

Guidelines for offering healthy foods at meeting and catered events

Have you considered how the food choices you make for meetings and catered events influence the health of your fellow employees and clients?

Creating a healthy nutrition environment is an important part of promoting health in your workplace.

These guidelines are designed to help facilitate the selection of healthier food and beverage options for meetings and catered events. By following these guidelines, you can promote nutrition, health and help to reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Personnel are encouraged to use these guidelines when ordering food or beverages for all work sponsored functions.

Guidelines

Guideline 1:

Consider not offering food, or offering only beverages. We are surrounded by food all day, every day. It is important to consider whether it is necessary to provide food at meetings, especially during the mid-morning or afternoon. If you decide to provide food, consider offering only fruit and vegetables.

Guideline 2:

Offer a variety of healthy food choices. There are many healthy and tasty options for meetings and catered events. When food is provided, aim to offer foods that are lower in fat and higher in fibre. Offer a variety of whole grain products, vegetables and fruits. Choose lower fat milk products, leaner meats, and foods prepared with little or no fat.

The following suggestions will help you in choosing a variety of healthy options that are in line with these guidelines.

Beverages

- Tap water
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Skim or 1% milk
- Coffee and flavoured coffees – regular and decaffeinated
- Tea – regular and herbal teas

Snacks

- Fresh fruit
- Raw vegetables – cut up and offered with fat-free or low-fat dressing, salsa, yogurt dip or hummus
- Whole grain crackers and cheese
- Whole grain cereal bars and granola bars



Breakfast

- Fresh fruit
- Yogurt
- Bagels – serve a variety of whole grain options (quarter and serve with peanut butter, low fat cream cheese and/or jam)
- Muffins – small, mini or cut in half (include a variety of lower fat, bran and fruit options)
- Loaf bread (e.g. banana, zucchini)

Catered Lunches and Dinners

- Offer a vegetarian entrée
- Avoid fried foods and cream sauces
- Include at least one vegetable, raw or cooked, without butter or cream sauces added
- Serve green salads with dressing on the side
- Offer at least one low-fat or fat-free dressing
- Provide pasta, vegetable, tuna or salmon salads with fat-free or low fat dressing
- Include whole grain breads (whole grain whole wheat, multi-grain rye)
- Consider providing fruit for dessert



Sandwiches

- Always include a vegetarian option
- Choose whole grain breads, pita, wraps, or buns
- Limit processed luncheon meats
Consider sliced lean roast beef, chicken, turkey or ham
- Offer egg, tuna or salmon made with lower fat mayonnaise
- Include a selection of cheeses (especially lower fat varieties)
- Offer toppings of lettuce, tomatoes, onions, pickles and other vegetables

Tips for selecting foods lower in fat:

- Ask caterer to use lower fat or fat-free preparation methods and to serve added fats like dressings and condiments on the side
- Choose entrees in tomato-based sauces rather than cream, butter or cheese sauces
- Include fresh fruit instead of higher fat desserts like cakes and cookies
- Serve vegetables with low-fat dip instead of butter or cream sauces

For more information on healthy eating in the workplace for Nutrition Services, visit www.york.ca/nutrition.

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