

# The Cost of Healthy Meals and Snacks for Children in Saskatchewan 2018



Public Health Nutritionists of Saskatchewan

## The Cost of Meals and Snacks for Children in Saskatchewan 2018

Foods and beverages served in childcare settings, schools and community programs can affect children's health and well-being. The cost of foods, as well as available program funding and budgets, impact the type of foods and beverages served. This resource shows the average cost of healthy meals and snacks for children and youth in Northern and Southern Saskatchewan. Details can be found on page 3. Using these average costs can help childcare facilities, schools, and community organizations budget for child nutrition programs. Planning for the cost of healthy food helps to ensure quality food is available in meal and snack programs.

### Why are healthy foods and beverages important?

Children and youth need to eat healthy foods and drink healthy beverages to support proper growth and development. Healthy eating patterns in childhood support intellectual development and may help maintain long-term health (1-3).

Research has consistently shown that nutrition programs that offer healthy foods and beverages can influence the health and educational outcomes of children and youth (4-13).

Provincial guidelines are available to guide the types of foods and beverages served in childcare facilities and schools to benefit the well-being of children.

For more information related to the nutrition guidelines in child care settings, refer to the Saskatchewan Child Care Licensee Manual at [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca). For more information about school nutrition guidelines, refer to Nourishing Minds and Healthy Foods for my School found at [www.saskatchewan.ca](http://www.saskatchewan.ca).

### How food costs were determined

To assess the cost of healthy foods and beverages being served in Saskatchewan for nutrition programs, sample one week menus for breakfast, lunch and snacks were created based on the Government of Saskatchewan *Planning Healthy Menus for My School* (15). Costs of menu items were based on Saskatchewan food costing data available in *The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2018* (16).

### Things to consider when looking at food costs

- The types of foods and beverages available in meal and snack programs are influenced by many factors. When referring to this resource, consider the following:
- The sample menu used did not include pre-packaged and convenience foods. If these items were included, the costs would be higher.
- Meal and snack costs were based on average package sizes found in most grocery stores. There may be some savings by purchasing in bulk, through a food service distributor or grocery wholesale company.
- Costs are for foods and beverages only. Meal and snack programs have additional costs for storage equipment, serving supplies, staff and volunteers.
- Food costs for younger children, such as infants and preschoolers, may be lower since these children have small stomachs and tend to eat smaller amounts of food than older children and adults.

## Cost of sample breakfast, lunch and snack in Saskatchewan 2018

*Geographical Area	Sample Breakfast Cost/Child/Day	Sample Lunch Cost/Child/Day	Sample Snack Cost/Child/Day
Northern Saskatchewan - Far North	\$ 2.44	\$ 3.57	\$ 2.05
Northern Saskatchewan – North West	\$ 1.72	\$ 2.80	\$ 1.49
Northern Saskatchewan – North East	\$ 1.82	\$ 2.56	\$ 1.70
Northern Saskatchewan – North Town	\$ 1.48	\$ 2.36	\$ 1.15
Northern Saskatchewan - Average	\$ 1.79	\$ 2.71	\$ 1.56
Southern Saskatchewan – Rural	\$ 1.52	\$ 2.16	\$ 1.24
Southern Saskatchewan – Town	\$ 1.36	\$ 2.07	\$ 1.16
Southern Saskatchewan – Small City	\$ 1.19	\$ 1.80	\$ 1.04
Southern Saskatchewan – Large City	\$ 1.14	\$ 1.77	\$ 0.95
Southern Saskatchewan - Average	\$ 1.26	\$ 1.89	\$ 1.09
<b>Total Saskatchewan Average</b>	<b>\$ 1.37</b>	<b>\$ 2.06</b>	<b>\$ 1.17</b>

### \* Northern geographical areas

- Northern Saskatchewan: Communities farther than 100 km north of Prince Albert
- Far North: low access communities with seasonal roads. Air travel is main access to community
- North West: moderately accessible communities with gravel or paved road and some air access
- North East: moderately accessible communities with gravel roads and some air access
- Northern Town: highly accessible communities with paved roads and air access in all seasons

### \* Southern geographical areas

- Southern Saskatchewan: Communities including and surrounding Prince Albert and south.
- Rural: population less than 500 people
- Town: population between 500-4999 people
- Small City: population between 5000 – 99 999 people
- Large City: population of 100 000 or more people

