

Healthy Eating Guidelines for Worksites



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Healthy Eating Guidelines for Worksites

Why offer healthy foods at meetings, conferences and seminars?

The physical and social environment of the workplace influences health-related behaviors. Work is where many people spend most of their time; therefore, food available at a person's workplace frequently determines what they eat throughout the day. Workplace gatherings can promote healthier food choices by following the recommendations put forth by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans by offering:

- More fruits and vegetables
- Non- or low-fat milk products
- Whole grains
- Foods low in saturated and trans fats
- Smaller serving sizes (see page 8 for examples of proper serving sizes)

General guidelines:

- Emphasize fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy and lean protein sources
- Offer low-fat and low-calorie foods
- Serve smaller portions of higher calorie foods (e.g. mini, halved or quartered bagels, muffins or cookies)
- Include a vegetarian option with meals and snacks
- Offer seasonal and local foods when possible (see page 7)
- Use lower fat versions of condiments (e.g. dressings, mayo, cream cheese, sour cream, dips)
- For mid-morning and mid-afternoon meetings, consider serving only beverages
- Serve only 100% juice, and use glasses or containers that are 12oz or smaller
- Serve low-fat or skim milk with coffee and tea
- Offer water with meals and snacks
- If registration forms are used, provide space to indicate food allergies or dietary restrictions



Whole Grains Tip:

When buying whole-grain products, the first or second ingredient must list “whole” before the grain (e.g. whole wheat, whole oats, whole corn meal, whole rye). Wheat, rye, pumpernickel, 12-grain and multi-grain breads are not necessarily whole grains.



Menu Ideas for Meetings and Conferences

Employers can make it easier for people to make healthy food choices by providing healthy food at meetings and other events they sponsor. Here are sample menus that offer healthy foods.

Breakfast

- Fruit pieces (offer seasonal, local fruit whenever possible)
- Low- or non-fat yogurt
- Small muffins (2-3oz) or large muffins cut in half (look for whole-grain muffins)
- 100% whole-grain bread and/or whole-grain English muffins
- Whole-grain cereals (serve with skim or 1% milk)
- Mini whole-grain bagels or larger bagels cut in half

Spreads to offer:

Single servings of peanut butter, jam, jelly, low-fat cream cheese, trans fat free spread

Beverages:

- Bottled water
- Skim or 1% milk
- Coffee and tea (offer skim and 1% milk)
- 100% juice in containers that are 12oz or smaller

Mid-morning meetings

Consider only serving beverages (see beverage list on page 4).

Lunch

- Low-sodium meat-based broth or low-sodium vegetable-based soup
- Green or vegetable salad (offer light vinaigrettes or low-fat dressings on the side)
- Pasta or rice salad (made with light vinaigrettes or low-fat dressings)
- Potato salad (use combination of low-fat mayo and yogurt, and dress lightly)
- Whole-grain rolls with trans fat free spread (if offering butter, use single-serving packets)
- Pizza (choose vegetable topping and avoid pepperoni, sausage and extra cheese)



Sandwich Ideas:

- Whole-grain breads, rolls, wraps (cut sandwiches in half for smaller portions)
- Lean roast beef, lean poultry without skin, ham, tuna fish with low-fat mayo, hummus (always offer a vegetarian choice)
- 1oz slices of reduced-fat cheese
- Vegetable toppings
- Packets of mustard and low-fat mayo

Beverages:

- Bottled water
- Unsweetened iced tea
- Flavored water (no sugar)
- Skim or 1% milk
- Coffee and tea (offer skim and 1% milk)

Beverage Tip:

Consider not offering soda and juice. If offered, provide diet soda and 100% juice in containers that are 12oz or smaller.

Menu Ideas for Meetings and Conferences

Mid-afternoon meetings

Consider only serving beverages.

Snack ideas:

- Baked chips with salsa
- Fruit pieces or fruit salad
- Low- or non-fat yogurt
- Raw veggies with low-fat dip, hummus and/or bean dip
- Whole-grain pita bread with hummus and/or bean dip
- Whole-grain crackers with cheese (1oz portions of cheese)
- Dried fruit with and without nuts
- Pretzels and plain popcorn

Beverages:

- Bottled water
- Unsweetened iced tea
- Flavored water (no sugar)
- Skim or 1% milk
- Coffee and tea (offer skim and 1% milk)

Snack Tip:

Consider not offering food at staff meetings. Calories from one extra bagel per week equals to a weight gain of 5 pounds per year.



Dinner

Work with the conference center or caterer to select entrées that have less than 15 grams of fat per serving and always include a vegetarian option.

