



March 2023 School Health Newsletter – Windham Schools Compiled by Beth Green RN

School Lunches

Buying lunch at school might be the first-time kids get to call the shots on which foods they'll eat. School lunches have improved both in taste and nutrition, and many serve healthier dishes, such as grilled chicken sandwiches and salads.

But in the typical school cafeteria, kids can still choose an unhealthy mix of foods often available a la carte or in the vending machine. For instance, a kid might decide to buy a hot dog, day after day.

Lunchtime Opportunities

Use school lunches as a chance to steer your kids toward good choices. Especially with younger kids, explain how a nutritious lunch will give them energy to finish the rest of the schoolday and enjoy after-school activities.

Here are some other tips:

- Look over the cafeteria menu together. Ask what a typical lunch includes and which meals your kids like. Recommend items that are healthier, but let them buy favorite lunch items once in a while, even if that includes a hot dog.
- Ask about foods like chips, soda, and ice cream. Find out if and when these foods are available at school.
- Encourage kids to take a packed lunch, at least occasionally. This can help ensure that kids get a nutritious midday meal.

Healthier Alternatives

Encourage kids to choose cafeteria meals that include fruits, vegetables, lean meats, and whole grains, such as whole-wheat bread instead of white. Also, they should avoid fried foods when possible and choose low-fat milk or water as a drink.

If you're helping pack a lunch, start by brainstorming foods and snacks that your kids would like to eat. Besides old faves like peanut butter and jelly, try pitas or wrap sandwiches stuffed with grilled chicken or veggies. Try soups and salads, and don't forget last night's leftovers as an easy lunchbox filler.

You also can do a lunch makeover. These small changes do make a nutritional difference:

Instead of:	Consider:
Higher-fat lunch meats	Lower-fat deli meats, such as turkey
White bread	Whole-grain breads (wheat, oat, multi-grain)
Mayonnaise	Light mayonnaise or mustard
Fried chips and snacks	Air-popped popcorn, trail mix, veggies and dip
Fruit in syrup	Fruit in natural juices or fresh fruit
Cookies and snack cakes	Trail mix, yogurt, or homemade baked goods such as oatmeal cookies or fruit muffins
Fruit drinks and soda	Low-fat milk, water, or 100% fruit juice

Healthy Packed Lunches

Prepackaged lunches for kids are popular and convenient, but they're also expensive and often less than nutritious. Instead, create your own packable lunch using healthier ingredients. You could pack these options in plastic containers, resealable plastic bags, or colorful plastic wrap:

- cold-cut roll-ups: lean, low-fat turkey, ham, or roast beef with low-fat cheese on whole wheat tortillas
- cold pizza: shredded mozzarella cheese with pizza sauce on a flour tortilla, whole-wheat pita, English muffin, or mini pizza shell
- cracker sandwiches: whole-grain crackers filled with low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter and jelly
- peanut butter and celery sticks
- veggie sticks with low-fat dip or dressing
- 100% fruit juice box or bottle of water
- an optional dessert: yogurt, low-fat pudding, oatmeal raisin cookie, graham crackers, fresh fruit

Check with the school to see if there are any restrictions on what kids can pack in their lunches. And don't forget to involve your kids in the process so that healthier lunches can become a goal for them too.

Keep Packed Food Safe

A packed lunch carries the added responsibility of keeping the food safe to eat. That means keeping hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

To help keep lunch foods safe:

- Wash your hands before preparing food.

- Use a thermos for hot foods.
- Use cold packs or freeze some foods and drinks overnight. They'll thaw in the lunchbox.
- Wash out lunch boxes every day or use brown paper bags that can be thrown away or recycled.
- Pack some moist towelettes to remind kids to wash their hands before eating and to clean up after.

Reviewed by: Mary L. Gavin, MD

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What's on your tray?

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is a federally funded meal program operating in public schools, nonprofit private schools, and residential child care institutions. Students receive a nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunch that will provide the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) of necessary nutrients. Here at the Home of The Bombers everyone gets a free lunch and breakfast through the Community Eligibility Provision. The NSLP enhances students learning abilities by contributing to their physical and mental well being

Menus are planned following the guidelines of the program and will demonstrate to students the right size portions. The current meal pattern increases the availability of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in the school menu.

The following chart shows the serving guidelines that determines how the menus are planned to meet the nutritional standards of the NSLP.



National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week (minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^b	2½ (½)	2½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^b	3¾ (¾)	3¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark green ^c	½	½	½
Red/Orange ^c	¾	¾	1¼
Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c,d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^e	1	1	1½
Grains (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid milk (cups) ^g	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^h	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Interim Target 1 (mg) ^h	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,420
Sodium Interim Target 1A (mg) ^h	≤ 1,110	≤ 1,225	≤ 1,280
Trans fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is ½ cup.

^b One-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as ½ cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as ½ cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

^c Larger amounts of these vegetables may be served.

^d This category consists of "Other vegetables" as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(E) of this section. For the purposes of the NSLP, the "Other vegetables" requirement may be met with any

Our Bomber cafeterias are continuously trying to improve the menu options that are available to our students. While we do have prepared foods, we are striving to go towards a more from scratch cooking approach. This style of cooking will help us meet the everchanging guidelines of the USDA. There is a big push to reduce sodium and sugar in school meals. The easiest way to accomplish this is to cook from scratch which allows us to control the amount of salt and sugar and provide healthier meals for our students. We are excited to offer sample tastings this school year and collect feedback from the students and staff.

Please follow us on our Facebook and Instagram pages @bomber_eats to see our latest menu additions and offerings in the cafeterias.

School Health

Stop the Spread of Cold and Flu Viruses

You probably already know how awful the flu or common cold can make you feel. To help avoid all that misery - and possible health complications - getting a flu shot is the best way to prevent an illness.

But aside from vaccination, take these 5 steps to reduce your chances of getting sick during the cold and flu season:

1. Wash your hands frequently - and properly.

Using soap and warm water, scrub every surface of your hands, including under your fingernails, for a full 20 to 30 seconds. When you're not near a sink, hand sanitizer is a good substitute.

2. Cover your cough or sneeze.

Cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue so the cold germs won't get on your hands and spread.

3. In this case, don't share!

Sharing paper towels, utensils, drinks or food in the lunchroom or bathroom can spread cold and flu germs.

4. Disinfect at home and school.

Cold germs can live on surfaces for several hours or even days. Wiping down things like your cellphone, locker, school desk, doorknobs and remotes can prevent the spread of germs.

5. Avoid touching your face.

Try to keep your fingers out of your eyes, nose and mouth. Cold and flu germs on your hands can easily be transferred when rubbing or itching your eyes and nose, for instance.



Flu or Cold Symptoms?

How do you know your child has a cold or the flu and should you send them to school?

Symptoms of the flu include:

Fever (usually high), extreme tiredness, headache, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches and pains, stomach symptoms, such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea (more common in children than adults), chest discomfort

Symptoms of a cold:

Sneezing, stuffy or runny nose, may have fever (usually not high), productive cough, mucus, sore throat

*Please do not send your child to school if they have over a 100 degree fever or has had it in the past 24 hours, is vomiting or has in the past 24 hours, or has a **severe** sore throat. More information can be found on the school's Jr/Sr High page under the Nurse's Station tab. If you have questions, call 330-326-2711, ext. 541. Wash those hands and stay healthy!!

Link to CDC website for flu information: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/qa.htm>