

Healthy Meals in Preschools Programme (HMPP) FAQ

Updated as of: 20 June 2023

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Cooked Food or Snack

Wholegrains

1.1 Can we serve macaroni for lunch? It's hard to find wholegrain macaroni.

Preschool may serve macaroni for lunch. If preschool is not able to get wholegrain macaroni easily, it is advised to buy other type of pasta such as spaghetti, penne, fusilli etc.

1.2 How many times per week we can serve macaroni?

For noodles without WG alternatives readily available (e.g. macaroni, ABC pasta, ban mian, glass noodles/sweet potato noodles) we will provisionally allow it to be served once a week.

1.3 Do all noodles need to be 100% wholemeal?

For oriental noodles, such as bee hoon, kuey teow, yellow noodles etc, **only** wholegrain noodles can be served. As such wholegrain oriental noodles cannot be mixed with non-wholegrain noodles.

While for **non-oriental** noodle, such as spaghetti, macaroni, etc, preschool can mix normal non-oriental noodle with at least 20% of the wholegrain version.

1.4 Can we use wholegrain pasta that is not HCS-endorsed?

Preschool can use wholegrain pasta that is not endorsed with Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS), provided the wholegrain pasta meets the “wholegrain” requirements of HCS, which are $\geq 2\text{g}/100\text{g}$ fat, $\leq 120\text{mg}/100\text{g}$ sodium, $\geq 3\text{g}/100\text{g}$ of dietary fibre and 100% wholegrains. When pasta is served, at least 20% of wholegrain (WG) pasta shall be mixed with other pasta of choice. Rationale is that WG pasta is usually made with 100% WG flour, hence 20% is sufficient unlike for oriental noodles. Unlike oriental noodles, WG pasta is usually made of 100% WG flour. Hence incorporating 20% of WG pasta will be sufficient.

1.5 Can we serve oriental noodle?

When oriental noodles are served (e.g. bee hoon, kway teow, yellow noodles, mee tai mak, egg noodles, laksa noodles, instant noodles, ban mian, etc), only wholegrain (WG) oriental noodles shall be used. No mixing of WG and non-WG oriental noodles as the wholemeal flour content of WG noodles is usually quite low (~15%), hence we want to ensure that children can obtain a sufficient amount of wholegrains from noodle consumption, and build up their preference for WG noodles from young.

1.6 If the noodle is served as side dish, is it must be wholegrain as well?

The guideline for wholegrain (WG) noodles is only applicable when it is served as a main carbohydrate source during lunch. If the preschool serves macaroni/ ABC pasta/ other non-WG noodles during breakfast or tea break, or as a side dish (e.g. small amounts of tang hoon in soup), they are exempted from the guideline.

1.7 Can you list out the common example of wholegrain noodle?

There are a lot of wholegrain noodle, you can refer to the supplier list here ([link](#)).

Fruit

2.1 If fruits can be served at any time, does this mean we do not need to serve fruit with every meal?

Fruits can be served at any time of the day as long as it meets the HMPP requirement.

2.2 Do we need to serve fruit together with lunch?

Same as point 2.1

2.3 Can we use salt to soak the fruits and vegetables to prevent oxidation (browning)?

The use of salt to soak the fruits and vegetables to prevent oxidation (browning) is not encouraged. Preschools can consider using vinegar such as apple cider.

2.4 Can dried fruits counted as the fruit servings?

Canned fruits are not allowed to replace fresh fruit serving because they are usually preserved and higher in sugar.

If dried fruit is served, it must be plain, unflavoured, uncoated version (e.g. dried fruit with chocolate coating is **not** allowed) and limit to twice a week.

2.5 Why does the weight of serving size of fruits differ for different fruits?

The provision of fruit required under HMPP guideline is at least half a serving. The weight of the fruit is dependent on the type of fruit being served.

Generally, the serving size of a fruit is determined based on international standards by nutrition experts; taking into consideration the nutrient content of the fruit and nutritional requirement of the population before determining the recommended weight for 1 serve.

We can refer to the respective serving size of fruit on Healthhub:

<https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/56/fruits-and-veggies>

2.6 Our preschool serve fruit before lunch, will we be penalised if fruit is not served during lunch?

We will not penalise the school if sufficient fruits (at least 32.5g per child) are served during other times.

Vegetables

3.1 Can we serve raw vegetables such as cucumbers or carrots?

The preschools may check with Spore Food Authority on food safety regulation on handling raw food products.

3.2 How do we demonstrate embracing diversity in our meals? While I understand the need to be safe, some preschools have children whose diet includes salads.

Preschools may check with Spore Food Authority on food safety regulation on handling raw food products.

3.3 Would the nutrients from vegetables be lost if we fully cook them?

Cooking of vegetables will inevitably destroy some heat-sensitive vitamins such as vitamin B and C. However, we do not recommend serving uncooked or raw vegetables to children due to food safety concern. Schools may adopt cooking methods as such blanching, steaming or light stir-frying to retain most of its nutrients. Overall, having a balanced meal according to My Healthy Plate will also help to ensure sufficient nutrients intake.

3.4 What are the common vegetables?

All vegetables except starchy vegetables (e.g. corn, potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, yam, lotus root, butternut squash, cassava, burdock root) are recommended. The common vegetables served in preschools include broccoli, chye sim, carrot, tomatoes, etc.

