



Students' choices are influenced by the types of foods and beverages available, their taste and price.

School Vending Machines:

Steps to Meeting the Guidelines

Increasing access to healthy food and beverages enhances student learning, behaviour and health. *The Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools* (2007, Ministry of Education & Ministry of Health) have been created to guide decisions on food and beverage choices sold in BC schools. Here are some steps to help you provide healthy choices in your vending machines.

STEP 1:
Take stock of the choices in your vending machine(s).

Use the *Tool for Stocking Healthy Foods in Schools* to list the products currently stocked in your vending machine.

STEP 2:
Compare your products to the Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools.

Create a scorecard on the *Brand Name Food List* website which will provide you with the percentage of products from each choose category and the percentages recommended for schools.

It's expected that at least 50% of foods and beverages sold come from the *Choose Most* (CM) category and up to 50% from the *Choose Sometimes* (CS) category. This means if your vending machines have a total of 50 slots/options, at least 25 of the slots have to be *Choose Most* items, and the rest could be *Choose Sometimes* items.

If you do not find the food or beverage in the *Brand Name Food List*, you can submit it on-line or ask your vendor to submit it for ranking. On the website go to *Product List*, and click on *Submit an Item*. It may take up to two weeks for the item to be ranked and added to the product list.

STEP 3:
Develop a plan to ensure your vending machines meet the Guidelines.

Review the results of your scorecard and develop a plan to reach the standards set out in the *Guidelines*. The *Brand Name Food List* website can be used to generate a list of products that meet *Choose Most* or *Choose Sometimes* criteria. Make your choices from this list and provide them to your supplier to ensure that your vending machines meet the *Guidelines*.

PLANNING PROCESS TIPS:

The more people at your school that are committed to your school meeting the *Guidelines* the more likely you are to be successful.

- ✓ Establish a committee that includes a teacher, administrator, support staff, student and parent representation.
- ✓ Create connections with provincial and local supports.
- ✓ Centralize vending services through an RFP with your district and work with vendors to adapt current contracts.
- ✓ Educate students, staff and parents on the importance of healthy eating.



Vending machines are the primary source of nourishment for some students.

Some questions for your committee to consider are:

- ✓ Do you want to meet the minimum standards or exceed them?
- ✓ What strategies can you use to increase acceptance?
 - Since taste is a key factor, it's wise to get a group of students together to identify the *Choose Most* and *Choose Sometimes* products and flavours they like best. They also can provide tips on how you can make the switch easier for your school.
 - Offer *Choose Most* products at a lower price than *Choose Sometimes* products.
 - Promote *Choose Most* products by placing them at eye level or featuring them in promotional materials.
 - Engage parents in the discussion. Have your parent representative present at the next Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting or including an update in the parent newsletter.
- ✓ Who else should you connect with?
 - Contact Dial-A-Dietitian at 604.732.9191 Or toll-free at 1.800.667.3438 for information, advice and links to local support persons such as health and school district contacts.
- ✓ Can your current vending operator meet your needs, or do you need to check out other possibilities?
 - Current Contracts/Agreements - discuss with your vending operator how the contract can be amended to meet the *Guidelines*. The vending industry is encouraging their members to adapt current contracts to incorporate healthier choices. If your vendor cannot meet your needs, contact your School District's treasury staff to find out what your options are.
 - New Contracts/Agreements - larger schools or School Districts could consider putting out a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a vendor (see *Generic Template*). If it is not feasible for your school to use an RFP process, then ask vendors for a business proposal showing how they will meet the *Guidelines*. Here are some things you could ask for in writing prior to signing any agreement:
 - A chart (using the *Brand Name Food List* scorecard or *Appendix A*) for each machine they will operate showing what items they will stock, categorized according to the *Guidelines' Choose categories*, and then totalling the per cent (%) in each category for each machine and for all machines put together.
 - How will the vendor maintain and fill the machines?
 - Frequency of filling? During school hours?
 - Ensuring perishable products do not surpass "best before" dates?
 - Response time to breakdowns and problems?
 - Will the vendor operate the machine personally or subcontract?
 - Does advertising on the vendor's machine, uniform and delivery van reflect your school's goals and values? (e.g. No *Not Recommended* or *Choose Least* products advertised by name or logo).
 - How will the vendor report on sales?
 - Ideally your vendor will provide monthly or quarterly reports of what is sold. This makes it easy to track favourite items and fine-tune pricing strategies.



Large portions of food and beverages can promote overeating and contribute to obesity.

RESOURCES

- ✓ Brand Name Food List
www.brandnamefoodlist.ca
- ✓ Dial-a-Dietitian at 604.732.9191
(toll free in BC at 1.800.667.3438)
www.dialadietitian.org
- ✓ Guidelines for Food and Beverage Sales in BC Schools (2007, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health)
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/guidelines_sales07.pdf
- ✓ Ministry RFP Vending Services
- Generic Template and Appendix A
- Ministry of Education
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/hsnetwork/resources.htm
- ✓ Tool for Stocking Healthy Foods at School
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/health_publications.htm

An initiative of these BC Healthy Living Alliance members:

