

# Making Healthy Choices Easy Choices

## Alberta Nutrition Guidelines For Children and Youth

### What Are They?

The goal of Alberta Nutrition Guidelines for Children and Youth (ANG) is to help organizations provide healthy food choices to young people wherever they go. The aim is to increase availability and appeal of healthier food choices, to teach and model healthy eating behaviours and to promote overall health.<sup>1</sup>

### Why do we need them?

- More than one in four Alberta children and youth are overweight. Being overweight increases risk of chronic disease.<sup>2</sup>
- More and more children are eating outside the home so it is important to offer healthy food choices everywhere.
- Good nutrition helps children grow, learn, stay healthy and be active.

### What will I find in the guidelines?

The Guidelines offer general nutrition recommendations to make the healthy choice the easy choice. Foods are divided into three categories; Choose Most Often, Choose Sometimes, and Choose Least Often.

**Choose Most Often** – food closer to their “natural state”; low fat, adequate fibre, low salt.

Examples:

- fresh fruits and vegetables
- 100% juice
- whole grain products
- low fat milk, cheese, yogurt
- lean meats, eggs, nut butters, tofu, legumes

**Choose Sometimes** – provide some good nutrition but have added salt, fat and/or sugar.

Examples:

- salted nuts
- some refined grain products (white bread, white rice)
- higher fat and/or higher sugar dairy products
- processed meats

**Choose Least Often** – high calorie, low nutrient foods.

Examples:

- chips, sugary cereal, cookies, chocolate bars
- candy, ice cream
- pastry, doughnuts
- pop, energy drinks, fruit flavoured drinks

### How can I help?

Find out what your school is doing to promote healthy eating, and be supportive

### How can I learn more?

The detailed Guidelines are available at each school and at [www.healthyalberta.ca](http://www.healthyalberta.ca). For more information, contact your school's public health nurse.

<sup>1</sup> Government of Alberta, 2008

<sup>2</sup> Southern Alberta Child and Youth Health Network, 2006