3.5 What are considered starchy vegetables and why they are not considered as part of the vegetables serving under HMPP guidelines?

The example of starchy vegetables are corn, potato, pumpkin, sweet potato, yam, lotus root, butternut squash, cassava, burdock root.

3.6 Do we count black fungus and mushroom as vegetables?

Botanically, black fungus and mushroom are considered as fungi, but will be considered as vegetables under HMPP guidelines.

3.7 Is winter melon a starchy vegetable?

Winter melon is not considered a starchy vegetable because the starch content is not as high as the ones mentioned in 3.4. It comprises high percentage of water too.

3.8 Is potato counted as carbohydrates?

Potato or sweet potato is high in starch; hence it is considered a source of carbohydrate.

3.9 We understand that starchy vegetables are not considered as vegetables, but can you list out the examples of starchy vegetables?

Examples of starchy vegetables are pumpkin, potato, sweet potato, yam, lotus root, butternut squash, cassava, burdock root, peas without pod or skin, chick pea, and corn.

3.10 Is seaweed considered as vegetables?

Seaweed without additional seasoning, and not preserved is considered as vegetables.

3.11 Is tomato considered as fruits or vegetables?

Botanically, tomatoes, cucumbers, zucchini, bell pepper are considered as fruits, but will be considered as vegetables under HMPP guidelines.

3.12 Legumes and pea are considered as vegetables?

Legumes e.g. pea are considered as protein sources as they are higher in protein and lower in fibre. They are not considered as vegetables.

Protein (Meat and Others)

4.1 Can we use thigh meat without skin and fat?

It is recommended to use breast meat as it is lower in fat content, however preschools are allowed to use thigh meat provided the skin and fat are removed before cooking and shall not be deep fried.

4.2 Is it okay to serve children fish instead of meat for all their meals?

We encourage preschools to serve a variety of meat and others (including fish and meat) as part of a balanced and healthy diet.

4.3 Can we serve hotdog to children?

Only hotdog with HCS or HCS equivalent is acceptable as long as it is not deep fried. However, preschools are encouraged to use fresh meat over processed meats like hotdogs due to their higher saturated fat and sodium content.

4.4 We have a vegan child, can we serve mock meat?

Mock meat with HCS or HCS equivalent is allowed and preschools should not deep-fry it but may use healthier cooking methods such as stir-fry, bake or grill.

4.5 Is whole chicken (skin, bones, meat) allowed to be used for cooking soup stock? The excess fat and oil (floated to the top) will be skimmed off once the soup has cooled down.

Yes, using whole chicken is allowed as it is a natural way to flavour soup stock. It is also a good practice to remove fat/oil prior to serving.

4.6 Is minced meat allowed?

Yes, minced meat that is prepared using lean meat is allowed (i.e., not necessarily from breast meat, it could be any meat without fats and skin).

Fats and Oils

5.1 Can we purchase cheese that is low-fat but has no healthier choice symbol?

Low-fat cheese without the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) is allowed.

5.2 Can we use artisan cheese?

Yes, you may use the cheese in moderation.

5.3 Which oil I can use to cook foods for children?

Any cooking oils with Healthier Choice Symbol is allowed to use.

5.4 Do we need to check HCS for sesame oil if it is used for seasoning?

Yes. All oils used for food preparations must have either the Healthier Choice Symbol or contain less than 35g/100ml of saturated fat.

5.5 Can we use olive oil without HCS?

Any olive oil that contains HCS or HCS equivalent is allowed.

5.6 We should use butter or margarine in preparing foods to serve children?

Butter, lard, hard margarine, ghee and shortening shall not be used as these are higher in saturated fats.

If soft margarine is used, only those with the Healthier Choice Symbol, or equivalent nutrient criteria, can be used.

5.7 Why do we encourage soft margarine since it's a processed food?

Margarine is a plant-based product and is generally lower in saturated fats when compared to dairy-based fat/oil products such as butter. There are 2 types of margarine: hard margarine and soft margarine. Soft margarine, which is better for heart health, is made from healthier oil with lower saturated fat. Hard margarine which is made from palm oil, is higher in saturated fat. While butter and hard margarine are not allowed under the Healthy Meals in Pre-schools Programme, soft margarine is allowed to be used as a lower saturated fat alternative. To look for healthier spreads, parents are advised to look at the nutrition labels and purchase the one that has the least trans-fat and saturated fat.

5.8 Is margarine allowed to be served?

There are 2 types of commercial margarine: hard margarine and soft margarine. Hard margarine does not melt when left in room temperature; due to its high saturated fat (bad fats). Conversely, the total fat in soft margarine is contributed mainly by unsaturated fats (good fats) present in healthier plant oils (e.g. soyabean oil, canola oil). Soft margarine that is lower in saturated fat, melts easily when left in room temperature, hence requiring refrigeration.

Therefore, preschools are recommended to use soft margarine. It must have the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) or meet the following nutrient criteria: $\leq 27\text{g}/100\text{g}$ saturated fat, $<0.5\text{g}/100\text{g}$ trans-fat, and $\leq 400\text{mg}/100\text{g}$ sodium.

5.9 Why is there a need to serve reduced fat items?

Over-consumption of fat could lead to weight gain and increase risk of heart-related diseases. Moreover, healthy eating habits should be cultivated since young and the preschools have an important role to play.

