

Nutrition Services and Resources Available to York Region Schools

York Region Health Services, Nutrition Services is using a *whole school* approach to enhance the school nutrition environment with the ultimate goal to improve eating behaviours in students, as well as families. This approach is based on nine essential elements (see below) of a healthy school nutrition environment taken from the *Call to Action: Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment*. A copy of this document can be downloaded from: www.york.ca/

Healthy Schools, Healthy Kids!

A whole school approach to healthy eating

- 1. Nutrition education for students** Nutrition Services recommends the following curriculum-matched resources:
 - *Discover Healthy Eating! A Teacher's Resource for Grades 1-8* is a curriculum-matched resource for teachers to help students identify and choose a variety of foods for healthy eating. It also has activities that address physical activity, body image and eating disorders. This resource can be downloaded from: <http://www.toronto.ca/health/>, click on *Publications*, click on *Professional Resources*.
 - *Mission Nutrition* is a resource that contains curriculum connections, lesson plans, student activity sheets, home activities and assessment rubrics. This resource can be downloaded from: www.missionnutrition.ca/
 - *Everybody is a Somebody* provides information and strategies on ways to promote positive body image among teen girls. The manual provides background information for teachers and activities and worksheets to use with grade 7 and 8 students. An order form for this resource can be obtained from <http://www.bodyimagecoalition.org/everybody2.html> or by calling the Body Image Coalition of Peel at 905-791-7800 ext. 2063.
 - *4 for Lunch A Healthy Lunch Challenge* for grade 3 students - offered once a year in the Fall. The goal of this program is to encourage families to pack nutritious lunches. Materials, including curriculum-matched activities are provided. The challenge is for students and their parents to plan and make healthy lunches for one week. All classes participating in the challenge receive certificates and are eligible for prizes. The winning classes enjoy a healthy lunch party and chances for other great prizes.
 - *Nutrition Matters* fact sheets and *Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating* materials are intended for use by teachers as background information, to copy and send home with students, or to provide information for inserts in school newsletters. Please use the *Nutrition Resources Order Form for School Staff* to place an order.
- 2. Nutrition education for staff provided by a registered dietitian** Nutrition Services offers training in nutrition for teaching staff facilitated by a registered dietitian. This 1 hour workshop provides the nutrition fundamentals required to teach the healthy eating specific expectations from the *Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8: Health and Physical Education* (1998). Classroom activities using instructional intelligence strategies and evaluation and assessment opportunities are highlighted.
- 3. Positive role modeling of healthy eating by school staff** Research has indicated that school teachers have a potentially greater influence on a child's health than any other group outside of the home.
- 4. Healthy, reasonably priced and culturally appropriate food choices available in schools** Nutrition Services offers resources to help schools define food standards. Food standards are based on the classification of foods with maximum, moderate and minimum nutritional value and define the healthiest foods and beverages that can be served and/or sold in schools and at school-sponsored functions.

5. **Safe food practices and allergy-safe environment** Providing a safe food environment will decrease the risk of food-borne illnesses. York Region Health Services, School Services has developed an Anaphylaxis Resource Kit to help schools create safe environments. Please see your principal to view a copy of this resource kit.
6. **Appropriate scheduling of nutrition breaks** Nutrition services offers guidance on nutrition breaks. Students need a minimum of 20 continuous minutes of eating time for nutrition breaks. Additional time should be provided for washing hands, getting dressed for outside etc. Resources are also available to support the Balanced School Day schedule.
7. **Student Nutrition Programs** *York Region Food for Learning* is a community partnership of parents, educators, health professionals, and business members. This group is dedicated to enhancing classroom learning by supporting breakfast, snack or lunch programs. Currently, York Region Food for Learning supports over 75 student nutrition programs benefiting over 14,000 children. Visit www.foodforlearning.com for more information.
8. **Student, parent and community education about healthy eating** Involving parents in nutrition-related learning experience such as parent workshops, games, take-home activities and school meals can enhance and change the eating behaviours of both students and parents. For example, Nutrition Services offers the following parent workshops: What's in your Child's Lunch Bag?; Healthy Eating and Physical Activity for Youth; and, Creating a Healthy School Nutrition Environment – Forming a School Nutrition Action Committee.
9. **Food and nutrition policies to support healthy eating** A school nutrition policy will help to ensure that students can apply the healthy eating behaviours they have learned in the classroom. Policies are not meant to control personal choice, but rather provide support and make available a variety of healthy choices. Nutrition Services staff are available to consult with schools and provide tools to help review and/or develop school food and nutrition policies and to work towards establishing supportive school environments for healthy eating (i.e., foods sold in schools, school food days or school fundraisers etc.).

Nutrition Tools for Schools – A toolkit for elementary schools

Interested in promoting healthy eating habits among elementary school students? Not sure how or where to start? *Nutrition Tools for Schools* is for you! Whether you're a teacher, parent, school administrator or volunteer, *Nutrition Tools for Schools* will lead you through a step-by-step process to creating a healthy nutrition environment in your school. *Nutrition Tools for Schools* contains a variety of tools to implement the nine essential elements listed above. For more information about this toolkit, please contact a public health nutritionist at 905-895-4512 or 1-800-735-6625 ext. 4332.

By getting involved in improving healthy eating choices at your school, you can make a difference in your students' energy, readiness to learn and their overall health!

Contact a Public Health Nutritionist at (905) 895-4512 or 1-800-735-6625 ext. 4332 if you would like further information about any of the above programs and services.

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