






EARLY LEARNING SERVICE

VEGETARIAN SAMPLE MENU: AUTUMN

This menu meets the Pā-Harakeke level of the Heart Foundation's Healthy Heart Award. It is flexible to meet the needs of your service and includes nut-free and pescatarian options.

	MONDAY <i>Rāhina</i>	TUESDAY <i>Rātu</i>	WEDNESDAY <i>Rāapa</i>	THURSDAY <i>Rāpare</i>	FRIDAY <i>Rāmere</i>
Morning tea <i>Kai ō te ata</i>					
Snack	Peanut butter on wholemeal toast (nut-free option: hummus) Fruit	Munch and crunch platter with tzatziki dip 	Banana oat cookies* and plain yoghurt	Bircher muesli (nut-free option: without almond flakes**) 	Monkey rolls (nut-free option: mini egg muffins) fruit and plain yoghurt
Drink <i>Ngā Inu</i>	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water
Lunch <i>Kai ō te tina</i>					
Main dish	Corn and Lentil Fritters (Pescatarian option: add canned tuna) 	Mac n' cheese with white and green beans	Vegetable rice cakes with tofu (Pescatarian option: add canned salmon)	Red lentil vegetable curry	Courgette marbles sprinkled with cheese
Extras	Salad plate	Steamed broccoli and carrot	Salad plate 	Brown rice	Steamed carrots Wholemeal pasta
Drink <i>Ngā Inu</i>	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water
Afternoon tea <i>Kai ō te ahiahi</i>					
Snack	Fruit and vege pieces, cheese slices and onion dip	Feijoa muffins* Seasonal fruit 	Rainbow platter: Fruit, vegetables, pita triangles and black bean dip	Corn thins, cottage cheese and sliced tomato Seasonal fruit	Vegetable sticks and hummus Fruit salad
Drink <i>Ngā Inu</i>	Milk and water	Milk and water	Milk and water	Milk and water	Milk and water

*Healthy baking uses part or all wholemeal flour, oats or bran.

**Ground or flaked nuts and seeds can be used in snacks and baking.

Children can choke on food at any age but the risk is higher in children under 5 years. Refer to the Ministry of Health Guidelines to find out more. Search 'food and choking' at health.govt.nz

You can download the recipes for the **coloured items** from heartfoundation.org.nz

To learn more about planning a menu that meets the Healthy Heart Award guidelines visit learnbyheart.org.nz

VEGETARIAN MENU PLANNING

Children are able to obtain all the essential nutrients they need for normal growth and development from a carefully planned and varied vegetarian diet. Menu planning will help to control the quality and cost of food that is served. It will also make it easier for staff to order and buy the food needed.

A rotating or cycle menu is the easiest to use. A 2-4 week rotating cycle helps to ensure children's nutritional needs are met (e.g. energy, protein, iron, B12, calcium, zinc and Omega-3 fatty acids). It will also ensure a variety of sensory qualities, e.g. taste, texture, flavours, colours and temperature. This will help children's learning and enjoyment of food. Early and repeated exposure to a food also helps children to accept it and learn to like it in the long term.

For the Pā-Harakeke level of the Healthy Heart Award, if the menu of an early learning service includes morning and afternoon snacks as well as lunch, children should be offered (each day) at least:

- 2 servings of non-starchy vegetables*
- 2 servings of fruit (fresh, frozen or canned)
- 2 servings of grain foods (mostly wholegrain or wholemeal) or starchy vegetables*
- 1 serving of protein (e.g. eggs, tofu, tempeh, dried or canned beans, lentils and chickpeas, edamame (soy) beans and fish for those services offering)
- Vitamin-C rich vegetables or fruit with each main meal to enhance iron absorption
- 2 servings of milk or milk products (or calcium-fortified alternatives).

*Starchy vegetables include potato, Māori potato, kumara, corn, parsnip, yams, taro, green banana, cassava.

Remember to consider children from different cultures and also those with allergies or special nutritional needs when planning your menu.



NON-VEGETARIAN OPTIONS

This vegetarian menu can easily be adapted to be non-vegetarian and also meet the Pā-Harakeke level of the Heart Foundation's Healthy Heart Award. Suggestions include:

- **Corn and lentil fritters** – Add or top with canned tuna or salmon
- **Mac n' cheese with white and green beans** – Add cooked chicken for a pasta bake
- **Vegetable rice cakes** – Add or top with canned tuna or salmon
- **Red lentil vegetable curry** – Include lean beef or lamb
- **Courgette marbles** – Replace courgette marbles with **beef meatballs**.

Each week, remember to include:

- 2x meals with lean red meat
- 2x meals with white meat, fish or seafood
- 1x vegetarian meal.

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