



WHY CHANGE UP THE MENU?

A great education starts with kids having the energy and focus to learn at school. Boosting healthy and delicious food and drinks options at school can improve kids' concentration, mood, memory, learning, academic performance and mental wellbeing and give them the fuel they need to thrive.

Providing healthier food and drinks also helps to meet the Department of Education and Training's [School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy](#).

Making changes to your school canteen or tuckshop might seem overwhelming but there are small changes you can do to get started. You can 'Change up the menu' with the following smaller 'bite' sized actions:

- **Boost veggies and salad** – add salad and vegetables to at least half of canteen lunch menu options (hot and cold).
- **Skip the deep fryer** – swap fried foods for oven baked / air fried / toasted options (e.g. hot chips, crumbed chicken or fish).
- **Offer healthier pies and pastries** – offer healthier pies and pastries (where supply is available), limit the options (not more than three), and/or swap pies for quiches, frittatas and products with increased vegetable content.

The process is the same for each of the bites. You can try one 'bite' at a time or do them all at once. It's up to you. Whichever approach you take, this guide will support you through each step of the way.

BOOST VEGGIES AND SALAD – WHAT'S INVOLVED?

This bite is about adding veggies or salad to **at least half** of all lunch menu options (hot and cold). This could include:

- sandwiches and wraps
- burgers and rolls, including hot dogs
- salads
- baked potatoes
- sushi and rice paper rolls
- toasted sandwiches and jaffles
- pasta, rice and noodle dishes
- nachos and pizza
- soups.

To **boost veggies and salad**, follow our three simple steps:





STEP ONE: REVIEW

Start by reviewing how many lunch options are currently on offer in your canteen or your external food service if you don't have an on-site canteen.

Count how many include vegetables or salad. You should count those that include at least one vegetable or salad ingredient. Vegetables and salad include:

- fresh, frozen, canned (drained) or cooked vegetables (e.g. carrot, corn, pumpkin)
- leafy greens
- potato
- dry, canned or cooked beans or legumes (e.g. kidney beans, chickpeas or lentils).

Do not count garnishes or condiments as a vegetable (such as parsley on top of nachos, tomato sauce on a hot dog, spinach-flavoured pasta or tomato sauce/pasta sauce on a pizza base with no other vegetables included).



STEP TWO: PLAN

The next step involves planning how you will make the changes.

Try these simple ways to add vegetables and salad to popular lunch options.

Lunch options	Ideas for adding more veggies
Sandwiches, wraps, rolls or burgers	Include a few salad ingredients such as lettuce, tomato, onion, beetroot, grated carrot, roast pumpkin or capsicum.
Nachos	Add tomato salsa, kidney beans or Mexican beans, corn kernels, capsicum, and/or spinach.
Salads	Add more salads to the menu such as warm chicken salad, garden salad, Greek salad, roast vegetable salad, or pumpkin, beetroot and feta salad.
Skewers/kebabs	Serve chicken tenders or beef skewers with a side of vegetables (e.g. a cob of corn) or salad or add some vegetables to the skewers like capsicum.
Curry	Offer vegetarian options such as pumpkin and chickpea and serve with brown rice or flatbread.
Soups, casseroles or pasta dishes	Offer vegetable-based soups in winter with a bread roll. Add grated carrot and zucchini to pasta sauces such as Bolognese or add a small side salad to a hot dish like lasagne.
Sushi	Choose or make sushi options that include vegetables like cucumber, avocado or carrot.
Rice paper rolls	Offer vegetable-based options – ones that include grated carrot, zucchini or shredded cabbage.
Vegetarian dishes	Add in some hot vegetarian options such as vegetarian pizza, baked potatoes or vegetable lasagne.





Find out where your school buys its lunch options. It could be a local distributor, wholesaler or supermarket. If it is a local distributor or wholesaler contact them to discuss and determine healthier options the school can purchase.

- If there is a contract or agreement in place, discuss with the supplier what flexibility there is and how healthier options could be included in the existing contract.
- If the contract is set, you might need to wait to influence the contract when it comes time for renewal. Or consider using a different supplier that can offer the options you want.
- When ordering try to look for the product description or ingredients list to see whether the item has any vegetables and choose options that feature more than one vegetable, if possible.

PREPARING FOR CHANGE

Look for ways to engage your school community in making changes. Take opportunities to talk to families, staff, students, canteen staff and volunteers to get a sense of the 'appetite' for change and the best way to introduce changes. Involve the Parents and Friends Association, School Council, Sustainability Club or Wellbeing Committee if there is one. You can make changes all at once or use a gradual approach:

All at once involves making the changes overnight or all in one go. An ideal time to do this is at the beginning of a new school year or term. This is the quickest approach and usually works best if you are only introducing a few changes and when you know there is good support for change.