5.10 Can provide a list of Low-fat Halal Mozzarella Cheese?

Understand that there are limited low-fat mozzarella cheese options in the market. We recommend replacing the full-fat mozzarella cheese with 50% reduced-fat cheese that is easily available in market.

Sauces, Spreads, Condiments, Sugar and Salt

6.1 Can we use jam and kaya that is HCS-endorsed but contains sweeteners?

Yes

6.2 Can we use non-HCS-endorsed jam and kaya?

Jam and kaya without the Healthier Choice Symbol endorsement is not allowed as they are usually higher in sugar.

6.3 Do we apply the sauces guidelines to teachers' meals as well?

The HMPP guidelines are applicable to everyone who has their meals within the preschool.

6.4 Can we use abalone sauce in soup?

Preschools may use abalone sauce in soup provided that it has the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) or meet the HCS guidelines. In addition, preschools must follow the preparation instruction when using the product.

6.5 Can we use ikan bilis to cook soup?

Preschools can use anchovies (*ikan bilis*) to cook soup, provided that the anchovies are washed thoroughly before cooking. Do also note that certain anchovies might pose as a choking hazard due to its bones, hence it is advisable to filter the anchovies thoroughly before serving.

6.6 Are there any brands of dry curry powder that are HCS-endorsed?

Currently there is no dry curry powder with Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS), but you may choose the dry curry powder prepared using pure spices without any added seasoning.

Alternatively, you may use curry paste that has HCS. You may refer to the HCS supplier list ([link](#)) for the HCS-endorsed curry paste.

6.7 Does using lower-sodium help? Won't the cooks just add more sauce if they find that the food is plain?

Lower-sodium sauces definitely help to reduce the amount of sodium added to the dish when it is used as a 1:1 substitution. Most importantly the cook should understand the rationale for using lower-sodium sauces and should follow the preparation instruction on the product. The cook should also consider adding herbs and spices or natural chicken stock to enhance the flavours of the dishes.

6.8 What if I cannot find any pasta sauce with HCS, can I still use pasta sauce?

There are pasta sauces with HCS. Please refer to the suppliers list ([link](#)).

6.9 Preserved food

For preserved vegetables or products, the direction is as follow:

Types of Preserved Food Allowed [#]	Types of Preserved Food Not Allowed
<p>Staple food unique to a particular cuisine. These ingredients or food is allowed to be used to prepare dishes of that particular cuisine in view of cultural consideration.</p> <p>Example: Kimchi to Korean Cuisine. Hence, Kimchi can be used to prepare Korean dishes.</p>	<p>Non-staple food which is not commonly eaten as part of a cuisine.</p> <p>Example: Sichuan vegetable, Preserved olive vegetable, Preserved mustard greens (梅菜), Pickled mustard, Salted vegetable, Preserved cabbage (冬菜), Century Egg, Salted Egg</p>

[#]These allowed food product(s) must meet the nutrient guidelines of Healthier Choice Symbol Nutrient Guidelines should it be added into the list of category/sub-category of the document in the future.

Below is a list of commonly used food and it's HCS category/sub-category classification for nutrient comparison to determine if it meet the nutrients criteria of HCS product (when buying grocery, the preschool can use Asian sauce as a reference on nutrient)

List of products	HCS Category/Sub-category
Miso Paste	Asian Savoury sauce / Soup and Broth
Japanese curry cubes/paste	Asian Recipe mixes
Natto beans	Plant Based Protein/Soy Products: Legumes - Canned
Gochujang (Korea red chilli paste)	Asian Savoury Sauce
Soyabean paste	Asian Savoury Sauce
Sesame sauce	Salad dressing
Pesto sauce	Pasta sauce: Cream / cheese based
Dry spices (E.g. Cajun, mixed herbs)	Herbs and Spices
Seaweed	Fruit and Vegetables: Dried vegetables
Teriyaki Sauce	Soy-Based Sauces: Soy sauce (Others) and Marinades
Breadcrumbs	Bread (loaf), breadcrumbs, Flat breads (pita, wraps), pizza crust

6.10 Are there any studies to indicate the negative effect(s) of sweetener/sugar alcohols on pre-schoolers or primary school kids?

To date, there is no safety reason to disallow the use of sweeteners. It is considered safe and its limits for use are listed in Food Regulations. Compared to sugars, a lower sugar and sugar free product is still considered healthier.

Milk or Calcium-fortified beverages with HCS

7.1 Can we serve full cream milk to children above 2yo?

Preschools are recommended to serve low-fat milk to children above 2 years old. This is because their nutrient requirements can be met by consuming a variety of solid foods apart from milk. Therefore, children above 2 years old are able to switch from full cream milk to low-fat milk.

However, if the preschool would like to continue to serve full cream milk, it should be plain full cream milk.

7.2 If there are only a few children below 2 years old, do we have to provide different types of milk for each age group?

For children below 2 years old, low-fat milk does not provide enough nutrients for proper growth, vitamin absorption and brain development. It is therefore required to serve them full cream milk.

7.3 Does the recommendation of low-fat/full-cream milk also apply to powdered milk?

The recommendation of low-fat or full cream milk applies to powdered milk, UHT and fresh milk.

7.4 Is full cream milk mixed with water equivalent to low fat milk?

No. This is because if water is added to full cream milk, not only the fat percentage will be reduced, the percentage of the essential nutrients such as the calcium percentage will be reduced too. Therefore, for any powdered milk, it is advisable to follow the serving size on the product packaging.

