

Seasonal Menu (Winter)

Preface:

Balanced diet is an important foundation for establishing children's health, while schools are important places for nurturing and developing children's healthy eating habits from their early ages. In this context, the Department of Health encourages all pre-primary institutions to design menus with reference to the "Nutrition Guidelines for Children Aged 2 to 6" under the "StartSmart@school.hk" Campaign, so as to make campus environment friendly towards healthy diets and to make the diets of pre-primary pupils conforming to the "3 Low 1 High" (i.e. low fat/oil, low salt, low sugar and high dietary fibre) healthy eating principle.

Winter is forthcoming so what shall we consider when designing healthful and seasonal menus? Let us take a look at the distinctive examples below:

1. To maximise the benefits of winter climate, seasonal vegetables such as lotus roots, radishes, baby pak choys, Chinese kales, Shanghai cabbages, and cucumbers should be added to enhance the flavours and nutrients of dishes.
2. Besides fruit and bread, healthful and hot snacks like boiled corns, boiled sweet potatoes, and congee should also be served to keep body warm under cold conditions.
3. No single food can satisfy all the nutritional needs of pre-primary children. It is therefore recommended to increase menu varieties to allow the children to obtain all the nutrients they need:

Do not repeat ingredients in a week as far as practicable	Cook main meals with types of and cooking methods	Eat noodle or pasta once a week
Try your best not to repeat the ingredient combinations in the breakfasts, lunches, and dinners within a week. Meanwhile, add different types (melons or gourds, leaf vegetables, beans, etc.) and colours of vegetables to improve dish flavours and attractiveness.	Cook your main meals with different meats and alternatives, such as pork, chicken, fish, egg and plain soybean products. Meanwhile, adopt different low-fat cooking methods, such as steaming, braising, boiling, blanching, and sautéing to enhance the variety of dishes.	Replace rice with noodle or pasta like spaghetti, gemelli, and macaroni in a main meal once a week (e.g. Friday) in order to make meals more diversified and appealing.

4. Use natural and fresh spices, such as garlic, spring onion, onion, a small pinch of pepper, lemon, and herbs to substitute ready-made seasonings and sauces high in sodium. By doing so, dishes can be made healthier and tastier.
5. Sauce or gravy can be made with fresh vegetables and fruit, e.g. tomato paste (Bolognese with red kidney beans), pumpkin juice (Chicken filets cooked with onions and pumpkin), and corn sauce (Fish filets in corn sauce). All these are healthful and delectable.
6. The following menus are designed in accordance with the recommendations from the “Healthy Eating Food Pyramid” supplying all food categories required by pre-primary children, so as to ensure balanced nutrition.

To learn more about the recommendations on healthful food ingredients and cooking methods, please refer to the “Nutrition Guidelines for Children Aged 2 to 6” under the “StartSmart@school.hk” Campaign <http://startsmart.gov.hk/files/pdf/nutritional-chi-c.pdf>

Example of Winter Menu

Week One	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Oatmeal with red dates in low-fat milk ^③	Oat bread ^④ + Low-fat milk	Vermicelli with cabbage and shredded pork in soup ^⑤	Groat congee with lettuce and fish paste ^⑤	Steamed Chinese bun ^④ + Low sugar soy milk with added calcium
Morning Snacks	Orange	Apple	Dragon Fruit	Banana	Kiwifruit
Lunch	Stir-fried chicken fillets with zucchini and black fungi + Tianjin cabbage in broth ^①	Stewed radish with fish floss + Stir-fried spinach	Steamed egg custard with dried whitebaits + Stir-fried Chinese kale	Assorted vegetables and tofu hotpot + Stir-fried lily with lotus root slices	Bolognese with red kidney beans + Blanched seasonal vegetables
Afternoon Tea ^⑥	Peanut butter sandwich ^④	Pumpkin peanuts congee ^{② ⑤}	Steamed Chinese bun ^④ + Low-sugar soy milk with added calcium	Mashed potato with low fat milk	Boiled Corns
Week Two	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Oatmeal with raisins and low fat milk ^③	Corn flakes + Low-fat milk	Shanghai noodles with zucchini and minced meat ^⑤	Congee with fungi and fish pastes ^⑤	Steamed bun ^④ + Low-sugar soy milk with added calcium
Morning Snacks	Seedless grapes	Mandarin	Apple	Papaya	Pear