A gradual approach gives students more time to get used to the changes and an opportunity to try alternative options. It is often the more readily accepted option if you need to make lots of changes. There are three ways you could take a gradual approach:

1. Add frozen diced vegetables to commercial pasta meals before heating.
2. Top commercial pizzas like cheese and pepperoni with vegetables like capsicum, spinach and mushrooms before cooking.
3. Add a side salad to a hot dish.





STEP THREE: ACT

Now you've done all the groundwork, it's time to put it into action.

Here's a great example of boosting veggies and salad.

Vic Kids' College (P-12) reviewed the hot and cold lunch options on their canteen menu and found that only 38% (eight out of 22) of the options available included vegetables (see menu below, options without vegetables are highlighted in red). Next, they identified ways to add in more vegetables and salads to their canteen menu, so that at least half (50%) of the lunch menu has vegetables or salad. Vic Kids' College decided to make changes to their hot and cold lunch options.

Lunch Choices Menu BEFORE	Price (\$)
Hot Foods	
Burgers and rolls	
Hot dog with tomato sauce	
Hot chicken and gravy roll	
Beef burger with lettuce, tomato, beetroot and BBQ sauce	
Cheeseburger with beef, cheese and tomato sauce	
Pizza	
Margarita pizza	
Cheese and pepperoni pizza	
Hawaiian pizza	
Pasta / Rice / Noodle dishes	
Beef lasagna	3.00
Macaroni cheese	
Fried rice with ham	
Butter chicken with rice	
Cold Foods	
Salads	
Chicken Caesar salad	
Garden salad	
Sandwiches and wraps	
Cheese toasties	
Vegemite sandwich	
Egg and lettuce sandwich	
Roast chicken and cheese sandwich	
Ham and cheese sandwich	
Salad wrap	
Chicken sweet chilli wrap with lettuce, tomato, and mayo	
Sushi	
Tuna and avocado sushi	
Crispy chicken sushi	

Lunch Choices Menu AFTER	Price (\$)
Hot Foods	
Burgers and rolls	
Hot dog with tomato sauce	
Hot chicken and gravy roll	
Beef burger with lettuce, tomato, beetroot and BBQ sauce	
Cheeseburger with beef, cheese and tomato sauce	
Veggie burger with lettuce, cheese and chutney	
Pizza	
Margarita pizza	
Supreme pizza with pepperoni, cheese, capsicum, spinach, onion and olives	
Hawaiian pizza	
Pasta / Rice / Noodle dishes	
Beef lasagna with a side garden salad	3.00
Macaroni cheese	
Fried rice with ham	
Pork stir-fry with Singapore noodles	
Pumpkin and chickpea curry with rice	
Cold Foods	
Salads	
Chicken Caesar salad	
Garden salad	
Sandwiches and wraps	
Cheese, tomato and spinach toasties	
Vegemite sandwich	
Egg and lettuce sandwich	
Roast chicken and cheese sandwich	
Ham, cheese and tomato sandwich	
Salad wrap	
Chicken sweet chilli wrap with lettuce, tomato, and mayo	
Sushi	
Tuna and avocado sushi	
Crispy chicken sushi	
Rice paper rolls	
Tofu, carrot and avocado	
Chicken, carrot and cucumber	





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Now you've done all the groundwork, it's time to put it into action.

SUPPORTING SUCCESS

Think about the ways you can promote your new healthy options through the way they are placed, priced and promoted. You are more likely to have success by:

- **placing the meals containing vegetables or salad** in more prominent positions
- **promoting the meals containing vegetables or salad in meal deals with healthier drink options** e.g. chicken and salad wrap and flavoured mineral water (no sugar) for \$6
- **pricing healthier meals competitively so they are the cheaper choice** consider lowering the price of healthier options or increasing the price of less healthy options
- **promoting the benefits of healthier options through newsletters** and other regular communication channels
- **getting students involved in promoting the changes** by designing posters, menus, promotions, competitions and labelling.



Remember, this is just one of the 'bites' you can do to change up the menu. Check out ['Offer healthier pies and pastries'](#) and ['Skip the deep fryer'](#).





CELEBRATE

Great job! You've finished the 'Boost veggies and salad' bite for Vic Kids Eat Well. Make sure you share the good news with the whole school community and communicate how you will continue your great work in the other action areas of Vic Kids Eat Well.

FOR FURTHER HELP

Vic Kids Eat Well tech team

For advice or assistance regarding program support and delivery, setting engagement and website database issues

- 1300 18 57 25
- vickidseatwell@cancervic.org.au

Your local Health Promotion Officer

For on the ground support

Full name: _____

Job title: _____

Organisation: _____

Contact no. _____

Email: _____



If you are having trouble accessing this document, please email vickidseatwell@cancervic.org.au or call **1300 185 725**

Vic Kids Eat Well is supported by the Victorian Government, and is delivered by Cancer Council Victoria's Achievement Program, in partnership with Nutrition Australia's Healthy Eating Advisory Service