7.5 Is there a difference in the nutrients between fresh milk and UHT full cream milk?

Comparing between fresh milk and UHT full cream milk, both contain essential nutrients such as calcium and protein in similar amounts.

7.6 Is UHT milk ok?

UHT or pasteurised or fresh milk is acceptable.

7.7 Are all the servings of milk supposed to be consumed in school even though some parents may feed their child at home?

We do understand that some parents may feed their child milk right before going to the preschool. The required servings of milk must be made available in the preschool's menu.

7.8 For full-day service, what happens if children do not come in for breakfast and miss the first serving of milk?

Same answer as 7.7.

7.9 For full-day service, can we serve one serving of milk for breakfast and other drinks for high tea?

According to the point 7 of the HMPP guidelines, preschools with full day service have to provide 2 or more servings of milk daily. The preschool can serve 1 serving of milk for breakfast and other calcium-fortified beverages with HCS or HCS equivalent for teatime.

7.10 For half-day service (kindergarten), can we serve calcium-enriched snacks instead of milk? Is it a must to serve milk as we only serve snacks?

According to the point 7 of the HMPP guidelines, preschool with half day service has to provide 1 or more servings of milk daily. The recommendation for milk should not be replaced with calcium-enriched snacks as they are higher in sodium and sugar content.

7.11 If parents supply the milk, does that count as one serving?

If parents supply the milk, it is considered as one serving. However, the preschool's menu must provide 2 servings of milk to cater to other preschoolers who do not bring milk to the preschools.

7.12 How about packet milk brought to school by parents? Do they have to meet the guidelines? What if they provide flavoured milk?

While it may be challenging to control the type of milk that the parents should prepare for their child, the preschools are encouraged to educate the parents on the recommended types of milk, such as plain low-fat milk being a healthier option as compared to flavoured milk due to its lower sugar content, so that children will not acquire a taste preference towards sweet foods. The preschool's menu must provide 2 servings of milk.

Flavoured milk is under the subcategory of 'dairy/creamer-based drinks' in Point 8 of the HMPP guidelines as it contains sugar. If a full day service preschool serves 1 serving of flavoured milk, it will contribute 1 out of 2 servings of milk required. However, preschool should not serve any other sweetened beverage for the day. The flavoured milk must be HCS or HCS equivalent.

7.13 Is it possible for the consumption of milk to be taken at home in the form of take-home package provided by the school?

Preschools may provide packaged milk for children to consume at home. The preschool's menu must provide 2 servings of milk daily.

7.14 Does school-based daily purchased milk count as one serving?

School-based daily purchased milk is considered as one serving. Do note that the serving size for milk must be more than or equal to 150ml. The preschool's menu must provide 2 servings of milk daily.

7.15 Will the children be drinking too much milk if we serve 300ml in school and the parents provide more at home?

The recommended amount and frequency of milk served in the preschool is based on the children's nutrients requirements to support healthy growth and development.

7.16 Can we use non-HCS-endorsed milk for children above 2 years old?

Yes, as long as it meets the product criteria stated in the HMPP guidelines.

7.17 If the child is allergic to our brand of milk powder and brings her own milk, do we get the doctor's memo and exclude her from HMPP?

For such isolated case, the child is allowed to bring her own milk and it will not be accounted for during the HMPP assessment. Hence a doctor's memo is not required.

7.18 If parents self-declare that the child is allergic to milk and requests for water to be served instead, is that ok?

If the child has dietary restriction due to certain health condition, such as allergic to milk or lactose intolerance, the preschool may provide other calcium-fortified beverages to the child.

7.19 Can parents supply soy milk if the child is allergic to cow's milk?

For the child who is allergic to cow's milk, parents may supply calcium-fortified soy milk. Please highlight to parents that the soy milk has to be calcium-fortified. This is to ensure to the child receive sufficient calcium as they are needed to support healthy growth and development.

7.20 Is there a list of calcium-fortified beverages?

Example of calcium fortified beverages are plant-based milk (e.g. soy milk, almond milk) and calcium fortified malted drinks. Alternatively, preschools can look for the plant-based milk with Healthier Choice Symbol with tagline higher in calcium.



7.21 Does this mean milk/calcium-fortified beverage has to be clearly shown in the menu?

The preschools are encouraged to indicate milk/calcium-fortified beverage in the menu.

7.22 Is milk/calcium-fortified beverage compulsory every day?

It is compulsory for preschools to provide milk or calcium-fortified beverage daily as they are needed to support healthy growth and development. The serving size for milk must be minimally 150 ml or more.

7.23 Does this mean we have to replace other beverages/desserts with milk?

To meet the recommended serving size for milk, preschools do not necessarily have to replace other beverages/desserts with milk as milk can be served at any time of the day.

7.24 How can we ensure we meet the nutrient guidelines when we use the powdered version of milk / calcium-fortified beverages?

When using powdered version of milk or calcium-fortified beverages, always follow the preparation instructions on the packaging.

7.25 Does barley drink / red bean / green bean drink count as a calcium-fortified beverage?

Local desserts soup such as barley drink, red bean, green bean, sweet potato soup, etc, are not considered as calcium-fortified beverages. They are categorised under sweetened desserts and should adhere to the relevant guidelines.