**Example Calculation:** A nutrition program in Southern Saskatchewan provides breakfast for **90 children for 180 days a year**. If an average breakfast in Southern Saskatchewan costs **\$1.26 per child/day**, the calculated food budget would be:  
 $\$1.26 \text{ per child/day} \times 90 \text{ children} = \$113.40 \text{ per day}$   
 $180 \text{ days the program runs} \times \$113.40 \text{ per day} = \underline{\underline{\$20,412}}$  needed for breakfasts for a year

### References:

1. Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. Report of the Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, to the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture; 2010.
2. Guidelines for School Health Programs to Promote Lifelong Healthy Eating. Journal of School Health. 1997 Jan;67(1)9-26. Abstract available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8990041](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8990041)
3. WHO 2016. Consideration of the evidence on childhood obesity for the Commission on Ending Childhood Obesity Report of the Ad hoc Working Group on Science and Evidence for Ending Childhood Obesity. Geneva, Switzerland. available from: [apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/206549/1/9789241565332\\_eng.pdf?ua=1](https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/206549/1/9789241565332_eng.pdf?ua=1)
4. Belot, Michele, and Jonathon James. 2009. Healthy School Meals and Educational Outcomes. ISER Working Paper Series, No. 2009-01.
5. Gleason, Philip M, and Allison Headley Dodd. School Breakfast Program but Not School Lunch Program Participation is Associated with Lower Body Mass Index. J Am Diet Assoc. 2009 Feb;109(2 Suppl):S118-28. 109 (2). Abstract available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19166666](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19166666)
6. Golley, R., Baines, E., Wood, L., Pearce, J., Nelson, M. School lunch and learning behaviors in primary schools: an intervention study. Eur J Clin Nutr. 2010 Nov;64(11):1280-8. Abstract available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20808337](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20808337)
7. Hubbard, K.L., Must, A., Eliasziw, M., Folta, S.C., Goldberg, J What's in Children's Backpacks: Foods Brought from Home. J Acad Nutr Diet. 2014 Sep;114(9):1424-31. Abstract available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25037557](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25037557)
8. Mullally ML, Taylor JP, Kuhle S, Bryanton J, Hernandez KJ, MacLellan DL, McKenna ML, Gray RJ, Veugelers PJ. A province-wide school nutrition policy and food consumption in elementary school children in Prince Edward Island. Can J Public Health. 2010 Jan-Feb;101(1):40-3. Abstract available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20364537](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20364537)
9. Taras, H. Nutrition and student performance at school. J Sch Health. 2005 Aug;75(6):199-213. Abstract available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16014126](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16014126)
10. Kleinman RE, Hall S, Green H, Korzec-Ramirez D, Patton K, et al. Diet, Breakfast and Academic Performance. Ann Nutr Metab. 2002; 46(0 1): 24–30. Abstract available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3275817/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3275817/)
11. Adolphus, K., C. L. Lawton and L. Dye. The effects of breakfast on behavior and academic performance in children and adolescents. Front Hum Neurosci. 2013 Aug 8;7:425. Available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3737458/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3737458/) Overby N, Hoigaard R. (2012). Diet and behavioral problems at school in Norwegian adolescents. Food Nutr. Res. 2012 June 28;56. Abstract available from: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22761600>
12. Murphy, J. M. (2007). Breakfast and learning: An updated review. Journal of Current Nutrition and Food Science, Feb 2007;3(1):3-36. Available from: [www.researchgate.net/publication/228638584\\_Breakfast\\_and\\_Learning\\_An\\_Updated\\_Review](http://www.researchgate.net/publication/228638584_Breakfast_and_Learning_An_Updated_Review)
13. MacLellan D, Holland A, Taylor J, McKenna M, Hernandez K. Implementing school nutrition policy: Student and parent perspectives. Can J Diet Pract Res. 2010 Winter;71(4):172-7. Abstract available from: [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21144132](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21144132)
14. Government of Saskatchewan. Planning Healthy Menus for my School. 2019. Pending release.
15. Saskatchewan Food Costing Task Group. The Cost of Healthy Eating in Saskatchewan 2018.(2019).