



# freshSNAP

## Parent Guide

Creating healthy food  
environments at home  
and school



Government of Western Australia  
Department of Health



NATIONAL  
NUTRITION  
FOUNDATION

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**Let's connect!**



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# About freshSNAP

## **FreshSNAP is your Western Australian Fresh School Nutrition Advisory Program.**

We provide a FREE, comprehensive state-wide advisory and implementation service to deliver nutrition education and support schools in creating healthy food and drink environments.

Our services are available to the whole school community - including leadership, educators, canteen and food service staff, students, parents and families, and professionals supporting the wellbeing of school-aged children.

Our passionate and experienced team offers free consultations, professional learning sessions, support for canteens, school incursions and ongoing support for your school to create a culture and environment that makes every day healthier for Western Australian kids.

FreshSNAP is delivered by National Nutrition Foundation and proudly funded by the Department of Health Western Australia.

## **About National Nutrition Foundation**

National Nutrition Foundation is an independent, national not-for-profit organisation that enables Australians to enjoy nutritious foods and drinks.

We do this by collaborating with governments, business, public health and community organisations to deliver programs and services to make a collective impact.



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*This made  
the cut!*

# About this guide

This guide is designed to inspire and empower parents with the knowledge and confidence to create healthy eating environments at home and within the school community.

You'll learn why good nutrition is essential for growing bodies and minds, discover practical ways to make nutritious choices easier at home, and explore how parents can work together to improve school food environments.

Inside, you'll find out how to:

- Feel confident talking to your child or teen about making food choices that fuel their body
- Be a champion for a tasty, nutritious school canteen
- Advocate for healthier school events and fundraisers
- Pack lunchboxes that kids actually want to eat (and parents feel good about!)
- Explore freshSNAP's FREE resources, tips, and ongoing support

**With these simple tools and tips, you'll be ready to make a real, lasting difference, one bite at a time!**



# Why nutrition matters for growing kids and teens

As children and teenagers grow, their bodies and brains go through big changes and good nutrition provides them with the fuel they need to thrive. Eating well during these important years supports everything from physical growth to emotional wellbeing and academic success.