7.26 Can one serving of Milo mixed with milk replace one serving of plain milk?

The milo used must be endorsed with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS). As such, it is considered a calcium-fortified beverage, and can be used to replace 1 serving of plain milk. However, do follow the preparation instructions on the milo packaging.

7.27 Any recommendations for homemade calcium-fortified beverages?

Homemade plant-based beverage from, soybean, almond nuts, oat, cashew nut etc. do not contain sufficient calcium to meet children dietary requirement.

7.28 How much water should children drink if we are giving them 2 serves of milk a day?

Children between three and six years old are recommended to drink three to five glasses of water daily. The glass size for water is equivalent to 250ml.

7.29 If we use milk in our dishes (e.g., cake, cereal with milk, milk in green bean soup), does that count as one serving?

Milk added to dishes does not count as one serving because the amount of milk used is insufficient to meet the children's calcium requirement as compared to a glass of milk.

**7.30 Would the provision of cheese count as one serving of milk / calcium-fortified beverage?
Can we serve calcium-enriched foods to substitute the milk / calcium-fortified beverage?**

Calcium-fortified cheeses are a good source of calcium, but it also contains a significant amount of sodium. Therefore, it is not recommended to replace milk or any other calcium-fortified beverages with cheese.

7.31 Is there any way to adjust the requirements - 3 days x 300ml and 2 days x 150ml?

The recommended amount and frequency of milk served in the preschool is based on the children's nutrients requirements to support healthy growth and development. Therefore, it is not recommended to adjust the requirements.

7.32 If children do not like to drink milk or drink very little, how do we overcome this issue?

Preschools are encouraged to repeatedly offer milk even for children who dislikes it. Picky eating is a learnt behaviour, repeatedly offering milk to the child and encouraging them to drink a sip will increase the chances of acceptance. Study showed that children with picky eating behaviour is likely to accept the particular food after trying the same food over the time (typically 15 to 20 times).

Other than milk, preschools may also serve other calcium-fortified beverages such as malted beverages or soy milk.

7.33 It will be challenging for us to set aside time for drinking milk other than snack and mealtimes. We can only provide additional drinks during breakfast and tea break.

Preschools do not necessarily have to set aside time for drinking milk. Milk can be served as snacks or be paired with any main meal.

Sugar-based drinks (E.g. Non-carbonated drinks/Asian drink)

8.1 What are some examples of artificial sweeteners?

Examples of intense sweeteners include sugar alcohols, monk fruit extract, stevia, acesulfame K, sucralose, and aspartame.

8.2 Can we use rock sugar for beverages?

Preschools can use rock sugar for homemade beverages (e.g., barley water, flower tea, date tea and etc), but the total amount of sugar in the beverage should not more than 5g per 100ml and saturated fat not more than 1.2g per 100ml.

8.3 Can we add a little bit of sugar or syrup in food? Just like siew dai kind of sweetness.

Cordial/syrups and intense sweeteners are not allowed, whether to be added in drinks or used in food preparation.

Juice

9.1 Is fruit juice concentrate allowed to be used to prepare beverage for children?

Adding water to juice concentrate or cordial to make beverages does not comply with HMPP guidelines.

9.2 Is there a fixed frequency to serve fruit juice to children?

Freshly squeezed fruit juice is limited one serving (150ml or less) per child per day. However, we would recommend centres to encourage children to take fruits. ***Dairy/creamer-based drinks*** (E.g. Malted or Chocolate drink, Coffee, Tea, Milk, Yogurt drink and etc)

High Calcium Beverage

10.1 How to calculate the sugar content in malted beverages?

There is no need to calculate the sugar content in malted beverages. Malted beverages (e.g. milk, milo/ovaltine/cereal/oats prepared with milk) are considered calcium-fortified beverages and should be prepared according to the preparation instructions on the product package without adding any sugars. The product must also have the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) or meet HCS guidelines.

10.2 Can one serving of milk be yogurt drink?

No, yogurt drink is a type of sweetened beverage, hence it is under Dairy/creamer based drinks subcategory, preschools should limit the yogurt drink to 1 serving per day.

Do note that only HCS endorsed yogurt drink is allowed.

Plant-based milk (E.g. Soy milk, almond milk, Oat milk and etc)

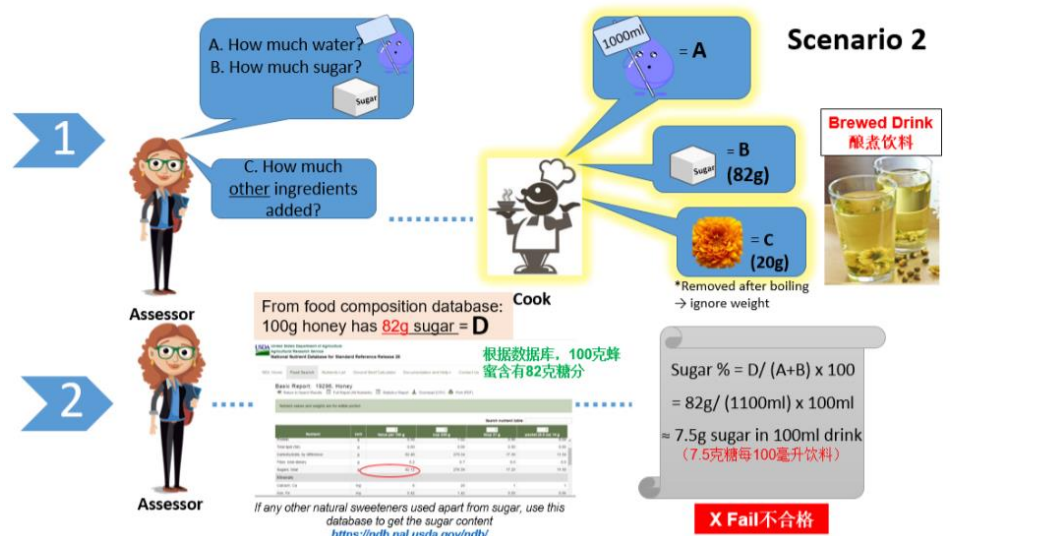
11.1 What are the examples of homemade or freshly prepared beverages

