fruit platter

cheese and crackers

mini salad plate with boiled egg

vegetable soup and wholegrain roll

toasted cheese sandwiches with carrot and cucumber sticks

zucchini slice or frittata served with a side salad

pot of warm baked beans and wholegrain toast soldiers

a jacket potato topped with coleslaw salad or a mix of kidney beans, corn, grated cheese and natural yoghurt

## Main meals



### Sandwiches, wraps and rolls

experiment with a variety of wholemeal, wholegrain, rye and sough dough wraps, pita, rolls and sliced breads

### Filling ideas

*protein:* canned tuna, egg, roasted chicken, lamb or beef, shredded slow cooked pork, cheese, vturkey, tofu

*spread options:* margarine, pesto, hummus, reduced fat mayonnaise, chutney or relish, beetroot dip, mashed avocado, ricotta

*salad:* tomato, lettuce, cucumber, rainbow salad of grated carrot and beetroot



### Burger ideas – with at least one cup of salad

try wholegrain or wholemeal buns – flat and soft buns are easiest for kids to handle and bite

start with a grilled lean beef patty, chicken, fish or vegetarian burger

add some salad, such as baby spinach, lettuce, tomato, beetroot slices, grated carrot, coleslaw, roasted onion or mashed avocado

*optional extras:* cheese, egg, pesto, hummus, tomato chutney

to keep the size manageable for little hands, put some salad on the side of the plate rather than overloading the burger

# 8 INSPIRATIONAL HEALTHY KIDS MENU IDEAS CONTINUED...



**Pasta ideas** – with at least half a cup of vegetables or sauce

vegetable-rich bolognese sauce served with spaghetti or short pasta that is easier for children to manage

vegetable-rich, smooth tomato-based pasta sauce with coloured bows and topped with grated cheese

chicken, broccoli and olive oil served with orecchiette

vegetarian lasagne with layers of roasted zucchini and pumpkin and a tomato sauce



**Pizza ideas** – topped with at least half a cup of vegetables per serve

**Base** – try wholemeal options, such as pita bread. English muffins can work for mini pizzas.

## Topping ideas

grated mushrooms, diced capsicum, onion, olives and cheese

pineapple, fresh tomato and cheese

roasted red capsicum, chicken, red onion, baby tomatoes and bocconcini/mozzarella

peas, grated zucchini, basil, chicken and feta cheese

*Mexican:* diced tomato, scattered minced meat, cumin, kidney beans, corn, diced capsicum, pineapple and cheese





## Asian cuisine

sushi filled with prawn, chicken, tuna, tofu or omelette, plus cucumber, pumpkin, avocado

rice paper rolls filled with shredded beef or pork, prawn, chicken, tofu or omelette and carrot, cucumber, capsicum, lettuce and sweet chilli dipping sauce

lettuce cups filled with stir-fried pork mince and Asian vegetables

*fried rice:* white or brown rice with a combination of ingredients, such as peas, corn, diced carrot, cooked egg, roasted pork pieces, flavoured with garlic, soy sauce and sesame oil



## Healthy Kids desserts

fresh, tinned, grilled, baked or poached fruit

small platter of seasonal fruit

fruit salad served with yoghurt for dipping

fruit 'sundaes' made by layering fruit, yoghurt and nuts or seeds

grilled pineapple skewers with toasted sesame seeds and yoghurt for dipping

poached and pureed apple or pear, topped with a dollop of yoghurt

Greek yoghurt topped with berries

chia seed or sago pudding

rice pudding

stewed, poached or roasted fruit with crumble topping



# 9

## PORTION SIZES

Many food establishments like to provide their customers with generous serves.

The Healthy Kids Menu does not set requirements for serving sizes, other than providing at least one serving of vegetables.

