

Seasonal Menu (Autumn)

Introduction:

Balanced diet lays an important foundation to the health of children while schools can serve as important breeding grounds for nurturing children's healthy eating habits. 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 create a campus environment friendly towards healthy diets and facilitate pre-primary pupils to observe the "3 Low 1 High" (i.e. low fat/oil, low salt, low sugar and high dietary fibre) healthy eating principle.

Autumn is around the corner so what shall we consider when designing a healthful and seasonal menu? Let us take a look at the distinctive examples below:

1. No single food can satisfy all the nutritional needs of pre-primary children. It is therefore recommended not to repeat the combinations of food ingredients in the breakfasts, lunches and afternoon teas within a week. By doing so, we can not only increase menu varieties but also allow children to absorb nutrition more comprehensively.
2. Choose a variety of food ingredients. Prepare proper meals with different meats, such as pork, poultry, fish, egg and original flavoured soy products, by practising low fat cooking, such as steaming, stewing, boiling, blanching and sautéing.
3. As seasons change, swap in your seasonal picks such as Chinese kale, Chinese spinach, Shanghai cabbage, loofah, cucumber and taro to enhance dish flavours and make the nutrition of your dish more balanced.
4. To enhance dish flavours, season your dishes with more natural spices such as garlic, spring onion, onion, small amount of pepper, lemon and herbs.

5. Food thickeners can be made with fresh vegetables and fruit. For instance, sauce made with tomato juice, pumpkin juice and corn juice can effectively enhance the flavours of dishes.
6. When having an afternoon tea, healthful and convenient snacks other than fruit, such as sandwiches, buns, blanched corn kernels, boiled sweet potatoes and boiled baby taros, can also be served to replace high sugar and fat snacks like cakes and coconut tarts.
7. In accordance with the recommendations from the “food pyramid”, this menu is designed to supply all food categories needed by pre-school children to ensure balance diet is attained.

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

https://www.startsmart.gov.hk/files/pdf/nutritional_guide_en.pdf

Example of Autumn Menu

Week One	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Low fat cheese and tomato sandwich ^④	Steamed Chinese bun ^④ + Low sugar soy milk with added calcium	Oatmeal with low fat milk and date ^③	Oat bread ^④ + Low fat milk	Macaroni with lettuce and beef
Morning Snacks	Dragon Fruit	Orange	Apple	Banana	Pear
Lunch	Stir-fried shredded meat with hairy melon and shredded shitake mushroom + Blanched choy sum	Stir-fried string beans with chicken filets + Tianjin cabbage in soup ^①	Stewed radish with fish floss + Stir-fried Chinese kale	Steamed egg custard with corn and minced meat ^② + Stir-fried cabbage	Assorted beans cooked with tofu + Blanched seasonal vegetables
Afternoon Tea ^⑥	Sweet potato soup (less sugar)	Pumpkin peanuts congee ^②	Peanut butter sandwich ^④	Boiled baby taro	Mashed potato with low fat milk
Week Two	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Shanghai noodles with cabbage and shredded egg	Corn flakes + Low fat milk	Oatmeal with raisins and low fat milk ^③	Sweet bun ^④ + Low sugar soy milk with added calcium	Conchiglie with bok Choy and chicken
Morning Snacks	Grapes	Kiwifruit	Papaya	Apple	Mandarin
Lunch	Stir-fried tri-coloured peppers with chicken filets ^② + Chinese spinach in soup ^①	Steamed fish with shredded pumpkin and chopped garlic ^② + Stir-fried Chinese kale	Pan-fried egg with carrot and onion + Blanched seasonal vegetables	Tofu cooked with straw mushroom and beef + Stir-fried choy sum	Meat floss with eggplant + Blanched lettuce

Afternoon Tea ⑥	Small bun④ + Low sugar soy milk with added sugar	Congee with tomato and minced meat	Peanut butter sandwich④	Blanched corn kernels	Piggy bun with jam⑤ + Low fat milk
Week Three	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Sandwich with low fat cheese and cucumber④	Steamed bun④ + Low sugar soy milk with added calcium	Oatmeal with low fat milk and dates③	Peanut buttered bun + Low fat milk	Macaroni with eggplant and minced meat
Morning Snacks	Apple	Orange	Grapes	Dragon fruit	Star fruit
Lunch	Fish filet with white sauce (low fat milk) and mushroom + Stir-fried Shanghai cabbage	Steamed egg custard with Japanese sardines + Stir-fried broccoli	Steamed tofu with shitake mushroom and shredded chicken + Stir-fried choy sum	Pork chop with onion and tomato + Tianjin Cabbage in soup①	Stir-fried baby corn with chicken filets + Blanched seasonal vegetables
Afternoon Tea ⑥	Red bean sweet soup (less sugar)	Congee with pumpkin and groats②	Boiled Sweet potato	Blanched corn kernels	Mashed potato with low fat milk
Week Four	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Breakfast	Soba with fungi and fresh bamboo shoots	Cornflakes + Low fat milk	Oatmeal with low fat milk⑤	Oat bread with raisins + Low sugar soy milk with added calcium	Conchiglie with hairy melon and beef
Morning Snacks	Orange	Banana	Apple	Kiwifruit	Pomelo
Lunch	Stir-fried tomato with minced meat and egg + Stir-fried choy sum	Stuffed tofu with fish paste + Stir-fried bok choy with chopped garlic	Stir-fried tri-coloured peppers with shredded pork② + Chinese spinach in soup①	Stir-fried French beans with chicken filets + Blanched seasonal vegetables	Stir-fried broccoli with fish filets + Blanched lettuce

Afternoon Tea⑥	Small bun④ + Low sugar soy milk with added calcium	Congee with shitake mushroom and minced meat	Blanched corn kernels	Boiled sweet potato	Oat bread④ + Low fat milk
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Remarks:

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

One to two servings of grains and cereals, half serving of fruit or one serving of milk product.

EatSmart tips on “Less salt and less sugar”:

1. The soup should be home made with vegetables for substituting ready-made soup containing higher salt content. Through this, less salt intake can be achieved while maintaining the savory of the dish.
2. Cooking with pumpkins, corn kernels and coloured peppers can enhance dish colours, aromas and flavours. It can also reduce the use of salt and sugar.
3. Using low fat milk with original flavoured raisins or dates in replacement of the commonly used condensed milk or evaporated milk can reduce fat and sugar intake while maintaining the tastiness of the dish.
4. 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.
5. Use jam prepared without added sugar only.
6. While eating snacks, drink water instead of beverages containing higher sugar content such as instant malted barley and wheat drinks, and juice with added sugar.

☰ For recipe details, please visit this webpage: http://startsmart.gov.hk/files/pdf/lunch_and_soup_recipes_for_preschool_children_tc.pdf