Examples of homemade or freshly prepared beverages are barley water, flower tea, red date tea and etc.

11.2 How many litres of water should we use to meet the sugar guidelines of <5g of sugar?

Below is the sample calculation based on the types of beverages.

1) Brewed Drink



Scenario 2

1 Assessor asks: A. How much water? B. How much sugar? C. How much other ingredients added?

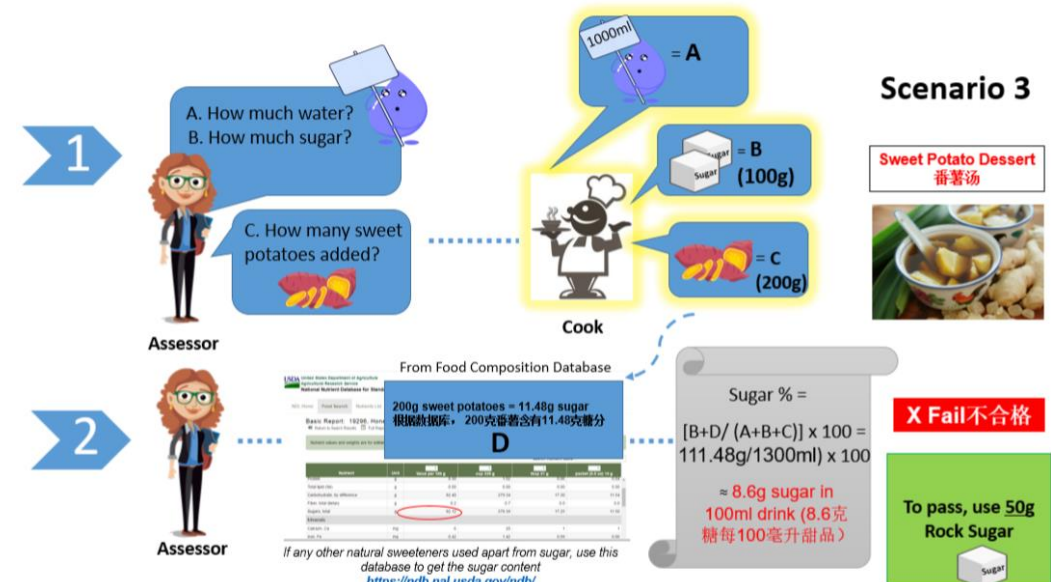
Cook provides: A = 1000ml, B = (82g) Sugar, C = (20g) Honey

2 Assessor checks food composition database: From food composition database: 100g honey has 82g sugar = D

Calculation: $Sugar \% = D / (A+B) \times 100 = 82g / (1100ml) \times 100ml \approx 7.5g \text{ sugar in } 100ml \text{ drink}$

Result: X Fail 不合格

2) Local Soup Dessert



Scenario 3

1 Assessor asks: A. How much water? B. How much sugar? C. How many sweet potatoes added?

Cook provides: A = 1000ml, B = (100g) Sugar, C = (200g) Sweet Potatoes

2 Assessor checks food composition database: From Food Composition Database: 200g sweet potatoes = 11.48g sugar = D

Calculation: $Sugar \% = [B+D] / (A+B+C) \times 100 = 111.48g / 1300ml \times 100 \approx 8.6g \text{ sugar in } 100ml \text{ drink}$

Result: X Fail 不合格

To pass, use 50g Rock Sugar

11.3 Is it okay if the preschool does not serve homemade beverages?

Preschools can dictate what is to be served in the menu.

Dessert

Local soup desserts

12.1 Can we serve sweet potato soup or tau suan?

Preschool can serve sweet potato soup or tau suan, however the sugar content must be 12g or less per serving. Additionally, tau suan must not be served with Chinese doughnut sticks (youtiao) as it is deep fried.

Jellies

13.1 Can preschool add grass jelly in no added sugar beverages?

Grass jelly or any other jelly ingredients pre-soaked in syrup/cordials are not allowed to be used.

Local and seasonal cakes

14.1 Can preschool use dried fruits to make some homemade cake (eg: fruitcake)?

Dried fruits can be used to prepare homemade snacks (e.g. steamed raisin cake). The sugar content of the snack must be less than 12g or less per serving.

14.2 Can we serve pandan cake or banana cake?

Preschools can serve pandan cake and banana cake which are aligned to the following guidelines. Commercially prepared cakes must have the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) or meet the HCS guidelines (dessert's category).

Homemade cakes should contain 12g or less of sugar per serving.

14.3 If the preschool serves biscuits, do they have to be HCS-endorsed?

Preschools must serve Preschool biscuits that have the Healthier Choice Symbol and contain wholegrain.

