

# Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars & Catered Events



## Message from

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Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars & Catered Events was developed by Public Health Nutrition faculty, staff, and students in the School of Public Health. As one of the top public health schools in the country, we believe it is our responsibility to take the lead in educating the public about healthy behaviors. Dietary choices are among the fundamental components of healthy living.

We offer these guidelines to any organization interested in promoting a healthy work environment. The guidelines come at a time when the nation is in the midst of an obesity epidemic. Through the choices we make, we can all play a role in putting an end to the epidemic and thereby live longer, healthier lives.

## Developed by

Guidelines Committee

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Available at: <http://z.umn.edu/healthyfoods>

The School of Public Health at the University of Minnesota is committed to promoting the health and well-being of populations. Our food choices, lifestyle and environment all affect our health. We know that dietary factors contribute substantially to preventable diseases and premature deaths.

- ◆ American diets are low in fruits, vegetables and whole grains and high in refined carbohydrates, added sugar, saturated fat and sodium.
- ◆ Dietary factors are associated with 4 of the 10 leading causes of death: coronary heart disease, some types of cancer, stroke and type 2 diabetes. Diet-related health conditions cost society an estimated \$200 billion each year in medical expenses and lost productivity.
- ◆ There is an epidemic of obesity. Currently, two-thirds of U.S. adults and one-third of youth are either obese or overweight. Obesity increases the risk for many serious illnesses including heart disease, stroke, type 2 diabetes, hypertension and certain types of cancer.

Because of the strong relationship between diet and health, high rates of obesity and our commitment to health, the following guidelines were developed to help facilitate the selection of healthier and lower calorie food and beverages. It is fitting for a School of Public Health to provide leadership to promote healthful eating at work-site functions. We can model our commitment to good health by creating a healthy work environment. Most importantly, by following these guidelines, you can promote your own health and reduce your risk for chronic diseases.

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## Guideline 1—Offer healthy food choices at breakfasts, lunches, dinners and receptions

There are many healthy options for tasty foods and beverages. When food and beverages are provided for events, offer food choices that are lower in fat and calories. Fruits and vegetables are always a good choice. Portion sizes have increased substantially in the United States and contribute added calories. Offer smaller

portions of foods, such as mini muffins or mini bagels.

Food recommendations included in this guideline are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans issued in 2010 by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are science-

based recommendations that provide advice for healthy Americans aged 2 years and over about food choices to promote health and prevent disease.

*Important:* Whenever possible, try to serve locally produced foods. Local foods are tastier and fresher, support farmers and the local economy and help protect the environment.

## Guideline 2—Consider not offering food at mid-morning or mid-afternoon meetings, presentations and seminars

In America, we are surrounded by food all day, every day. Many meetings and seminars provide food. With the increasing rates of overweight people and the difficulty of controlling weight in a food-saturated environment, it is important to consider whether it is necessary to provide food

at meetings, presentations and seminars, especially mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

We can help create a norm that food does not have to be omnipresent and does not have to be used to try to motivate people to attend these events. While food is often provided at

meetings for social reasons, there is a need to increase awareness that at mid-morning and mid-afternoon meetings, food is not necessary. Consider offering only beverages. If it is decided to provide food, offer only fruits, vegetables and/or other healthy foods.

## Tips for Selecting Healthier Lower Calorie Foods

- ◆ Ask caterer to use lower fat or fat-free preparation methods, to serve added fats like dressings or condiments on the side and to provide the number of calories and fat grams in entrées if available
- ◆ Select lower fat and calorie entrées—approximately 12–15 g fat or less and 450 calories or less

- ◆ Select items that are broiled, baked, grilled or steamed rather than fried or sautéed
- ◆ Choose entrées in tomato-based sauces rather than cream, butter or cheese sauces
- ◆ Include fresh fruit
- ◆ Include at least one vegetable—fresh or cooked, with no butter or cream sauces added

- ◆ Include whole grain breads—skip the butter or margarine
- ◆ Choose lower fat and calorie desserts: cut up fresh fruit and offer with low-fat fruit yogurt dip, low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping

## Suggestions for Foods & Beverages

### Beverages

- ◆ Ice water
- ◆ Bottled spring or sparkling water—regular or flavored with no sugar
- ◆ 100% fruit or vegetable juices—avoid large-size bottles
- ◆ Low fat or fat-free milk
- ◆ Coffee and flavored coffees—regular and decaffeinated
- ◆ Tea—regular and herb teas—hot or cold
- ◆ Coffee/tea creamers of low fat or fat-free milk or half & half