**Supports brain development.** Helps with focus, memory, and learning.



**Builds strong bodies.** Fuels growth spurts, muscle development, and bone strength.



**Improves mood and mental health.** A balanced diet can support emotional wellbeing.



**Provides lasting energy.** Keeps kids energised for school, sport, and play.



**Builds lifelong habits.** Kids who eat nutritious foods are more likely to make healthy choices as adults.

**Nourishing food choices now lay the foundation for a healthier, happier future!**

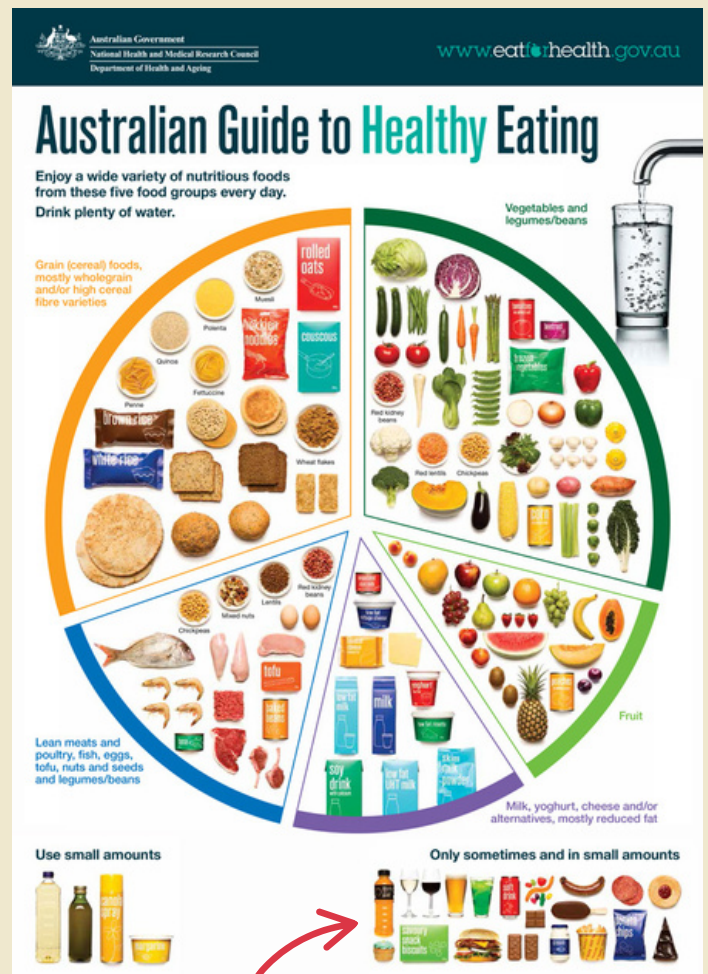


# Why nutrition matters for growing kids and teens

## Food Foundations: The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating

The Australian Guide to Healthy Eating focuses on five main food groups that kids and teens need every day:

- **Grains** – like bread, rice, pasta, and cereals.
- **Vegetables** – all colours and types.
- **Fruits** – fresh, frozen or canned.
- **Dairy or alternatives** – such as milk, yoghurt, cheese or plant-based options.
- **Meat or alternatives** – like chicken, eggs, tofu, fish, or legumes.



These food groups provide kids and teens with the nutrients they need to grow, learn, and feel their best. There's also room for "sometimes foods" but they should be enjoyed in moderation, alongside the core food groups.

# Supporting healthy eating at home

Healthy eating at home is the secret ingredient to helping your child grow strong, stay energised, and thrive. Not only does it set them up with positive habits that last a lifetime, it reinforces nutrition education they learn at school.

## 1. Role modelling healthy behaviours

Children often imitate the behaviours they see. When parents choose nutritious foods and enjoy eating them, it encourages kids to do the same. Show enthusiasm for fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and balanced meals. Avoid negative comments about foods, and demonstrate a positive attitude towards trying new foods.

## 2. Mealtime habits

Establish consistent mealtimes to create a sense of routine. Aim for family meals without distractions like TV or phones, which helps children and teens focus on their food and the social connection. This will also help your child eat more mindfully and recognise their hunger and fullness cues.

## 3. Shopping & meal prep

Plan ahead by preparing healthy snacks and meals in advance. For example, wash and cut fruits and vegetables, portion out crackers or yoghurt, or make homemade muffins with whole grains and fruits. Having these ready makes it easier for kids to grab nutritious options instead of ultra-processed snack foods. Include children in grocery shopping and meal prep to teach them about food choices and develop their cooking skills.

## 4. Make food fun

Get creative with food presentation and encourage kids to get involved. Arrange food so it is visually appealing by cutting into fun shapes, arrange food on platters, create build-your-own stations and include a variety of flavours or textures to make meals more interesting.

## 5. Healthy communication

Talk about food in a positive, neutral way. Avoid calling foods “good” or “bad,” which can create guilt or cravings. Instead, focus on how foods help the body and mind feel strong and energetic. Encourage children to express their likes and dislikes without pressure, and involve them in making food choices to build confidence and a healthy relationship with food.

freshhhh

# Supporting healthy eating at home

## Healthy Communication

The way we speak about food at home has a powerful impact on how children and teenagers think, feel, and behave around eating. Parents play a key role in creating a supportive food environment that builds confidence, reduces shame, and encourages lifelong healthy habits. Start the conversation today!

### What to do?



#### Be a role model

- Speak positively about food, both during meals and in casual conversations. Talk about what you enjoy, how food helps your body feel good, and the benefits of variety.

"I felt so great after eating a colourful lunch today."



#### Focus on non-weight related benefits

- When discussing health, focus on energy, mood, mental clarity, strong bones, vision, or sports performance, not body weight or size.

"This sandwich can give you long-lasting energy for school today."



#### Explore the senses

- Talk about how food looks, smells, tastes, and feels. Encourage your child to describe what they notice. This builds a positive, mindful connection to food.

"I love how bright and crunchy these carrots are. Want to try one?"



#### Involve your child in food decisions and preparation

- Giving your child a say in what they eat, and providing them with the opportunity to prepare these foods, helps to build confidence and independence, while making mealtimes a time to learn and connect.

"Let's build your lunchbox together with foods that will fuel your brain!"

# Supporting healthy eating at home

## Healthy Communication

### What to avoid?

#### Don't talk about diets, body weight, or size



- Avoid linking food to appearance, weight loss, or dieting. This can contribute to poor body image, low self-esteem, and disordered eating.