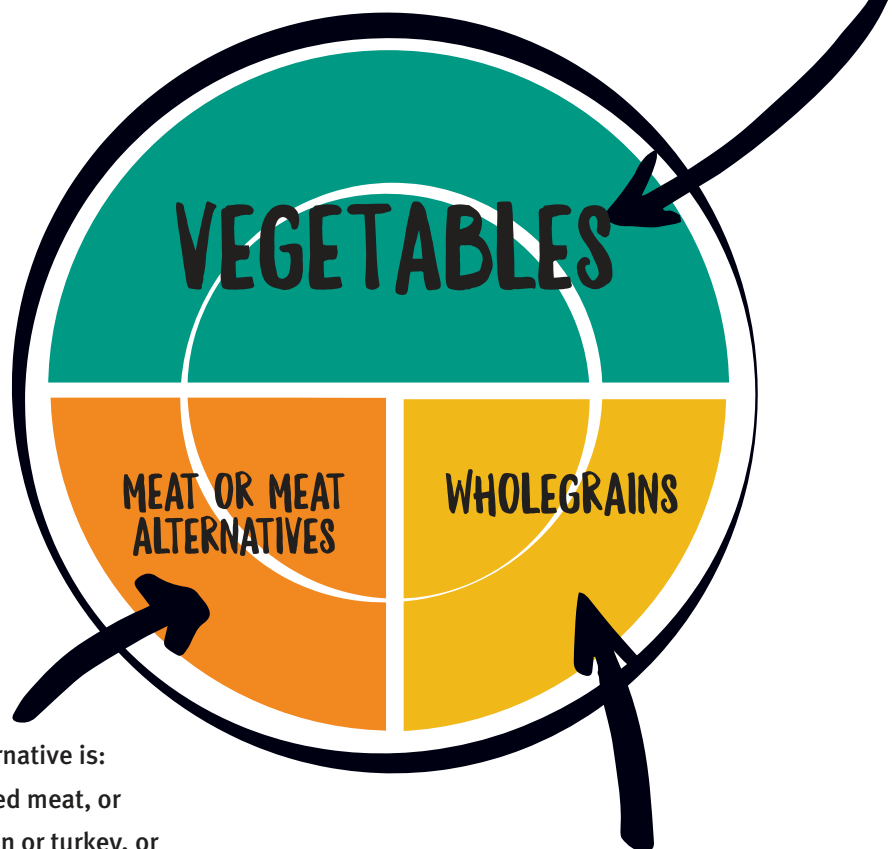
This chart is a simple guide for portion sizes for children, and the proportion for each part of the meal.

This information is provided as a helpful guide.

### 1+ SERVES PER MEAL

A serve of vegetables is:

- half a cup of cooked vegetables or legumes
- one cup of salad
- half a medium-sized potato (75g)
- 1 medium tomato (75g)



### 1 SERVE PER MEAL

A serve of lean meat, or alternative is:

- 65 grams of cooked lean red meat, or
- 80 grams of cooked chicken or turkey, or
- 100 grams of cooked fish, or
- two large eggs
- 1 cup cooked legumes e.g. kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas
- 170g tofu

### 1-2 SERVES PER MEAL

A serve of grain or cereal is:

- one slice of bread, or
- half a medium roll, or
- half a cup of cooked rice, pasta or noodles



# 10 WORKING TOWARDS A HEALTHIER MENU

## Are you considering some menu changes, but not sure about committing to a Healthy Kids Menu?

Change is not always easy, especially when you don't know how customers and sales will respond. Try making a few small changes when the time is right. Even though it might not be enough to be branded a Healthy Kids Menu, it can give you time to get feedback from customers and staff.

You may trial a few new dishes or change just a couple of aspects of your existing menu.

Some ideas to consider:

- Serve all meals with vegetables or salad. Avoid adding side salad as this is generally unappealing to kids. See **page 18** for creative ways to include vegetables in kids meals.

- Reduce the serving size of potato chips – aim for no more than 12 regular sized chips in a kids meal to make room for more salad or vegetables.
- Replace potato chips with a different carbohydrate, such as pasta, bread or rice.
- Don't include soft drinks as a standard option in meal combinations, though customers can still ask for them.
- Reduce the serving size of ice cream – two scoops or 75 grams maximum is a good guide.
- Simplify desserts by removing sugary toppings, such as chocolate topping, sprinkles, chocolate and cookies.
- Avoid displaying sugar-sweetened drinks at the eye level of children.