- Green or vegetable salad (with light vinaigrettes or low-fat dressings on the side)
- Whole-grain rolls with trans fat free spread (if offering butter, use single-serving packets)
- Pasta with marinara sauce
- Lean meats, skinless poultry, fish or tofu that is grilled, broiled, roasted or baked
- Serve at least two vegetables with meals (e.g. steamed vegetables, salad)
- Request seasonal and local vegetables (avoid butter and cream sauces)

Beverages:

- Bottled water
- Unsweetened iced tea
- Flavored water (no sugar)
- Skim or 1% milk
- Coffee and tea (offer skim and 1% milk)

Beverage Tip:

Consider not offering soda and juice. If offered, provide diet soda and 100% juice in containers that are 12oz or smaller.

Dessert

- Fresh fruit pieces or fruit salad (with low-fat yogurt dip)
- Angel food cake with fruit topping
- Low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet
- If cookies are offered, consider whole-grain cookies such as oatmeal or offer lower-fat varieties and smaller sizes (2-3oz)
- If cake is offered, cut into 2" squares

Making Healthier Food Choices

Conference centers and caterers should be willing to work with you or your planning committee to develop a healthy menu. Use the list below as a guide when talking to the chef or caterer. These guidelines are appropriate for meetings off-site or in the office.

	BEST	GOOD	LIMIT / AVOID
BEVERAGES	skim or 1% milk fat-free half & half soy milk tea coffee water sugar-free flavored water unsweetened iced tea 100% fruit or vegetable juice in 8oz containers diet soda	2% milk fruit juice	regular soda whole milk and cream sweetened tea lemonade sweetened fruit drinks sports drinks
FRUIT	fresh frozen canned in own juice	canned in light syrup dried	canned in heavy syrup sweetened canned fruit
VEGETABLES	all fresh or frozen without added fat and sauces low-sodium vegetable-based broth or soup soups made with vegetable puree or skim milk	canned stir-fried but not battered oven-baked potatoes vegetable-based broth or soup	fried battered served with cheese or butter sauce cream-based soups (such as cream of broccoli)

Making Healthier Food Choices

	BEST	GOOD	LIMIT / AVOID
MILK & MILK PRODUCTS	skim milk non-fat cream non-fat yogurt low-fat and part skim cheese fat-free cream cheese fat-free or low-fat cottage cheese	1% milk low-fat or whipped cream cheese low-fat yogurt low-fat cheese	whole milk and cream full-fat cheese and cream cheese processed cheese spread
BREADS, CEREALS & PASTAS	whole-grain or whole wheat: rolls, bread, English muffins or bagels low-fat granola and granola bars whole-grain cereal oatmeal whole-grain pasta brown rice	white: rolls, bread, English muffins or bagels mini-muffins unsweetened cereals grits pancakes French toast white pasta and rice corn bread	Danishes croissants doughnuts sweet rolls large muffins pastries sweetened cereals pasta with cheese, meat or Alfredo sauce pasta salad made with mayonnaise or creamy dressing crackers made with trans fat (see page 10)
MEAT, POULTRY, FISH, EGGS, BEANS & NUTS	extra-lean ground meat trimmed beef and pork skinless chicken and turkey tuna canned in water grilled, broiled, roasted or baked fish and shellfish beans split peas lentils tofu egg whites egg substitute	lean ground beef meat stir-fried in olive oil low-sodium and low-fat lunch meats broiled hamburgers Canadian bacon low-fat hot dogs tuna canned in oil nuts whole eggs cooked without added fat	fried meat or fish untrimmed beef and pork bacon sausage pepperoni ribs hot dogs chicken and turkey with skin lunch meats whole eggs cooked with fat

Making Healthier Food Choices

CONDIMENTS

BEST	GOOD	LIMIT / AVOID
catsup mustard vinegar Tabasco® non-fat or low-fat dressings non-fat cream cheese 100% fruit jam trans fat free margarine	whipped margarine and butter jelly low-fat mayonnaise oil-based dressings peanut butter low-fat sour cream	stick margarine and butter mayonnaise cream cheese creamy dressings sour cream gravy tartar sauce cream sauce cheese sauce

DESSERTS

frozen fruit juice bars ice milk bars low-fat frozen yogurt and ice cream sherbet sorbet fig bars ginger snaps fresh fruit pieces or fruit salad with low-fat yogurt dip angel food cake with fruit topping whole-grain cookies such as oatmeal (or lower-fat varieties)	dark chocolate cocoa cakes and pies cut into 2" squares 2-3oz cookies	cookies and cakes pies cheese cake ice cream milk or white chocolate candy
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Offering Seasonal and Local Foods at Conferences and Meetings

Why use seasonal and local foods?

- It supports our local community, economy and agriculture, and protects Vermont's farmland.
- It is better for the environment. Seasonal and local foods do not need artificial heat and light to create year-round growing conditions. Traditional systems of local farming are often small and diverse, reducing the need for synthetic pesticides, herbicides and artificial fertilizers. Additionally, fewer fossil fuels are burned on foods that travel short distances from farm to table and don't require as much packaging for transport.
- Food tastes better in season.
- Food in season can be less expensive, especially if you buy in bulk or purchase "seconds" (produce that is cosmetically damaged, but otherwise just fine).
- Local foods require less travel time; they'll be fresher and taste better, and are bred for taste, not for durability on the road. When food tastes better, you don't need to add calories, salt and fat in the form of sauces to increase flavor.
- Local producers and processors usually do not add preservatives or other artificial ingredients.