#### Avoid food guilt



- Don't label foods as "good," "bad," "junk," or "fattening." This language can create shame or confusion. Instead, talk about how some foods give our bodies long-lasting energy every day, while others are fun to enjoy sometimes.

#### Don't compare or moralise



- Avoid saying things like "carrots are better than chips" or "we're not eating that because it's bad for you." Instead, try:

**"We're swapping chips for crunchy carrots and hummus today to boost fresh, tasty options in our lunchbox."**

**"We're adding more colourful veggies to our meals because they help our bodies stay strong and energised."**

## Professional support

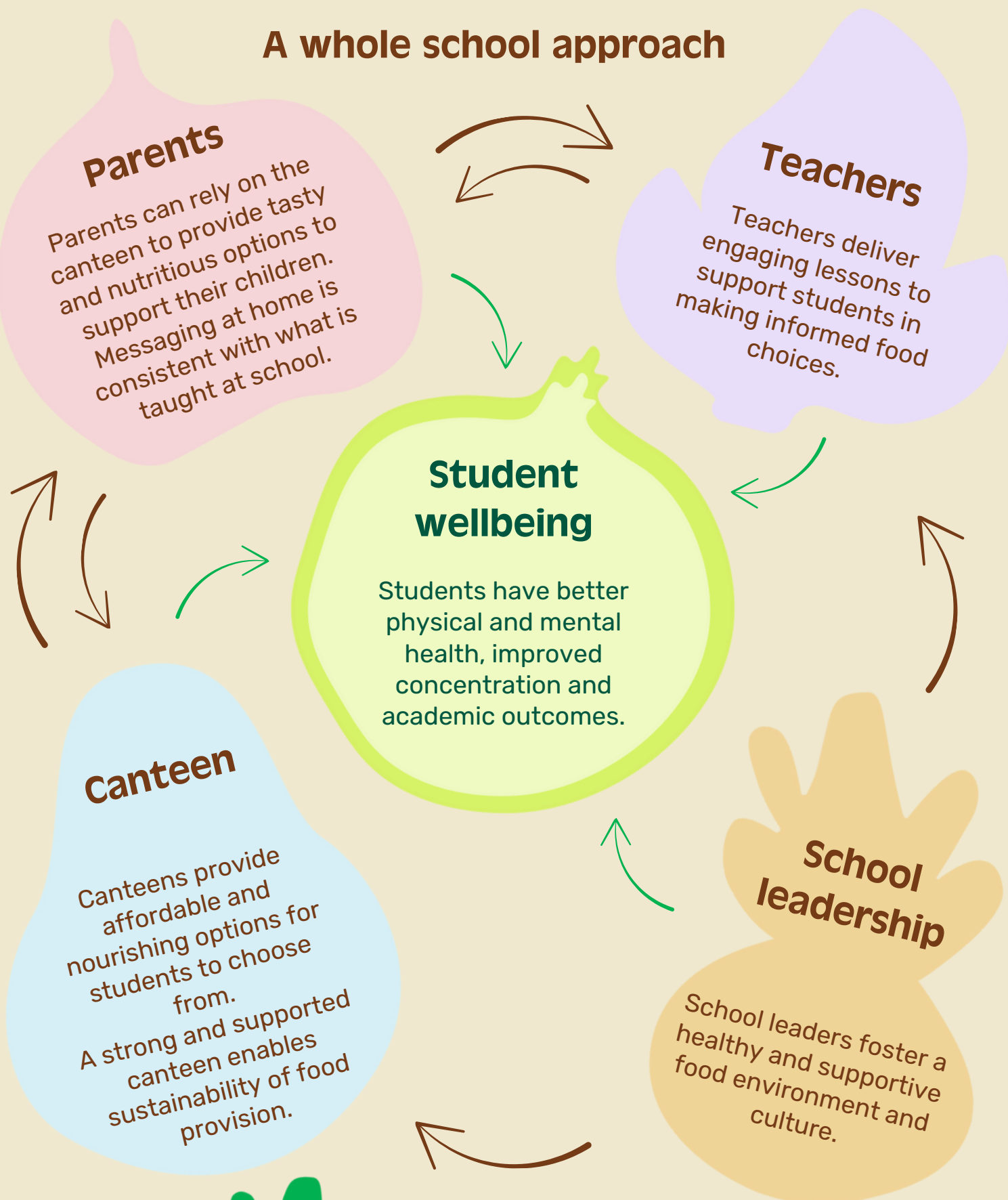
For more resources and support to communicate about food and nutrition, explore:

[Butterfly Foundation](#)   [The Embrace Collective](#)   [Eating Disorders Families Australia](#)

**For extra support, speak with your local GP who can refer you to the right specialist.**

# Supporting healthy eating at school

## A whole school approach



# Supporting healthy eating at school

The school canteen is more than just a place to buy food. It supports student learning, reinforces classroom education, models healthy habits and is the heart of the school community. The school canteen matters more than ever! For many families the canteen is no longer a treat. With many working families the canteen has become a regular part of the weekly routine.

