

Drinks in the canteen

Most school canteens sell a range of drinks. Often sold on their own or as part of a meal deal or combo. Choosing right drinks for your school can be tricky.

Drinks in the market place

There are over 30,000 items sold in most supermarkets in Australia with new products hitting the shelves each week. New technology coupled with consumer demand leads to new product development by food industry. Sometimes this is positive and has strong links to public health e.g. adding folate to cereals or ensuring plant based milks (e.g. soy) are fortified with calcium.

However, the vast range of beverages on the market is extraordinary! Many are high energy and sugar content and have very little or no nutritional benefit. According to the Australian Dietary Guidelines, we should choose water and plain reduced fat milk as every day drinks; whilst small serves of 99% fruit juices can be consumed occasionally. Other drinks are not necessary and can be detrimental to health.



What's all the fizz about?

Carbonated fruit juices are the new kid on the block and understandably many consumers are confused about what they are. Carbonated fruit juices are simply fruit juice with air bubbles or carbonation added, as stated above this does not change the nutrition profile of the drink.

There has been speculation that the added carbonation in these drinks can have a negative effect on dental health however research suggests that it is the acidic content of the juice that effect tooth enamel rather than the carbonation process. So just like other 99% juices they should be consumed in moderation. Many schools choose to restrict the sale of carbonated juices based on the perception that they are marketed like a soft drink or energy drink. Using them as a drink for special events (e.g. disco, fundraiser, meal deal/theme day) rather than a staple canteen drink item is a great option.

The squeeze on juice

99% fruit juice	Fruit juice, made with 99% juice and in small serves (e.g. 250mL) is considered an occasional choice. Fruit juice is a concentrated product which contains naturally occurring sugar (fructose); it does not contain added sugar and is a good source of vitamin C and other nutrients. However, it often lacks the fibre found in fruit and can be easily over-consumed, hence the recommendation to limit its intake	Approved for sale in school canteens
Fruit drink: less than 99% juice	Fruit drinks contain approximately 35-96% juice and added sugar or artificial sweetener. They are generally limited in other nutrients, making them unhealthy choices	Not approved for sale in school canteens
Carbonated juice	Refer to the above – it's all about the % of juice. Carbonation simply means air/bubbles have been added. This does not change the nutritional profile (see below for more information)	Approved for sale in most school canteens
Water flavoured with fruit juice	Flavoured water potentially displaces the consumption of plain water. They generally contain fruit juice and/or added sugar/sweeteners	Not approved for sale in school canteens

Drinks in the canteen

Canteens are required to follow their State/Territory policy and guidelines. In most jurisdictions the following is a good guide to drinks.



Green – everyday choices

- Plain water
- Plain reduced fat milk
- Reduced fat flavoured milk, small serve size



Amber – select carefully or restrict

- Plain full fat milk
- Reduced fat flavoured milk, large serve size
- 99% Fruit juice, small serve



Red – off the menu

- Soft drinks
- Energy drinks
- Flavoured water
- Sports drinks
- Large fruit juice; and less than 99% juice

Sources:

www.eatforhealth.gov.au

<https://livelighter.com.au/The-Facts/About-Sugary-Drinks>

<http://www.dental.wa.gov.au/info/index.php>