### Breakfast Meetings

- ◆ Breakfast—aim for 600 calories or less
- ◆ Fresh fruit
- ◆ Yogurt—flavored non-fat/fat-free
- ◆ Bagels—3-1/2" diameter or less; serve with low-fat cream cheese, jam or jelly
- ◆ Muffins—small or mini (5 g fat or less/muffin)
- ◆ Fruit bread (5 g fat or less/1 oz slice)—skip serving with butter or margarine
- ◆ Granola bars—low-fat (5 g fat or less/bar)
- ◆ Beverages from "Beverages" list

### Catered Lunches & Dinners

- ◆ Aim for a lunch or dinner of 700 total calories or less
- ◆ Select an entrée with no more than 12–15 g fat and 450 calories or less
- ◆ Always offer a vegetarian entrée
- ◆ Avoid fried foods or cream sauces
- ◆ Include fresh fruit
- ◆ Include at least one vegetable—fresh or cooked, with no butter or cream sauces added
- ◆ Serve salads with dressing on the side—offer at least one low-fat or fat-free dressing
- ◆ Choose lower fat/lower calorie desserts: cut up fresh fruit and offer with low-fat fruit yogurt dip, low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping
- ◆ Include whole grain breads—skip the butter or margarine
- ◆ Beverages from "Beverages" list

### Box Lunch Sandwich Ideas (always include a vegetarian option):

- ◆ Whole grain breads or pita wraps—prepared without butter/margarine, mayonnaise/salad dressing

- ◆ Cheese—reduced fat (5 g fat or less/oz)
- ◆ Meats, poultry or marinated tofu—low-fat (3 g fat/oz)
- ◆ Toppings of lettuce, sprouts, tomatoes, onions, pickles, mustard, catsup, low-fat mayonnaise
- ◆ Pretzels or baked chips (5 g fat or less/oz)
- ◆ Fresh fruit

### Catered Receptions

- ◆ Fresh fruit—cut up and offered with low-fat yogurt dip
- ◆ Raw vegetables—cut up and offered with fat-free or low-fat dressing, salsa or tofu dip
- ◆ Raw vegetable salads marinated in fat-free or low-fat Italian dressing
- ◆ Pasta, tofu, and vegetable salads with fat-free or low-fat dressing
- ◆ Vegetable spring rolls—fresh, not fried
- ◆ Vegetable sushi rolls
- ◆ Cheese—reduced fat, cut into small 2" cubes
- ◆ Whole grain crackers—5 g fat or less/serving
- ◆ Salmon (poached or steamed, no breading)
- ◆ Lean beef or turkey—1 oz slices
- ◆ Cake—cut into small 2" squares
- ◆ Angel food cake slices with fruit topping
- ◆ Beverages from "Beverages" list



## BALANCE YOUR EATING & ACTIVITY



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**Watch Those Extra Calories.** 3,500 more calories than you need can add a pound of weight. So if you eat 10 more calories a day than you burn, you'll gain about one pound in a month or about 10 pounds in a year.

**Check the Label.** The Nutrition Facts label lists number of servings per package and calories per serving.

**Drink Less Pop.** A 20 oz. bottle of regular pop has about 250 calories. Drinking one bottle a day for a year is over 90,000 calories and could equal as much as 26 pounds of weight gained in a year.

**Choose a Smaller Size.** A large order of French fries is over 500 calories. Cut that in half with the smaller size.

**Switch to Skim.** A 16 oz. specialty coffee drink can have 400 calories or more. Order it with skim milk and no whipped cream and cut the calories by half.

**Be Active.** Aim for 30-60 minutes of physical activity most days.

**Take a Walk.** If you keep your eating the same and start walking just 30 minutes a day, you could lose as many as 13-15 pounds in a year.

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## HOW MANY CALORIES DO YOU NEED A DAY?

Gender	Age	ACTIVITY LEVEL		
		Sedentary (less than 30 minutes/day)	Moderate (30-60 minutes/day)	Active (more than 60 minutes/day)
Female	4 - 8	1200 - 1400	1200 - 1400	1400 - 1800
	9 - 13	1400 - 1600	1600 - 2000	1800 - 2200
	14 - 18	1800	2000	2400
	19 - 30	1800 - 2000	2000 - 2200	2400
	31 - 50	1800	2000	2200
	51 +	1600	1800	2000 - 2200
Male	4 - 8	1200 - 1400	1400 - 1600	1600 - 2000
	9 - 13	1600 - 2000	1800 - 2200	2000 - 2600
	14 - 18	2000 - 2400	1400 - 2800	2800 - 3200
	19 - 30	2400 - 2600	2600 - 2800	3000
	31 - 50	2200 - 2400	2400 - 2600	2800 - 3000
	51 +	2000 - 2200	2200 - 2400	2400 - 2800

Check out [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov) for more personalized information to help you choose the foods and amounts that are right for you.