## The importance of a healthy canteen

### A big slice of their day!

- Students consume around  $\frac{1}{3}$  of **their daily energy** at school.
- Nutritious meals = better growth, learning and overall wellbeing.
- Choosing discretionary foods often displaces core foods, essential for growth and development.



### Support for busy families

- Working parents often rely on school food options.
- A healthy canteen gives parents peace of mind that their child is receiving a nourishing meal at school.

### Fuel for learning

- Teachers need students to be calm, focused, and ready to learn. The consumption of nutritious foods supports this.
- Canteen food options should reflect nutrition education taught in the classroom.

### Healthy habits are contagious!

- Kids are easily influenced by peers. When healthy food is normalised and celebrated, everyone benefits.
- Positive school culture = lifelong healthy habits.

# Supporting healthy eating at school

## Healthy Food and Drink Policy

### Does the canteen comply?

All public schools in Western Australia are required to adhere to the *Department of Education Student Health in Public Schools Procedures, Appendix B. Healthy Food and Drink*. This policy applies to all food and drink provided by the school, including the canteen, and follows a traffic light classification system.

**The menu must consist of:**



**At least 60% GREEN items.**



**AMBER items must make up no more than 40% of the menu.**

**AMBER savoury commercial products** can be sold on a maximum of **two days** per week.



**No RED items on the menu.**

If you feel the school canteen menu isn't meeting policy requirements, start a friendly conversation with the Canteen Manager, school leadership, or P&C President. Sharing genuine feedback helps encourage the school to listen and make positive, meaningful changes. Use your voice and encourage other parents to do the same to support a healthier food environment for all students.

**Get involved today and help create a canteen your whole school can be proud of!**

# Supporting healthy eating at school

## Advocating respectfully

### Tips for positive communication

Parent advocacy may feel intimidating, but it plays a crucial role in shaping the school food environment to better support student's health, learning, and wellbeing. By uniting community voices, advocacy can drive positive, lasting changes in canteen menus and policies that benefits all students.

#### Here are our top tips for successful advocacy:

-  **Be curious, not critical.** Ask questions and seek to understand before sharing concerns.
-  **Use "I" statements.** Focus on how you feel and what you hope to see, e.g., "I'd love to see more fresh fruit options."
-  **Stay solution-focused.** Suggest ideas or alternatives instead of only pointing out problems.
-  **Active listening.** Show you value others' perspectives and be open to feedback.
-  **Be patient and polite.** Change takes time. Keep conversations positive and respectful.
-  **Build allies.** Encourage other parents to join you in supporting healthier choices.
-  **Follow up.** Check in after meetings to see progress and offer continued support.

# Supporting healthy eating at school

## Advocacy templates

We have put together three simple templates parents can use to advocate for healthier canteen options at school.

### 1. Email template to Canteen Manager or school leadership

*Subject: Suggestions for healthier options in the school canteen*

Dear [Name],

I hope you're well. I'm writing as a parent who is interested in supporting healthier food choices in our school canteen. I'd love to discuss the possibility of adding more nutritious options that align with the school's health policies and support our children's wellbeing and learning.

If possible, I would appreciate the opportunity to chat or meet to share some ideas and hear your thoughts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kind regards,

[Your Name]



### 2. Conversation starter for parent teacher or P&C meetings

"Hi [Name], I've noticed the canteen menu could offer more nutritious options to better support our kids' wellbeing and learning. I'm interested in working together with the school community to explore some ideas. Do you know who I could speak to about this?"

### 3. Social media/community group post

Hi everyone!

I'm passionate about promoting healthier food choices in our school canteen to support our kids' wellbeing and learning. If you're interested, let's connect and see how we can work together to encourage positive changes. Feel free to message me or join the next P&C meeting!

