

# Choosing a new menu item

Schools

A little planning will go a long way to ensure you select the most appropriate, popular and cost-effective items for your food service menu.

Use the steps below to make the most of new items.

## Step 1

### Choose a healthy option

<p>Is the new food or drink classified as <b>Green (Everyday)</b> or <b>Amber (Select Carefully)</b>?</p> <p>Refer to the <u><a href="#">Canteens, Healthy Eating and Other Food Services</a></u> for information about the <b>Green (Everyday)</b>, <b>Amber (Select Carefully)</b> and <b>Red (Occasionally)</b> food and drink categories.</p>	<p>Over 50% of menu items should be <b>Green (Everyday)</b> and less than 50% of menu items should be <b>Amber (Select Carefully)</b>. <b>Red (Occasionally)</b> items should not be supplied on the regular school food service menu, and should not be provided more than twice per term.</p>
<p>Could the new item/s be made <b>Green-er</b>?</p>	<p>Try adding extra <b>Green (Everyday)</b> ingredients to serve the <b>Green-est</b> version possible.</p>

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## Step 2

### Include variety

Does your menu contain a variety of different healthy items in the hot foods, cold foods, snacks and drinks sections? E.g. at least two different options in each section.

Try to select new items that increase the variety of healthy options in each section of the menu.

## Step 3

### Offer something for all

Does your menu cater for a range of ages and appetite levels? E.g. primary and secondary students, physically active students and school staff.

Consider selling items in suitable sizes for different age groups and appetite levels.

Does your menu cater for special dietary requirements? E.g. halal, vegetarian, gluten free or lactose free.

Gather suggestions from the school community about the foods and drinks they would like to be available.



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## Step 4

### Be realistic

<p><b>Do you have the right equipment to prepare and store the new item?</b></p>	<p>Seek ways to use equipment you already have in multiple ways.</p>
<p><b>Do your staff and volunteers have the skills needed to prepare the new item?</b></p>	<p>Consider staff training by other staff, volunteers or parents.</p>
<p><b>Can you prepare the required quantity of the new item in time for the recess/lunch break?</b></p>	<p>Consider making in bulk and freeze in single serve portions to be thawed/reheated as needed.</p>
<p><b>Do you have the right equipment to prepare and store the new item?</b></p>	<p>Seek ways to use equipment you already have in multiple ways.</p>

## Step 5

### Is the price right?

<p><b>Is the selling price profitable? Use the Recipe costing template to work out a suitable selling price to cover costs and make a profit.</b></p>	<p>Use cheaper produce in season, or consider increasing the costs of a less healthy item to offset the gap.</p>
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## Step 6

### Selling and serving the item

<p>Will it be available over the counter, or will students need to pre-order?</p>	<p>Consider preparation time, packaging and how it will be served.</p>
<p>Is the new item likely to be on the regular menu, or sold as a 'one-off' for special events? E.g. theme days and sport days.</p>	<p>See Healthy school celebration ideas for lots of simple ideas to celebrate in fun and healthy ways.</p>
<p>Is the item suitable for the season? E.g. colder foods in summer, warmer foods in winter.</p>	<p>Decide when the item would be most in demand.</p>

## Step 7

### Review your checklist

<p>Review your answers above and decide if it is practical to introduce this new item.</p>	<p>Trial the item as a 'special' to test its popularity and gather feedback from the school community before placing it on the menu. Consider adapting the item to better suit your needs or introduce a different item.</p>
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## Step 8

### Trial and review successes

**Trials can be carried out:**

- by offering taste testing or special (discounted) deals
- during a number of lunch breaks or over a school term, and
- in different months of the year, as the season can affect an item's popularity.

Following a trial, gather feedback and amend the item to improve its popularity and success!