

# Healthy Meals in Pre-schools Programme (HMPP) Guidelines 2021

The following are food service and nutrition education criteria applicable to pre-schools in Singapore.

## Food Service Criteria for Pre-schools with Full-day Services

1. Provide calcium food sources daily.
2. For water, sweetened drinks and desserts:
  - a) Provide water during lunch and throughout the day.
  - b) Syrup, cordial (e.g. rose syrup and barley syrup) and commercially prepared sweetened drinks (e.g. ice lemon tea, chrysanthemum tea) without the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) are not allowed. Milk is allowed.
  - c) Homemade sweetened drinks and local liquid-based desserts, shall not contain more than 6g/100ml of sugar.
  - d) Homemade or commercially prepared sweetened drinks can only be sweetened with sugars. Non-sugar substitutes such as sugar alcohol (e.g. sorbitol and xylitol) and intense sweeteners (e.g. acesulfame K, sucralose and aspartame) are not allowed<sup>[1]</sup>.
3. Deep-fried food, pre deep-fried food upon purchase (e.g. pre deep-fried chicken nuggets, pre deepfried French fries and pre deep-fried noodles) and preserved food (e.g. sausage, ham, luncheon meat, preserved vegetables and preserved eggs) shall not be served.
4. When high-fat ingredients (e.g. coconut milk/cream, cheese, mayonnaise and cream) are used, half or more of the required amounts of such ingredients shall be replaced with reduced-fat alternatives (e.g. reduced-fat evaporated milk, reduced-fat cheese, reduced-fat mayonnaise and reduced-fat cream).

Use cooking oil with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) in food preparation.

Butter, lard, hard margarine, ghee and shortening shall not be used. If soft margarine is used, only those with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS), or equivalent nutrition criteria, can be used.

5. Use skinless poultry and lean meat when preparing food.
6. Serve food in the four food groups at lunch daily:
  - (1) Brown rice and wholemeal bread (carbohydrate source)<sup>[2]</sup>
  - (2) Fruit: At least 32.5g, such as ¼ small apple or ¼ wedge of watermelon
  - (3) Vegetables: At least 1.5 heaped dessertspoons
  - (4) Meat or alternative protein sources<sup>[3]</sup>
7. Serve wholegrains:
  - a) **Rice/porridge:** At least 20% of unpolished rice (e.g. brown rice) shall be mixed with other rice of choice.

<sup>[1]</sup> The aim is to cultivate a palate for less sweet drinks among the youths. We recognise that sweeteners may condition our palates to demand for sweet food and drinks in our diet, which may lead to excess calorie and sugar intake. Therefore, drinks containing non-sugar sweeteners are disallowed in schools.

<sup>[2]</sup> Examples of food in the 'brown rice and wholemeal bread' food group refers to any carbohydrate source such as rice, noodles, bread, and starchy vegetables like potato and pumpkin.

<sup>[3]</sup> Examples of food in the 'meat or alternative protein' food group are chicken, fish, lentils, beans and tofu.

<sup>[4]</sup> Per serving refers to a typical serving portion of the homemade snack, with each child consuming 1 serving.

- b) **Noodles:** When oriental noodles are served (e.g. bee hoon, kway teow, yellow noodles, mee tai mak, egg noodles, laksa noodles, instant noodles, ban mian, etc), only wholegrain oriental noodles shall be used. When spaghetti is served, at least 20% of wholemeal spaghetti shall be mixed with other spaghetti of choice.
  - c) **Bread:** Only wholemeal/wholegrain bread shall be used to prepare sandwiches.
8. Prepare homemade snacks according to the criteria below (where applicable):
- a) Comply with the Healthy Meals in Pre-schools Programme criteria.
  - b) Sugar content shall be equal to or less than one tablespoon (15g) per serving<sup>[4]</sup>.

