Eating healthy in Denmark

Healthier meals in daycare, schools, educational institutions and workplaces – official Danish guidelines

Guides for food professionals

Children, young people and adults consume many meals while staying in daycare, schools, educational institutions or workplaces. Therefore, there is great potential for achieving health benefits by improving the nutritional quality of meals served in these different arenas.

Official Danish guidelines for healthier meals to these specific target groups have been updated and published in 2017/2018.

Different arenas – same framework and logo

The official guides for healthier meals are developed to match different arenas by using the same framework and logo – 'The Meal Label'. As a result, all guidelines are recognizable with only minor adjustments for each arena. The guidelines consist of a series of nutritional principles for different meals and food offerings such as ‘lunch dishes’, ‘sandwiches’, ‘breakfast’, ‘snacks’ and ‘drinks’.

The guide for healthier meals are based on The Nordic Nutrition Recommendations (NNR, 2012), the Danish dietary guidelines (2013) and are developed by DVFA in collaboration with The National Food Institute, Technical University of Denmark (DTU Food). In addition, food professionals have contributed to the content by testing and commenting on guidelines.
‘The Meal Label’ – tool for branding

When kitchens apply the principles in the guide to all their food offerings and focus on reducing salt and sugar content, they can brand the kitchen with ‘The Meal Label’. The label cannot, however, be used to brand individual dishes.

‘The Meal Label’ and the accompanying guides make it easier to offer healthier food every day. Using this label also functions as a mean of communication to inform parents and guests, that their daycare, school or canteen is serving meals that follow the official Danish guidelines.

Healthy Diet and Communication Division
The Healthy Diet and Communication Division at The Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) provides recommendations on healthy eating according to the Danish dietary guidelines. Our main goal is to inspire the population to consume more vegetables, fruits, wholegrain and fish, while reducing the intake of foods containing high amounts of saturated fats, salt and sugar.

Find more information at maaltidsmaerket.dk

Inspiring positive welcoming environments
To complement the three official guides for healthier meals, a fourth ‘handbook’ serves to highlight the recommendations for ‘the good meal’ in daycare based on research from The Danish School of Education at Aarhus University.

Encouraging the development of healthy food and meal habits amongst young children, this guide aims at inspiring pedagogical staff members, food professionals as well as managers in daycare to ensure a positive welcoming environment, where young children are encouraged to eat well, develop good eating habits and social skills. To continue this work, such recommendations for schools are in the pipeline.