

Beverages



When menu planning, consider offering, selling, or serving nutritious foods from the "Serve Frequently" section most often and offering the "Serve Infrequently" foods less often. When offering foods from the "Serve Infrequently" foods, consider offering smaller serving sizes. Infrequently is defined as placed or occurring at wide intervals in space or time¹. This may look different between schools. For example, if offering a 4-week menu cycle, this could look like offering the food once or twice during the cycle. Schools are encouraged to plan meals and snacks to best meet the needs of their student population and determine when and where changes are possible.

Serve Frequently

- Water
- Unsweetened carbonated or still water
- Plain (unsweetened) pasteurized milk (0-2% MF)
- Plain (unsweetened) yogurt drinks (0-2% MF)
- Plain (unsweetened) kefir (0-2% MF)
- Plain (original or unsweetened) fortified plant-based beverages
- Fruit smoothies, with no added sugar (made from fresh, frozen or canned fruit mixed with plain (unsweetened), 0-2% MF, yogurt or milk and/or fortified plant-based beverage or plain water)

Serve Infrequently and in smaller serving sizes

- Beverages containing sugar substitutes
- Coffee, black tea (including iced tea, cold coffee beverages)*
- Flavoured waters with added sugars
- Fruit-flavoured drinks (e.g., lemonade), cocktails, punch
- Hot chocolate
- Milkshakes
- Slushy drinks
- Soft drinks
- Sport and/or electrolyte replacement drinks
- Sweetened milk
- Sweetened flavoured plant-based beverages ("original" may be offered)
- Vitamin fortified water
- 100% fruit juice

* Caffeine is not recommended for children under the age of 12. Even for youth over the age of 12, Health Canada's maximum recommended intake is quite low and equivalent to about 1 cup of coffee or less. Visit Health Canada's page on [Caffeine in Foods](#) to learn more. There is no need for sugar sweetened beverages to be offered, sold, or served in schools. These beverages contain little to no nutrients and contain high amounts of added sugar. Beverages high in sugar also increase the risk of cavities. Energy drinks are not recommended for children and teens because of the amount of caffeine, added sugars and other supplemental ingredients (like herbs and amino acids) they contain.