Lunch	Fish fillets in corn sauce②+Stir-fried cucumber with chopped garlic	Stir-fried assorted beans with eggs+Braised Baby cabbage in broth①	Steamed tofu with shiitake mushroom and fish paste+stir-fried choy sum	Stir-fried beef with fresh Chinese yam and black fungi+Blanched pak choy	Fusilli with assorted bell peppers and shredded chicken②+Blanched seasonal vegetables
Afternoon Tea⑥	Peanut butter sandwich④	Brown rice congee with tomatoes and minced meat ⑤	Steamed bun④+ Low-sugar soy milk with added calcium	Sandwich with low-fat cheese④	Boiled sweet potato
Week Three	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Oatmeal with Chinese wolfberry in low-fat milk③	Steamed bun④ + Low-fat milk	Alphabet pasta with assorted beans and diced chicken⑤	Congee with cabbage and dried whitebaits⑤	Sweet bun④ + Low-sugar soymilk with added calcium
Morning Snacks	Orange	Apple	Dragon fruit	Banana	Kiwifruit
Lunch	Steamed egg custard with vermicelli and minced meat + Stir-fried Shanghai cabbage	Braised tofu with assorted mushrooms+Stir-fried lily and celery	Steamed minced pork with shiitake mushrooms, diced lotus roots and oats +Stir-fried Indian lettuce	Chicken filets cooked with onion and pumpkin + Tianjin cabbage in broth①	Spaghetti with tomato paste and fish filets+Blanched seasonal vegetables
Afternoon Tea⑥	Peanut butter sandwich④	Groat congee with lettuce and fish paste⑤	Steamed bun④+Low-sugar soymilk with added calcium	Mashed potato with low-fat milk	Boiled corn
Week Four	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Oatmeal with raisins in low fat milk③	Cornflakes + Low fat milk	Soba with assorted mushrooms and fresh tofu skin⑤	Brown rice congee with shiitake mushrooms and chicken⑤	Sweet bun④+Low-sugar soymilk with added calcium
Morning Snacks	Seedless grapes	Mandarin	Apple	Papaya	Pear
Lunch	Pan-fried tofu with spring onions+Blanched choy sum	Stir-fried assorted bell peppers with shredded beef② + Watercress in broth①	Braised chicken with onion and chestnuts+Stir-fried green beans	Eggplants stuffed with fish paste+Blanched broccoli	Macaroni with stir-fried egg, corns and minced meat② + Blanched seasonal vegetables
Afternoon Tea⑥	Peanut butter sandwich④	Congee with black fungi and minced meat⑤	Oat bread④+Low-sugar soymilk with added calcium	Sandwich with low-fat cheese④	Boiled sweet potato

Remarks:

Half-day pre-primary institutions can supply snacks to children with reference to this example:

One to two servings of grains, half serving of fruit or one serving of dairy product.

EatSmart tips on “Less salt and less sugar”:

- ❶ Using the home-made vegetables soup to replace the ready-made soup containing higher salt content can reduce the salt intake while maintaining the savory of the dish.
- ❷ Cooking with pumpkins, corn kernels and mixed peppers can reduce the use of salt and sugar.
- ❸ Adding raisins, Chinese wolfberry or dates to oatmeal can reduce the use of sugar while maintaining the tastiness of the dish.
- ❹ Prepare breakfasts and afternoon teas with food such as sandwiches, small buns or steamed buns instead of cakes that are high in sugar and fat.
- ❺ Adding a variety of vegetables to congee and soup noodle can enhance the tastiness of the dish and reduce the use of the salt..
- ❻ Serve plain water as the main drink, instead of beverages containing higher sugar content such as instant malted drinks, and juice with added sugar.