This example menu has no healthy items:

While this menu doesn't meet the Healthy Kids Menu criteria it shows a few simple changes to introduce some healthier features:





# 11 FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## What is a healthy meal?

The Healthy Kids Menu Initiative defines healthy meals as those that:

- include at least half a cup of vegetables or one cup of salad, and
- are prepared using small amounts of healthy fats and oils, and
- do not include any shallow or deep fried foods, high-fat processed meats or savoury pastries, and
- does not include any soft drinks or desserts that are high in sugar, artificial or natural sweeteners.

## How do I modify my kids menu to offer enough healthy meals?

Some strategies for increasing the number of nutritious meals are:

- Replacing unhealthy meals with nutritious variations:
  - › replace chips and nuggets with grilled chicken skewers, salad and a baked potato
  - › replace ‘creamy pasta’ with pasta with a tomato-based sauce.
- Modify unhealthy meals to make them nutritious:
  - › quiche and chips can be modified to frittata and garden salad
  - › change a cheeseburger to a lean beef burger with tomato and lettuce, with cucumber slices on the side
  - › Add mushroom and capsicum to a margherita pizza
- Remove some unhealthy meals so your kids menu is smaller.
- add one or more new menu items that are healthy (*See Chapter 8 for simple meal ideas*).
- Consider whether any adult meals meet the healthy criteria and suit being offered in smaller portions for children.

## At least half of kids meals need to be nutritious. What about the other meals on the kids menu?

This program respects the importance of choice – both for business and for customers. Therefore some meals that don’t meet the healthy definition can stay on your Healthy Kids Menu. You can offer chips and nuggets on a Healthy Kids Menu if it suits your business and if such meals account for no more than half of the kids meals you offer.

## Why are artificially or naturally sweetened milk drinks allowed but artificially sweetened soft drinks are not?

Milk provides a valuable source of nutrients, particularly calcium. The diets of many Australian children don’t provide them with enough calcium. By offering milk products that are artificially sweetened, children may be encouraged to boost their intake of this healthy drink.

Other artificially or naturally sweetened beverages, such as mineral water, soft drinks, iced teas and energy drinks, have no nutritional value and are acidic, which contributes to the erosion of tooth enamel. That is why they cannot be included in a healthy kids menu.

## Can we add powdered or liquid flavourings to reduced fat milk?

Small quantities (i.e. no more than 3 teaspoons per serve) of powdered or liquid flavourings can be added because they may encourage children to drink milk. Caffeine and coffee flavours are not suitable for children.



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## How does this Guide apply to my kids breakfast menu?

Overall, the same principles apply. Most of the meals on a kids breakfast menu will be healthy and at least half of all kids meals must:

- include at least half a cup of vegetables, one cup of salad or half a cup of fruit or beans and
- be prepared using healthy fats and oils and
- not include any fried foods, high-fat processed meats or savoury pastries.

Eggs that are fried in a small amount of healthy oil are allowed in Healthy Kids Menu items, but hash browns, croissants and ham or bacon cannot be included.

Pancakes cannot be served with syrup, ice cream, cream or confectionery if they are one of the healthy menu items.

## Does the adult menu need to have healthy choices?

This initiative is focused on healthy options for children. Most venues do have healthy choices available for adults and we would encourage this to align with the principles of the Healthy Kids Menu Initiative. A lot of venues have found that demand increased for healthy adult meals since implementing a healthy kids menu.

## I'm worried that joining this initiative might increase my labour and food costs.

Venues have found that implementing a Healthy Kids Menu did not increase labour or food costs. Many venues reported that utilising the same produce they already had in stock for the adult menu was a great way to minimise food wastage, and did not take up much extra time to prepare.

## What if the new healthy menu items don't sell?

The Healthy Kids Menu Initiative is about providing children and families with healthier options when dining out. This is why the Code of Practice stipulates that at least half of the kids menu meals are healthy. If you find some meals aren't selling well, there may be some simple modifications you could do to improve sales, or ask customers for feedback.

### For further information

Health and Wellbeing Queensland  
PO Box 1419 Milton QLD 4064

visit: [www.hw.qld.gov.au/healthy-kids-menu/](http://www.hw.qld.gov.au/healthy-kids-menu/)

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# HEALTHY KIDS MENU



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