Administrative and Operational Matters Local and seasonal cakes

15.1 Do we have to follow the guidelines for breakfast?

HMPP guidelines are applicable for all meals (breakfast, lunch, dinner) and tea time served in the preschools.

15.2 Do we have to follow the guidelines for all meals?

Please refer to reply in 0

15.3 Do we have to follow the guidelines if we only serve snacks (3h kindergarten)?

Please refer to reply in 0 The snacks have to be HCS.

15.4 Do we have to follow the guidelines if we serve hot meals twice a week?

As long as you serve meals in the centre, HMPP applies.

Menu

16.1 How many sets of menus must a preschool have?

This is up to the preschool to decide.

16.2 If 150ml of milk is required twice a day for full day students, our menu will be limited as we must serve milk.

Other than milk, preschools can also serve calcium-fortified beverages such as malted beverages and plant-based milk (e.g. soy milk, almond milk). The purpose of serving milk or calcium-fortified beverages is to ensure adequate intake of calcium to support healthy growth and development of the children.

16.3 Do we have to submit our menu for approval before implementation in 2023?

Preschools do not have to submit the menu for approval but the HMPP accessor will conduct a pre-assessment in 2023, and the preschool can make adjustments before the actual assessment in 2024.

General Food Criterion

17.1 Based on the current guidelines, HPB is encouraging the use of ingredients or snacks with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) or meet HCS guidelines. Kindly note that ingredients are mostly bought in bulk and may not necessarily have the HCS symbol and/or NIP to assess immediately if it meets HCS guidelines eg, soya sauce, tomato sauce, Demi- Glace Sauce, cereal in bulk etc. In addition, delays due to requesting for NIP from suppliers and vetting through of the ingredients can have an impact on menu planning and preparing of meals for childcare. There also runs a risk whereby food varieties for the children may be restricted due to the worry of not being able to meet the HCS guidelines.

There are many HCS-endorsed products or HCS equivalent products available in the market and preschool can easily get an alternative if the product that they commonly used is out of stock. Additionally, you may also consider exploring our list of healthier ingredients suppliers to purchase ingredients at a more affordable rate ([link](#)). Before HMPP assessment, preschools can request the necessary documents e.g nutrition information panel from the suppliers.

17.2 Currently we are manufacturing ready to heat (RTH) proteins (chicken & fish) for our childcare clients. The varieties of selection for PCF RTH proteins may also be affected due to the stringent selection of HCS ingredients and worry of being unable to meet HCS guidelines (Under Protein category).

Healthy Meals in Preschools Programme (HMPP) and Healthy Meals in School Programme (HMSP) guidelines has adopted the same practice since the launch in 2022. To more clarity for food manufacturers and/or caterers in their understanding on the use of HCS endorsed ingredient, please refer to the below table:

Business model	Elaboration of business model	Use of HCS endorsed ingredient	Example of ingredients required (refer to the guideline for more information)
Food Caterer	<p>Provide cooked food which can be consumed immediately without any further processing (e.g. heating, cooking and etc) directly to the preschools/schools.</p> <p>E.g. Cooked food in Gastronorm (GN) trays, Baked products and etc.</p>	<p>The use of HCS certified/HCS equivalent ingredient is required as stipulated in the HMPP/HMSP guidelines.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sauces, spread, condiments and table salt (e.g. Lower sodium Light soy sauce, Oyster sauce, Teriyaki marinade, table salt and etc) <p>Processed protein (Frozen meat, Frozen fish fillet, Canned fish, Surimi products like fish ball, crab stick, fish cake and etc)</p>
Food Manufacturer	<p>Provide uncooked/partially cooked/cooked food to the preschools/schools which requires further processing (e.g. heating, cooking, reconstituting, and etc) prior to serving in the preschools/schools.</p> <p>E.g. Ready-to-Heat products, Ready-to-Eat products, Concentrate, and etc</p>	<p>The use of HCS certified/HCS equivalent ingredients to prepare the food product is recommended. Using healthier ingredients play a role in improving the nutrient profile of the final product in meeting HCS nutrient guidelines.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Product can be served if it meets either of the following: 2. Certified with Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) 3. Meet the specific nutrient requirement(s) listed in the respective food category/sub-category of Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) <p>Nutrient Guidelines of the product. <u>Direct nutrient analysis</u> report of the product must be produced for verification.</p>

17.3 The kitchen is concerned with managing their budget with the purchasing of HCS ingredients or products due to the cost difference. On top of this, the current inflation of food prices has already elevated the current cost of production.

Preschools can purchase the ingredients in bulk to reduce the cost.

17.4 With regards to direct nutrient analysis, one lab testing for direct nutrient analysis can cost a few hundred dollars. Therefore, a direct nutrient analysis for all food items may not be financially feasible.

To allow indirect analysis by an in-house nutritionist for the final food product:

Direct analysis of product is required to allow for fair comparison of various products from different suppliers in the market.

To conduct direct nutrient analysis for targeted and focused parameters for the relevant HCS categories:

We allow direct nutrient analysis of the specific nutrient requirement(s) listed in the respective food category/sub-category of Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) Nutrient Guidelines of the product. For example, a direct nutrient analysis of the nutrient Fat and Sodium is required for a Ready-to-Heat Chicken product (Canned and Processed sub-category). Do note that all footnote/endnote indicated in the HCS nutrient guidelines must be met accordingly as well.

