

Foods and drinks are classified as **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED** according to their nutritional value.

Wherever foods and drinks are offered, at least **50%** of choices should be from the **GREEN** category.

RED items should not be provided in workplace catering. In retail outlets and vending machines, less than 20% of choices should be from the **RED** category.

The Healthy Choices guidelines are used to promote healthy foods and drinks in retail outlets, vending machines and workplace catering.

The guidelines categorise foods and drinks into three groups. These are:

The GREEN category – best choices

Foods and drinks in the **GREEN** category are the healthiest choices. They are usually:

- good sources of important nutrients
- lower in saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt
- lower in energy (kilojoules)
- higher in fibre.

GREEN foods and drinks should always be available and they should be promoted as the best choices.

Wherever foods and drinks are offered (e.g. retail outlets, vending machines and catering), at least **50%** of choices should be from the **GREEN** category.

The AMBER category – choose carefully

AMBER foods and drinks should be selected carefully and should only be eaten in moderation. Although **AMBER** items may provide some good nutrients they can:

- lead you to take in too much energy (kilojoules)
- contain saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt.
- **AMBER** foods and drinks may be offered, but should not dominate. They should not be promoted over **GREEN** choices.

The RED category – limit

Foods and drinks in the **RED** category are not essential. If they are consumed too often, or in large amounts, they can lead to weight gain and chronic diseases.

In general **RED** choices are:

- high in energy (kilojoules)
- high in saturated fat, added sugar and/or salt
- low in important nutrients such as fibre.

RED foods and drinks should be consumed rarely and only in small amounts. In retail outlets and vending machines, no more than 20% of foods and drinks should be from the **RED** category.

RED foods and drinks should not be provided in workplace catering.

The table below includes examples of foods and drinks in the **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED** categories

GREEN – best choices	AMBER – choose carefully	RED – limit
Bread	Some savoury breads and crackers	Sugary drinks (e.g. soft drinks, sports drinks)
High fibre breakfast cereals	Some wholemeal muffins or scones with added fruit and vegetables	Confectionery
Reduced fat milk, cheese and yoghurt	Dried fruit	Ice creams and dairy desserts
Lean meat	Fish canned in brine or oil	Biscuits, cakes, slices and sweet pastries
Fish	Salted nuts and seeds	Saturated fats and oils (e.g. butter, cream)
Eggs	Some oven baked potato products	Deep fried foods
Plain nuts and seeds	Regular fat milk, cheese, yoghurt and custard	Crisps and chips
Tofu	Some flavoured milk	Pies, sausage rolls
Fruit (fresh, frozen)	99% fruit juice	Devon, salami, Strasburg
Vegetables	Artificially sweetened drinks	Sausages, saveloys
Legumes and beans		
Water		

For more examples of foods and drinks in each category, or to learn how to classify products, please refer to the *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide*¹.

¹ *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide*, Department of Health and Human Services, 2014, www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/preventive-health/nutrition/healthy-choices-for-retail-outlets-vending-machines-catering.

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