# Events and Fundraisers

Healthy fundraising supports student wellbeing, aligns with school health policies, and reinforces nutrition education taught in the classroom. By offering nutritious food options and promoting active or creative alternatives, P&Cs help create a consistent message across the school environment. This not only models healthy habits for students but also builds a culture where nutritious choices are normal, enjoyable, and valued by the whole school community.

## How to communicate the shift

Be clear, positive, and consistent in your messaging. Focus on the benefits for students and the school community. Communicate the change in newsletters, school apps, social media or P&C meetings.

*"We're raising funds and fuelling healthy futures! Thanks for supporting our move to fun, nutritious, and inclusive fundraising activities."*

*"Thank you for backing our move to fundraising that fuels both fun and wellbeing!"*

*"Our fundraising is now focused on fresh, fun, and nourishing options for all."*

## Fundraising ideas

- Frozen fruit icy poles
- Burger day with lean meat patty and salad
- Smoothie bike (available for hire from many local councils)
- Student made recipe book
- Walk-a-thon or dance-a-thon
- Fun run
- Teacher vs student sport matches
- Sports tournament
- Movie day/night with popcorn
- Free dress day
- Raffle (prizes could include books, sports equipment, movie voucher)
- Garden produce stall (if your school has a kitchen garden)



# Lunchbox Guide

To create a balanced lunchbox, mix & match foods from the 5 core food groups.

| FRUIT                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | VEGETABLES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | MILK , YOGHURT & CHEESE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | MEAT & ALTERNATIVES                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | GRAIN & CEREAL FOOD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>FRESH FRUIT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apple</li> <li>• Banana</li> <li>• Mandarin</li> <li>• Orange quarters</li> <li>• Passionfruit halved</li> <li>• Watermelon, honeydew, rockmelon chunks</li> <li>• Pineapple chunks</li> <li>• Grapes</li> <li>• Plums</li> <li>• Nectarines, plums, peaches</li> <li>• Strawberries</li> <li>• Blueberries</li> <li>• Cherries</li> <li>• Kiwi fruit</li> <li>• Pear</li> </ul> <b>MIXED FRUIT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit salad</li> <li>• Fruit kebabs</li> </ul> <b>DRIED FRUIT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dried fruit, nut, popcorn mixes</li> </ul> <b>TINNED FRUIT/FRUIT CUPS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In natural juice (not syrup)</li> </ul> | <b>RAW VEGIES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corn cobs</li> <li>• Carrot sticks</li> <li>• Capsicum sticks</li> <li>• Cucumber sticks</li> <li>• Celery sticks</li> <li>• Green beans</li> <li>• Snow peas</li> <li>• Cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• Mushroom pieces</li> </ul> <i>Can serve with a vegie based dip or salsa...</i> <b>SALADS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quinoa salad</li> <li>• Mixed bean salad</li> <li>• Pesto pasta salad</li> </ul> <b>BAKED ITEMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grilled or roasted vegies</li> <li>• Wholemeal vegie muffins</li> <li>• Zucchini slice</li> </ul> <b>SOUP</b> (in thermos) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pumpkin soup</li> <li>• Potato and leek soup</li> <li>• Chicken and corn soup</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Calcium-enriched plant based milks</li> <li>• Yoghurt (frozen overnight)</li> <li>• Cheese cubes, sticks or slices</li> <li>• Cottage or ricotta cheese</li> <li>• Cream cheese</li> <li>• Tzatziki dip</li> </ul> <i>Can serve with...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit</li> <li>• Wholegrain cereal</li> <li>• Vegie sticks</li> <li>• Rice/corn cakes</li> <li>• Wholegrain wheat crackers</li> </ul> <div> <p>Don't forget a water bottle for refilling throughout the day!</p> </div> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tinned tuna or salmon in springwater</li> <li>• Lean, skinless meats</li> <li>• Falafel balls</li> <li>• Lean meat patties</li> <li>• Lentil patties</li> <li>• Lean deli meats (e.g. chicken, turkey)</li> <li>• Boiled eggs</li> <li>• Baked beans</li> <li>• Tofu</li> <li>• Hummus dip</li> <li>• Lean meat kebabs</li> <li>• Peanut butter</li> <li>• Vegetable frittata</li> <li>• Homemade pizzas with lean meat &amp; vegies</li> </ul> <i>Can serve with...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholegrain roll, sandwich or wrap with salad</li> <li>• Rice/corn cakes</li> <li>• Wholegrain wheat crackers</li> <li>• Side salad</li> <li>• Steamed or roasted vegies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bread, rolls, wraps, pita, bagels, English muffins (preferably wholemeal or wholegrain)</li> <li>• Pasta dishes</li> <li>• Rice, quinoa, cous cous dishes</li> <li>• Noodle dishes</li> <li>• Sushi</li> </ul> <b>SAVOURY BAKED ITEMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homemade pizzas</li> <li>• Wholemeal savoury muffins</li> <li>• Pasta bake</li> </ul> <b>SWEET BAKED ITEMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Banana bread</li> <li>• Wholemeal fruit based muffins</li> </ul> <b>SNACKS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereal</li> <li>• Crackers</li> <li>• Popcorn</li> <li>• Crispbreads</li> <li>• Rice/corn cakes</li> <li>• Pikelets</li> <li>• Crumpets</li> <li>• Fruit toast</li> </ul> |

