

# Classification of Food Items for School Lunch

## Guidelines on Use

The committee- or teacher-in-charge of school lunch arrangement is recommended to follow the steps described in this document when they conduct preview of school lunch menus submitted by lunch suppliers. Findings should then be communicated to the lunch suppliers to improve the menus and make students' lunches more healthy.

### Steps:

#### **I. Remove “red light” food items**

Exclude all “Strongly Discouraged Food Items” from the lunch menu so that ALL lunch sets do not contain such “red light” food items. For details of classification, please refer to pages 40-41 of *Nutritional Guidelines on Lunch for Students*.

“Red light” food items that are often overlooked include:

- Sauce / Gravy (e.g. curry sauce / Portuguese style sauce made with coconut milk and white sauce made with cream)
- Food items that have been deep-fried in the production process (e.g. fish curd, e-fu noodles and deep-fried bean curd sticks)
- Food items that contain trans fat (e.g. flaky bread)

#### **II. Pay attention to frequency of use of “yellow light” food items in a week**

Identify “Limited Food Items” (“yellow light” food items) and make sure that these food items are provided for not more than two school days per week. For details of classification of these food items, please refer to pages 38-39 of *Nutritional Guidelines on Lunch for Students*.

#### **III. Check frequency of use of “green light” food items**

Depending on the serving of grains at school,

- **if more than one type of grains is provided a day**, “Encouraged Food Items” (“green light” food items) should be provided in at least one lunch set every day;
- **if only one type of grains is provided a day**, “Encouraged Food Items” should be provided on at least two school days per week.

For details of classification of these food items, please refer to page 37 of *Nutritional Guidelines on Lunch for Students*.

Category	Criterion	Examples
<b>Encouraged Food Items<sup>1</sup></b> > If more than one type of grains is provided a day, these food items should be provided in <u>at least one lunch set every day</u> . > If only one type of grains is provided a day, these food items should be provided on at least two school days per week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grains should contain at least 10% of whole grains or added vegetables, excluding potatoes, sweet potatoes, nuts and seeds (e.g. flaxseed and sesame)</li> </ul>	Red rice, brown rice, rice added with leafy vegetables/corn kernels/mushroom/carrot/pumpkin/barley, mixed grains rice, wholemeal bread, buckwheat noodles, spinach noodles, tri-colour fusilli, and quinoa
<b>Limited Food Items</b> > To be provided for <u>not more than two school days in a week with 4-5 school days</u> . > These food items should <u>not be provided for more than one school day in a week with only 2-3 school days</u> . > These food items <u>should not be provided in a week with only 1 school day</u> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grains with added fat and oil</li> </ul>	Fried rice <sup>2</sup> , fried noodles <sup>2</sup> , Yu-Mein noodles, and pizza (without using “red light” food items as ingredients)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fatty cut of meat and poultry with skin</li> </ul>	Beef belly, beef ribs, spare ribs, pork jowl, pork cartilage, chicken or duck or goose with skin (e.g. chicken wings, drumstick, chicken thigh, except chicken paw <sup>5</sup> )
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full-fat dairy products</li> </ul>	Full-fat milk, full-fat cheese, full-fat yoghurt, and all kinds of evaporated milk (including reduced-fat evaporated milk)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Processed or preserved meat, egg and vegetable products</li> </ul>	Egg tofu, BBQ pork, bacon, smoked duck breast, ham, sausage, luncheon meat, beef ball, white fish ball, mushroom and pork ball, preserved mustard green, pickled cucumber, fermented black soybean, textured vegetable protein, crab stick, soybean curd slab cooked with spices, ready-to-eat dim sum (e.g. siu mai, bun with meat and vegetables, steamed beef ball and steamed dumpling in Chiuchow style), tuna fish canned in oil, canned soup, chikuwa, marinated egg, ready-made burger patty, and salt baked chicken
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sauce or gravy with high sugar, salt or fat content<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>	<b>Gravy or sauce:</b> fermented black bean sauce, teriyaki sauce, Swiss sauce, ketchup, white sauce or carbonara sauce (made with full-fat milk or all kinds of evaporated milk), Portuguese style sauce or curry sauce (made with full-fat milk or all kinds of evaporated milk), Chinese marinade, red fermented soybean curd, fermented soybean curd, miso sauce, belachan, shrimp paste, chu hou sauce, soy sauce, preserved plum, miso, chili bean sauce, BBQ sauce, satay, sa cha sauce, sweet and sour sauce, and zhajiang sauce
<b>Strongly Discouraged Food Items</b> > Not to be provided in <u>ANY</u> lunch sets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deep-fried food items</li> </ul>	Deep-fried pork chop, French fries, deep-fried drumstick, spring roll, deep-fried dumpling with curry stuff, fried bean curd puff, fried fish ball, fried gluten, fried bean curd stick, fried fish fillet, fried fish curd, fried peanuts, e-fu noodles, food items containing deep-fried wheat dough stick (e.g. glutinous rice roll with fried fritter), fried bean curd, and deep-fried chicken paw <sup>5</sup>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food items with added animal fat or plant-based saturated fat</li> </ul>	<b>Oil/fat:</b> butter (including reduced-fat butter), lard, cream (including reduced-fat cream), palm oil, and coconut oil <b>Food items:</b> pineapple bun (with butter), pineapple bun, cocktail bun or loaf (bun with a filling made with sugar and shredded coconut), egg tart (short crust), egg tart, cookies, egg roll, sandwich biscuit, croissant, butter roll (with added butter), other food items made with coconut milk, scone and muffin <b>Sauce:</b> white sauce or carbonara sauce (made with cream), Portuguese style sauce or curry or satay sauce (made with coconut milk)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food items with added trans fat</li> </ul>	<b>Food items added with the following oils:</b> hydrogenated vegetable oil; margarine and vegetable shortening with trans fat added
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Beverages in the category of “Snacks to Choose Less”<sup>4</sup></li> </ul>	Soft drinks, fruit drinks, fruit juices with added sugar, yoghurt drinks, probiotic drinks, Tetra-Pak lemon tea or chrysanthemum tea or Chinese herbal tea, sports drink, and green tea
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food items with very high salt content</li> </ul>	Salted fish, salted egg, Chinese preserved sausage, Chinese preserved meat, food items containing preserved meat (e.g. sticky rice wrapped in lotus leaf, turnip cake, and taro cake), and Jinhua ham

1. Since school children have a high calcium need for their growth and development, lunch suppliers are encouraged to use calcium-rich ingredients. However, as there are only limited calcium-rich ingredients suitable for the production of lunch box, parents should provide children with calcium-rich food outside the lunch hour.  
 2. Rice and noodles added with more than 2 teaspoons of oil per serving per person during food preparation and cooking processes.  
 3. It is recommended that sauce or gravy with high sugar, salt or fat content should be served sparingly and separately.

4. For beverage examples of “Snacks to Choose Less”, please refer to *Nutritional Guidelines on Snacks for Students*.  
 5. Chicken paw (both non-fried and deep-fried) is categorised as “Strongly Discouraged Food Items” due to the high percentage of fat content.