



# The evidence for the major changes to the WA School Food and Drink Criteria

The Western Australian Department of Health has developed a new WA School Food and Drink Criteria (WASFDC) to classify food and drink provided in schools according to the traffic light system: GREEN (healthiest), AMBER, or RED (least healthy). The WASFDC has been developed to support implementation of the Department of Education Student Health in Public Schools Procedures, Appendix B. Healthy Food and Drink.

You will notice some changes in the classifications of some food and drink. The WASFDC classifies food and drink according to their nutritional quality, in line with international evidence, national dietary guidelines, and the Council of Australian Government Health Council National Interim Guide to Reduce Children's Exposure to Unhealthy Food and Drink Promotion. Major changes are listed below.

## To make it easier to provide GREEN food and drink in schools, the number of GREEN food and drink items has increased. The items below have been reclassified GREEN

- All dairy (milk, yoghurt, cheese)<sup>1</sup>
- All canned vegetables and legumes<sup>2,3,4</sup>
- Plain pizza bases<sup>5</sup>
- All tinned fish<sup>4</sup>
- All vegetable and legume patties, falafels, tofu, and tempeh<sup>4</sup>
- Cheese and cracker snack packs<sup>4</sup>
- Plain popcorn<sup>4</sup>

## To reduce children's exposure to junk food in schools, most AMBER discretionary foods will be reclassified RED. These include:

- Hot potato and sweet potato chips and wedges<sup>4,6</sup>
- Processed red meat such as ham, sausages and frankfurters<sup>4,6,7</sup>
- Commercial savoury pastry foods such as pies and sausage rolls<sup>4,6</sup>
- Chips and savoury biscuits such as salty flavoured crackers<sup>4,6</sup>
- Commercial sweet biscuits, cookies, cakes, desserts and sweet pastries<sup>4,6</sup>
- Fruit juice slushies<sup>4,6</sup>

## To encourage and support increased vegetable consumption, some items will be required to be served with at least half a serve of salad or vegetables<sup>2,4,8</sup> These include:

- AMBER red meat, poultry, fish and seafood, such as chicken wings
- Crumbed or coated red meat, poultry, fish or seafood, such as chicken nuggets
- Burger patties, rissoles, meatballs and fish cakes
- Processed poultry meat, like pressed chicken
- Commercial vegetable and legume patties, falafels, tofu, and tempeh
- Commercial plant-based meat alternatives, such as vegetarian sausages
- Commercial hot meals, such as pasta ready-meal

For assistance on reclassifying food items, recipes and or menus contact FreshSNAP  
[www.freshsnap.org.au](http://www.freshsnap.org.au)

For further information, please contact [obesity.prevention@health.wa.gov.au](mailto:obesity.prevention@health.wa.gov.au)

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<sup>1</sup> Heart Foundation. Dairy and Heart Health. 2019. Available from:

[www.heartfoundation.org.au/bundles/healthy-living-and-eating/dairy-and-heart-health](http://www.heartfoundation.org.au/bundles/healthy-living-and-eating/dairy-and-heart-health)

<sup>2</sup> Eat for Health. Australian Guide to Health Eating, vegetables and legume beans. Available from:

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/food-essentials/five-food-groups/vegetables-and-legumes-beans>

<sup>3</sup> Food Standards Australia New Zealand. Food Standards Code. Food Standard 1.2.7 – Nutrition, health and related claims. Available from:

<https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2018C00942>

<sup>4</sup> National Health and Medical Research Council, Australian Department of Health and Ageing. Australian Dietary Guidelines. 2013. Available from:

<https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/adg> OR <https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines>

<sup>5</sup> Eat for Health. Australian Guide to Health Eating, Grain (cereal foods). Available from:

[Grain \(cereal\) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties | Eat For Health](#)

<sup>6</sup> Coalition of Australian Governments (COAG) Health Council. National interim guide to reduce children's exposure to unhealthy food and drink

promotion. 2018. Available from: <https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/national-interim-guide-to-reduce-childrens-exposure-to-unhealthy-food-and-drink-promotion-2018>

<sup>7</sup> International Agency for Research on Cancer and World Health Organization. IARC Monographs evaluate consumption of red meat and

processed meat. 2015. Available from: [www.iarc.who.int/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/pr240\\_E.pdf](http://www.iarc.who.int/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/pr240_E.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Health of Children, Health Risk Factors, Nutrition. 2022. Available from:

[Health of children - Australian Institute of Health and Welfare \(aihw.gov.au\)](http://www.aihw.gov.au/health-of-children)

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