## Food Service Criteria for Pre-schools with Half-day Services

*Applicable to pre-schools with half-day services serving at least two hot meals per week.*

1. Provide calcium food sources **at least twice per week**.
2. For water, sweetened drinks and desserts:
  - a) Provide water during meals and throughout the day.
  - b) Syrup, cordial (e.g. rose syrup and barley syrup) and commercially prepared sweetened drinks (e.g. ice lemon tea, chrysanthemum tea) without the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) are not allowed. Milk is allowed.
  - c) Homemade sweetened drinks and local liquid-based desserts, shall not contain more than 6g/100ml of sugar.
  - d) Homemade or commercially prepared sweetened drinks can only be sweetened with sugars. Non-sugar substitutes such as sugar alcohol (e.g. sorbitol and xylitol) and intense sweeteners (e.g. acesulfame K, sucralose and aspartame) are not allowed<sup>[1]</sup>.
3. Deep-fried food, pre deep-fried food upon purchase (e.g. pre deep-fried chicken nuggets and pre deep-fried French fries) and preserved food (e.g. sausage, ham, luncheon meat, preserved vegetables and preserved eggs) shall not be served.
4. When high-fat ingredients (e.g. coconut milk/cream, cheese, mayonnaise and cream) are used, half or more of the required amounts of such ingredients shall be replaced with reduced-fat alternatives (e.g. reduced-fat evaporated milk, reduced-fat cheese, reduced-fat mayonnaise and reduced-fat cream).

Use cooking oil with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) in food preparation.

Butter, lard, hard margarine, ghee, and shortening shall not be used. If soft margarine is used, only those with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS), or equivalent nutrition criteria, can be used.

5. Use skinless poultry and lean meat when preparing food.
6. a) When hot meals are served, food in the three food groups must be incorporated:
  - (1) Brown rice and wholemeal bread (carbohydrate source)<sup>[2]</sup>

<sup>[1]</sup> The aim is to cultivate a palate for less sweet drinks among the youths. We recognise that sweeteners may condition our palates to demand for sweet food and drinks in our diet, which may lead to excess calorie and sugar intake.

Therefore, drinks containing non-sugar sweeteners are disallowed in schools.

<sup>[2]</sup> Examples of food in the 'brown rice and wholemeal bread' food group refers to any carbohydrate source such as rice, noodles, bread, and starchy vegetables like potato and pumpkin.

<sup>[3]</sup> Examples of food in the 'meat or alternative protein' food group are chicken, fish, lentils, beans and tofu.

<sup>[4]</sup> Per serving refers to a typical serving portion of the homemade snack, with each child consuming 1 serving.

- (2) Meat or alternative protein sources<sup>[3]</sup>
- (3) Vegetables: At least 1.5 heaped dessertspoons

b) Provide a minimum of 32.5g of fruit at least twice a week, such as ¼ small apple or ¼ wedge of watermelon.

7. Serve wholegrains:

- a) **Rice/porridge:** At least 20% of unpolished rice (e.g. brown rice) shall be mixed with other rice of choice.
- b) **Noodles:** When oriental noodles are served (e.g. bee hoon, kway teow, yellow noodles, mee tai mak, egg noodles, laksa noodles, instant noodles, ban mian, etc), only wholegrain oriental noodles shall be used. When spaghetti is served, at least 20% of wholemeal spaghetti shall be mixed with other spaghetti of choice.
- c) **Bread:** Only wholemeal/wholegrain bread shall be used to prepare sandwiches.

8. Prepare homemade snacks according to the criteria below (where applicable):

- a) Comply with the Healthy Meals in Pre-schools Programme criteria.
- b) Sugar content shall be equal to or less than one tablespoon (15g) per serving<sup>[4]</sup>.

## **Nutrition Education Criteria (For All Pre-schools)**

1. Introduce “My Healthy Plate”.
2. Share the basic concept of healthy eating, which consists of choosing the right types of food and the right amount of food consumption.
3. Share the importance of eating wholegrain food, fruit and vegetables.
4. Introduce the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) and explain why HCS products are better options.
5. Prepare a healthy meal with the students involved.
6. Organise a field trip to reinforce learning on healthy eating.
7. Set up a learning corner to reinforce students' learning on the importance of healthy eating.
8. Engage parents in activities to promote healthy eating.

*Note: These criteria are valid as of April 2021.*

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<sup>[2]</sup> Examples of food in the ‘brown rice and wholemeal bread’ food group refers to any carbohydrate source such as rice, noodles, bread, and starchy vegetables like potato and pumpkin.

<sup>[3]</sup> Examples of food in the ‘meat or alternative protein’ food group are chicken, fish, lentils, beans and tofu.

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