

PAMPHLET

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HEALTHY VENDING MACHINES

Because students—particularly secondary school students—often use school vending machines, the nutritional value of the food they contain is important, since it may comprise a significant part of the students' daily diet. This pamphlet is intended as a tool for school staff as well as for vending machine operators to help them optimize the quality and variety of foods sold.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- > Eliminate the sale of all products where sugar is the first ingredient listed (e.g. candy bars, candies, chocolate- or yogurt-covered dried fruit, chocolate- or sugar-coated fruit snacks, chocolate with less than 70% cocoa).
- > Vary the contents of vending machines from time to time to prevent students from buying junk food outside the school.

BEVERAGE VENDING MACHINES

- > Eliminate sugar-sweetened and artificially sweetened (diet) soft drinks from vending machines and replace them with a wide selection of 100% pure (unsweetened) fruit juices, vegetable juices, milk and water.
- > Replace sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g. fruit cocktail, punch or drinks, sports drinks, energy drinks) with 100% pure (unsweetened) fruit juices, vegetable juices, milk and water.
- > As much as possible, all drink sizes should be lower than 384 ml, and with resealable containers so that students can regulate their consumption as needed.
- > Limit the availability of caffeinated beverages to areas reserved for school staff.
- > Although there are a number of milk-based drinks on the market, many contain sugar. Offer only flavoured milks with less than 30 grams of total sugars per 250 ml.
- > In addition to water, offer nutritious choices such as 100% pure (unsweetened) fruit juices, vegetable juices, milk, yogurt drinks, as well as milk beverages (containing less than 30 grams of sugar per 250 ml) and rice and soymilk beverages fortified with calcium and vitamin D.

FOOD VENDING MACHINES

Food vending machines in schools are usually unrefrigerated. We recommend installing refrigerated units so that students can have access to a wider selection of healthy foods (e.g. raw vegetables, fresh fruit, homemade sandwiches, mixed salads, cheese, milk, yogurt and juice) when food services are not available.

In order to ensure consistency in the entire range of food offered (cafeteria, caterers, vending machines, food counters, etc.), it is important to respect the principles established for the menu (see Pamphlet 1, Healthy School Menus).

It is often difficult to evaluate the nutritional value of foods sold in vending machines. Many schools have therefore turned to the *Fuel to Xcell Healthy Vending Machine Program*¹ in order to establish a rating system that can be used to differentiate items that may be offered in vending machines from those that should be eliminated.

The proposed classification system was developed on the basis of the document named above, and is intended as a suggestion. It should be noted that this system does not take the salt content of foods into account and that, when possible, it is preferable to go with versions with less salt. Finally, it is also suggested that the services of a nutritionist be provided, in order to set up the food classification system or, at least, to approve it. It is up to each school to adopt the strategy best suited to provide healthy food choices from vending machines.

CLASSIFICATION

A set of criteria can be used to identify unacceptable items that should be eliminated from vending machines, and to categorize acceptable items using a colour-coded system.

- > Food and beverages classified as **green** or **yellow** are products with good nutritional value and are preferred choices for vending machines. **Green** category items should be chosen most often.
- > **White** category items should only be consumed occasionally. These foods should account for no more than 25% of the content of vending machines. The school could also decide to eliminate these products and to stick to products identified by green or yellow codes.

Certain foods offer excellent nutritional value and are therefore categorized as **green**:

- > Fresh vegetables and fruit
- > Nuts, seeds and legume snacks, with or without dried fruit
- > Yogurt and yogurt drinks
- > Cheese

All other items (e.g. dried fruit snacks, unsweetened fruit purée, rice cakes, cereal bars) may be evaluated using the checklist on the next page. Please note that the criteria are valid for all foods with a Nutrition Facts Table on the package.

Remember to comply with school guidelines concerning food allergies.

1. *Fuel to Xcell Healthy Vending Machine Program*, Ottawa Public Health, December 2004.

EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Product name: _____

Package size: _____

Using the Nutrition Facts Table and the list of ingredients on the package, complete the following checklist:

Criteria per vended package	Point allocation	Points
Total fat	3.0 g or less	3
	3.1 g to 6.0 g	2
	6.1 g to 8.0 g	1
	8.1 g to 9.0 g	0
	9.1 g to 11.0 g	-1
	Greater than 11.0 g	-10
Saturated and trans fats	1.4 g or less	5
	1.5 g to 2.0 g	4
	2.1 g to 2.5 g	3
	2.6 g to 3.0 g	2
	3.1 g to 3.5 g	1
	3.6 g to 5.0 g	0
	Greater than 5.0 g	-1
Fibre	6.0 g or less	4
	4.0 g to 5.9 g	3
	2.0 g to 3.9 g	2
	1.0 g to 1.9 g	1
	0 to 0.9 g	-2
Sugars	Sugar is the first ingredient listed	-15
	Sugar is the second or third ingredient listed	-3
	Sugar is not among the first three ingredients listed	0
TOTAL		<input style="width: 50px; height: 30px;" type="text"/>

PRODUCT CLASSIFICATION

Total points	Colour rating	Comments
8 - 12	Green	Excellent choice
4 - 7	Yellow	Good choice
0 - 3	White	Occasional choice
Less than		This product should be eliminated.

WARNING

The evaluation checklist was designed to assess food rather than beverages and is presented only as a tool. It should therefore be used with care. Although the checklist can be easily applied to most foods on the market, it does not take certain nutrient elements into account, in order to be user-friendly. As a result, certain low-nutrient foods may be allocated a higher rating than they actually merit. For example, certain types of **baked chips, pretzels and popcorn may be classified as green when they should really be categorized as yellow**, since they provide few essential nutrients. Caution and good judgment are therefore advised.

COLOUR CODING

It is suggested that colour-coded food classification systems be used as a tool to educate young people.

- > When implementing a colour-code system, inform users and teach them how to use the system.
- > To help students make healthy choices, post the appropriate colour code on the price sticker or the button used to select the product.
- > Post a legend close to the vending machines to explain the classification system used.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT

- > To promote sales, place nutritious products (green or yellow coded) in prominent slots in the vending machines (i.e. centre to top).
- > Make sure healthier choices (green and yellow coded products) constitute at least 75% of the foods sold in vending machines.

IMPLEMENTING CHANGES

- > Once the food to be sold in vending machines has been evaluated and classified, decisions can be made concerning the extent of the changes required.
- > The rate at which changes are implemented may vary depending on their extent. Make sure to allot time to facilitate the transition.
- > We suggest that you introduce changes after a break, such as summer vacation, winter holidays or spring break.
- > Make sure you **replace** eliminated items with **new healthier choices** in order to keep providing a variety of foods.
- > Remember to include student representatives in decisions concerning school food.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONSULT THE FOLLOWING SITES:

MELS

www.mels.gouv.qc.ca

MSSS

www.msss.gouv.qc.ca/sujets/santepub

MAPAQ

www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/mesaliments

www.securitedesaliments.gouv.qc.ca

www.mapaq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/consommation/qualitedesaliments/allergiesalimentaires

Do it for you! Program

www.vasy.gouv.qc.ca/index_en.html

Health Canada

www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fr-an/food-guide-aliment/index_e.html

Association québécoise des allergies alimentaires

www.aqaa.qc.ca