This resource is adapted from the Healthy Eating Advisory Service's Pick & Mix 1-6 poster Copyright © State of Victoria

# Resources and support

**FreshSNAP supports a whole-school approach to healthy eating where everyone including parents, teachers, leadership, and canteens have a role to play in creating a healthier food and drink environment. To support this, we offer a range of resources tailored to each of these target groups. Share these with your school community to highlight how freshSNAP can support your school!**

## Our website

Our website has all the tools and information that you need to create a healthy food environment. New resources, recipes, curriculum materials and online learning opportunities are regularly added to the website.

Visit [www.freshsnap.org.au](http://www.freshsnap.org.au) today!



## Free consultation services

FreshSNAP offers flexible consultations face-to-face, online, by email or phone to suit each school's needs and schedule. We support schools to assess their food environment, set goals, and create a step-by-step plan for lasting change.

## Events & Engagement

FreshSNAP values meaningful connections with the communities we support. We actively participate in a range of school and community events to provide nutrition education and support healthy food and drink environments.

This includes:

- ▷ **Teacher professional development**
- ▷ **School health and wellbeing expos**
- ▷ **Classroom incursions**
- ▷ **And more!**



# Resources and support

## FoodChecker

FoodChecker is an online product, menu and recipe assessment tool that is available for FREE to all WA schools. It provides instant traffic light classification for menu items, taking the guess work out of menu planning!

Assess your menu at [www.foodchecker.au](http://www.foodchecker.au)



## e-Learning

Self-paced online learning is available for canteen staff, teachers, parents and school leadership to truly support a whole of school approach to creating healthy food and drink environments.



## Recipes

You can find a range of recipes on the freshSNAP website that have been classified against the WA School Food and Drink Criteria. All the recipes are either **GREEN** or **AMBER**, meaning you can easily incorporate them into your current menu or at home and be confident in the nutritional value of the food you are providing. The recipe section of the website is regularly updated and includes ideas for breakfast, lunch, and snacks.

## Resources for parents, canteens and teachers

Browse our collection of free resources! From easy-to-read factsheets and vibrant posters to curriculum-aligned lesson plans. Whatever your role in the school community, there's something to help you champion healthy food and drink environments.

# How to get started

## Checklist for success



**Book a free consultation with the friendly freshSNAP team.**

Explore tailored ways your school can boost healthy food and drink options.



**Start the conversation.** Connect with other parents, P&C, teachers, canteen staff, and school leadership about why healthy choices matter.



**Use freshSNAP's free tools.** Including FoodChecker, online learning, factsheets, and recipes to spark change in your school community. Share these resources with other key members and decision makers of the school community.



**Invite freshSNAP to your school.** Invite the team to work alongside you in building a healthier, more supportive environment. From stalls at events to classroom incursions, the freshSNAP team can support your school in promoting healthy choices!



**Plan for the long term.** Focus on changes that are realistic, achievable, and sustainable. Remember, change takes time!



**Celebrate success.** Share your school's healthy wins with the community and freshSNAP to inspire others.

# Contact us

# fresh SNAP



We're here to support parents and the school community in ensuring WA kids and teens have the fuel they need to thrive!

**Contact our team for free consultation services and resources.**

You can reach us via email  
**[freshsnap@nnf.org.au](mailto:freshsnap@nnf.org.au)**

Or call us on **(08) 6182 2260**

We're here 9am-4pm Monday to Friday.



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Health**



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