Remember to ask the chef to use local foods. Most hotels and conference centers will accommodate when asked. Here are some simple-to-serve, easy-to-find local items:

- Milk
- Cider
- Cream for coffee
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Fresh vegetables (in season)
- Garden salad (in season)
- Fresh fruit (in season - apples most of the year)
- Granola (maple sweetened)
- Local beef, chicken, turkey, pork, lamb, sausage, lunchmeat
- Honey (as tea sweetener and spread) and maple syrup
- Butter
- Herbs (garnish, salad, seasoning)

For more detailed information on substituting local ingredients into common meeting and conference menus, visit the "Buy Local/ Buy Vermont" section at www.vermontagriculture.com or call (802) 828-2416.



The Vermont Fresh Network can also be a great resource for chefs and customers who want to do more with local foods. Their mission is to connect local farmers with local restaurants. You can find out more and search their membership at www.vermontfresh.net.

Visualize a Serving Size

When cutting food to serve at meetings or when discussing menus with chefs, visualize these standard serving sizes to help keep portions in check.



3 ounces of meat: size of a deck of cards



3 ounces of fish: size of a checkbook



1 ounce of cheese: size of four dice



1 medium potato: size of a computer mouse



2 tablespoons of peanut butter: size of a ping pong ball



1 teaspoon of butter or margarine: size of the tip of your thumb



1 cup of pasta: size of a tennis ball



1 cup of mashed potatoes or broccoli: size of your fist



1 average bagel: size of a hockey puck



1 ounce of nuts or dried fruit: size of a golf ball

Vending Machine Guidelines

Vending choices and pricing can promote healthy purchases over high fat or low fiber choices. If you are not a key decision maker, it is important to get support in your organization for any changes you would like to implement. Identify the person in your organization who handles vending contracts, and work with that person to make healthier choices available in vending machines. Start with a goal to have 50% of foods meet the guidelines and remember that smaller snack portions are preferred.

BEVERAGE RECOMMENDATIONS	
FRUIT/VEGETABLE JUICE	beverages that contain at least 100% fruit or vegetable juice package size no larger than 12oz
BOTTLED WATER	water without any added ingredients
DAIRY PRODUCTS	low-fat or non-fat milk, flavored milk or drinkable yogurt (with or without artificial sweeteners) package size no larger than 16oz and less than 300 total calories
OTHER BEVERAGES	low-calorie* diet soda, low-calorie iced tea, low-calorie sports drinks (with or without artificial sweeteners) *low-calorie: 40 calories or less per serving
SNACK RECOMMENDATIONS	
CHEESE	regular and reduced-fat cheese - portion size: 1.5oz or smaller
YOGURT	low-fat or non-fat yogurt: no larger than 8oz package (with or without artificial sweeteners) 8oz should have less than 200 calories per serving 6oz should have less than 150 calories per serving
NON-DAIRY SNACK FOODS	fat: No more than 35% of total calories from fat with less than 10% of calories from saturated fat or less than 1 gram of saturated fat and no trans fat. Exception: nuts, nut butters, and seeds sugar: No more than 35% sugar by weight and no more than 30 grams per 8 ounce portion, with the exception of fruits sodium: less than 230mg of sodium with the following exceptions: vegetables with sauce and soups with less than 480mg sodium and containing one or more of the following: more than 2 grams of fiber; or more than 5 grams of protein; or more than 10% Daily Value of Vitamin A,C,E, folate, calcium, magnesium, potassium, or iron; or 1/2 serving (1/4 cup) of fruit or vegetables

What to Look for on a Food Label

Limit saturated and trans fats

Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol and as low as possible in trans fat may reduce the risk for heart disease. Look for foods that have 5% or less daily value for fat.

To identify trans fat look for the words “hydrogenated” or “partially hydrogenated” on the food label.

Watch cholesterol

A food that is low in cholesterol contains less than 20mg of cholesterol per serving and less than 2 grams of saturated fat per serving.

Limit sodium

Adults should consume less than 2,300mg (approximately 1 teaspoon) of salt per day, less for those with health problems or a family history of high blood pressure. Low sodium foods have less than 140mg of sodium per serving.

Look for fiber

Adults need at least 25 grams of fiber everyday. High fiber foods contain at least 5 grams per serving. Fruits, veggies and whole grain foods are naturally good sources of fiber.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 3 oz. (85g)	
Servings Per Container 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 220	Calories from Fat 140
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 16g	25%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Trans Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 55mg	18%
Sodium 640mg	27%
Total Carbohydrate 3g	1%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 14g	
Vitamin A 4%	• Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 2%	• Iron 4%
<small>*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.</small>	

Example of a food label

References

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