Protein					
Sub-Category	Fat (g/100g)	Sodium (mg/100g)	Sugar (g/100g)	Calcium [^] (mg/100g)	Taglines for HCS
Animal based protein					
Meat & poultry	≤ 10	≤ 120	-	-	Lower in Saturated Fat {Lower in Sodium}
• Fresh and Frozen					
• Canned and Processed ¹	≤ 10 ^(a)	≤ 450	-	-	Lower in Sodium and Lower in Saturated Fat

Portion Size and Food Wastage

18.1 Is the serving size for one meal or the whole day?

The recommended serving size is for one meal.

18.2 Can we space out the servings for the main meal, e.g., serve fruits separately from the meal, serve 1 slice of bread during breakfast and another during tea, etc.

Preschools are required to serve according to the “Serving Size” column in the HMPP guidelines.

18.3 What if children are unable to finish the items? E.g., majority of 3-6yo can only finish ½ or 1 splice of wholegrain bread. Usually, 3-4yo will not be able to finish 100g rice + 45g vegetables + 45g meat +65-70g fruit. We believe in reducing food wastage. How can we work around this?

The guidelines are based on scientific research that assess the nutritional requirements needed to support a child’s growth. Hence, preschool should continue to serve and encourage the children to eat their foods. Understand some children may not be able finished the portion, the centres have to ensure meals with sufficient servings are provided.

Preschools should also inculcate healthy eating habits in children through lesson plans that teach children about the importance of nutrition and how to make healthier food choices. Excursions to farms or supermarkets can also be a fun way to teach children about the food sources and the variety of healthy foods available.

Additionally, preschool can consider working with other organizations to upcycle their food waste, which can involve donating surplus food to food banks or finding ways to compost or recycle the food waste. By taking these steps, the preschool can help reduce food waste and teach children about the importance of sustainability and the value of not wasting resources.

18.4 Can we serve a smaller portion to children that have smaller appetite to prevent wastage?

Please refer to reply in 18.3. The guidelines are based on scientific research that assess the nutritional requirements needed to support a child’s growth. Hence, preschool should continue to serve and encourage the children to eat their foods. Understand some children have smaller appetite, the centres have to ensure meals with sufficient servings are provided.

18.5 There will be a lot of food wastage which goes against our national education on sustainability. Can we serve based on our children's daily intake instead of keeping to the standard serving size?

Please refer to reply in 18.3.

18.6 What about the picky or sensitive eaters? Can we reduce the amount or not serve them the items to reduce food wastage?

Children with dietary restrictions due to certain health condition, such as food allergy or intolerance may adhere to the HMPP guidelines where applicable and the preschool will not be penalized during the assessment. Picky eating on the other hand is a learnt habit and by removing the aversive food from the child's diet, the child is unlikely to accept the food in the future, which will restrict their food choices. Instead, preschools should repeatedly offer the same food and encourage the child to take a bite as study has shown that children with picky eating behavior is likely to accept the particular food after trying over the time (typically 15 to 20 times).

Understand some children are picky or sensitive eaters, the centres have to ensure meals with sufficient servings are provided.

18.7 Regarding the spoon, HPB measures the spoon by height but for some spoons, the bowl portion can be shallower/deeper than others. How do we define it accurately?

Measuring the spoon by height is a simple way to define a standard tablespoon. Tablespoons have similar curvature hence the depths of the bowl portion do not differ significantly. The measurement of serving size by tablespoon is only applicable to the vegetables and protein; the preschool can use a weighing scale to measure the food; 1 tablespoon of vegetables or protein is equivalent to 30g.

18.8 What does 1 serve or more means?

1 serve or more means the minimum amount must be provided must be at least 1 serve.

HCS

19.1 How to tell if the beverage / jam / cake meets HCS guidelines?

Please refer to point 8 of HMPP guidelines for more details.

Below are the recommendations in general.

Commercial beverage: Only product with the Healthier Choice Symbols (HCS) or meet the HCS guidelines (beverage's category) AND does not contain any intense sweetener is allowed to be served.

Homemade drink: The sugar content must be $\leq 5g$ and saturated fat must be $\leq 1.2g$ per 100ml of beverage.

Freshly prepared fruit juice: The sugar content must be $\leq 5g$ (including the natural sugar in the fruit itself).

All beverages: Additional sweetener is not allowed.

Jam: Only product with HCS is allowed to be used in food preparation.

Commercial cake (e.g. local cake or seasonal cake): Only product with the HCS is allowed to be served.

Homemade cake: The sugar level must be 12g or less per serving.

Processed Foods

20.1 How do we measure the amount of ikan bilis when they are in grounded form?

Anchovies are naturally high in sodium. As we are unable to ascertain that commercially grounded anchovies (*ikan bilis*) are thoroughly rinsed and soaked before being grounded, it is not recommended to be used.

If the pre-school wants to use anchovies (*ikan bilis*) to make soup, do ensure that the anchovies are properly rinsed and soaked before use.

20.2 Can we serve hotdogs and nuggets?

Preschools can serve hotdogs and nuggets with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) or meet the HCS guidelines (protein category).

20.3 Can we use small-size crab sticks as part of the food prep?

Preschools can serve small-size crab sticks with the Healthier Choice Symbol (HCS) or meet the HCS guidelines (protein category).