



## 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 (no 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.

## SKIP THE DEEP FRYER – WHAT'S INVOLVED?

This bite involves swapping fried foods for oven baked/air fried/toasted options (e.g. hot chips, crumbed chicken or fish). When we talk about 'fried foods' we mean any of the following:

- hot chips
- wedges
- hash browns, tater tots/potato gems, potato cakes
- dim sims, spring rolls, Chiko rolls or wontons
- crumbed or battered meat products, such as chicken tenders or nuggets, fish fingers or fillets, chicken schnitzel and falafel.

To **skip the deep fryer**, follow our three simple steps:

**1. REVIEW**

**2. PLAN**

**3. ACT**

**CELEBRATE!**



## STEP ONE: REVIEW

Start by reviewing the deep-fried food options currently on offer in your canteen (or your external food service if you don't have an on-site canteen).

If any food items are deep-fried, note this down. This will help identify what foods should be swapped.



## STEP TWO: PLAN

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

There are many healthier cooking methods for these foods including:

- stir-fry
- steam
- boil
- grill and toast
- air-frying
- microwave
- roast or bake with minimal oil (e.g. using oil spray or brushing on oil).



You'll need to think about the cooking equipment your school has (e.g. air fryer, steamer, microwave, oven) and also consider the time implications of using different cooking methods. Here are some simple changes you can start with:

- bake or air-fry crumbed and coated foods such as fish fingers, chicken nuggets, wedges or hot chips
- bake spring rolls
- steam dim sims and wontons
- toast or grill falafel.



# 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** involves making changes gradually over time. This option gives students more time to get used to the changes and an opportunity to try alternative cooking methods before all deep-fried options are removed. It is often the more readily accepted option if you need to make lots of changes to the deep-fried food available. You may even consider removing any items which are not high sellers from the menu altogether.



## STEP THREE: ACT

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

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:

- **promoting the healthier hot foods in meal deals with healthier drink options** e.g. potato and vegetable frittata and flavoured milk (reduced fat) for \$5
- **pricing the healthier hot food options competitively so they are the cheaper choice** e.g. 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 '[Boost veggies and salad](#)' and '[Offer healthier pies and pastries](#)'.





## CELEBRATE

Great job! You've finished the 'Skip the deep fryer' 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](mailto: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](mailto: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 National Nutrition Foundation's Healthy Eating Advisory Service*

