



Nutrition Tidbits



Can I Trust the School to Feed My Child?

Jessica Merkley, Nutritionist

We understand that this is a major concern for parents of school-age children. It is also a major concern for those of us who are in charge of the food that is being offered at Queen Creek Unified School district. We all see the news stories warning against unhealthy school meals and making us question the integrity of the food in our country. These are all valid concerns. I want to assure you that the Child Nutrition employees in this district are caring individuals who strive every day to provide your children a meal that is not only nutritious and delicious but also safe, kid friendly and parent approved. As employees of the Child Nutrition Department, serving the students of QCUSD is our main priority and we take it very seriously.

The director of the Child Nutrition Department, Carol Weekly, Registered Dietitian and School Nutrition Specialist, has a passion for school food service that started 13 years ago. Several dedicated employees in the district have been here for 20+ years. We all have a passion for what we do and strive to provide the best. Carol and many other employees have children that attend school in the district and eat school meals every day. Most of our employees in the Nutrition Department, including Carol also enjoy eating the school meals every day. As a parent and Registered Dietitian it is very important to her that we offer the highest quality and variety to all the students of the district.

We have high standards for the food that we offer; For example, we use trusted brands like Land O' Lakes and Jennie-O. We use only 100% beef hamburger patties and 100% ground beef for tacos and nachos and serve nitrate-free chicken hot dogs. We do our best to purchase local and always American. We do not serve any white flour, all our grains are a minimum 51% whole grain. We offer a minimum of 1 fresh seasonal fruit and two fresh seasonal vegetables on the menu every day, however most schools offer more than that. We also offer a variety of canned (no added sugar and light syrup), and dried fruit.

You might look at our menu and see pizza, chicken nuggets, and Cheeseburgers and think that this is the same unhealthy food that you get at a fast food restaurant. As dietitians and nutritionists planning the menu, we can assure you that our food, although it sounds the same, is very different. We want our students to be familiar with and enjoy the food we offer but we also want it to be healthy. That is why we offer healthier version of these kid favorites. You can take a look at all the nutrition facts for our meals online at www.qcUSD.nutrislice.com and see for yourself just how different these are in their nutritional makeup from your typical fast food. Our food is never fried and all of our grains are at least 51% whole grain. The meals will typically be lower in fat, saturated fat, and sodium, and be higher in fiber.

Being a trusted source for your child's nutrition is very important to us. We welcome any questions, concerns, or recommendations so please feel free to contact our department through our information found at www.qcUSD.org.

Like us on Facebook at QCUSD Child Nutrition to stay updated and see pictures of what we're serving!

All la carte items sold during lunch within QCUSD must meet the USDA Smart Snacks Standards. Listed below are the guidelines and the nutrition information for all a la carte items.

Does not exceed 200 calories	≤35% total calories from fat (excludes nuts, seeds, reduced fat cheese)
Zero grams trans fat	≤10% calories from saturated fat
No more than 35% total sugar by weight	Maximum 200 mg sodium per item

After meeting ALL of these standards, each item must also meet ONE of the following:

- Whole grain rich (at least 50%)
- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, dairy product or protein food (meat, beans, etc.)
- Be a "combination food" with at least 1/4 cup fruit and/or vegetable



Baked Cookies—\$.25

Cal: 183, Cal from Fat: 55 (30%), Total Fat: 6g, Sat Fat: 1.65g (8.1%), Sodium: 150mg, Fiber: 2g, Sugar: 12g (28.6%), Protein: 3g

Fudge Brownie (Whole grain, low fat) —\$.75

Cal: 150, Cal from Fat: 40 (27%), Total Fat: 4.5g, Sat Fat: 1.5g (9%), Sodium: 160mg, Fiber: 2g, Sugar: 16g (28%), Protein: 2g

Cereal Bars (Cinnamon)—\$.75

Cal: 140, Cal from Fat: 30 (21%), Total Fat: 3.5g, Sat Fat: .5g (3.2%), Sodium: 125mg, Fiber: 1g, Sugar: 10g (27%), Protein: 2g

Simply Chex (Chocolate)—\$.75

Cal: 150, Cal from Fat: 45 (30%), Total Fat: 5g, Sat Fat: 1.5g (9%), Sodium: 80mg, Fiber: 2g, Sugar: 9g (26%), Protein: 2g

Sunflower Seeds (Salted)*— \$.50

Cal: 170, Cal from Fat: 130 (exempt), Total Fat: 14.5g, Sat Fat: 2g, Sodium: 110mg, Fiber: 3g, Sugar: 1g (3%), Protein: 5g

Fantastix! (Flamin' Hot)—\$.75

Cal: 130, Cal from Fat: 45 (34.6%), Total Fat: 5g, Sat Fat: 1g (6.9%), Sodium: 200mg, Fiber: 2g, Sugar: 0g, Protein: 2g

Blue Bunny Ice Cream Sandwich 3oz—\$.75

Cal: 130, Cal from Fat: 25, Total Fat: 2.5g (17.3%), Sat Fat: 1g (6.9%), Sodium: 105mg, Fiber: <1g, Sugar: 12g (21.8%), Protein: 3g

Whole Grain Rice Krispies Treat—\$.75

Cal: 160, Cal from Fat: 35, Total Fat: 4g (22.5%), Sat Fat: 1g (5.6%), Sodium: 150mg, Fiber: <1g, Sugar: 11g (27.5%), Protein: 2g

100% Juice Penguin Ice 7oz (slush)—\$.75

Cal: 87, Cal from Fat: 0, Total Fat: 0g (0%), Sat Fat: 0g (0%), Sodium: 12.79mg, Fiber: 0g, Carbohydrates: 21g (14.29%), Protein: 0g

100% Fruit Juice 4oz (Grape)— \$.50

Cal: 80, Cal from Fat: .9, Total Fat: .1g, Sat. Fat: 0g, Sodium: Trace, Fiber: 0g, Protein : .5g

Fat Free Milk 8oz (Chocolate)—\$.50

Cal: 140, Cal from Fat: 0, Total Fat: 0g, Sat. Fat: 0g, Sodium: 200mg, Fiber: 0g, Sugar: 24g, Protein: 8g

****Available daily; 100% Orange, Apple, Apple-Cherry, Fruit Punch, or Grape Juice (4oz), 1% or fat-free milk (8oz), fat-free chocolate or strawberry milk (8oz), fresh or canned fruits and vegetables (\$.50)****