

Healthy Eating Workplace Guidelines

Background: Healthy Eating Guidelines

Healthy Eating Workplace Guidelines are a set of recommendations that aim to provide consistent direction to the workplace on the foods and beverages offered within the workplace. The guidelines will set standards for creating an environment that is supportive of healthy eating at work.

The objective of the guidelines is for the workplace to be a role model in providing a workplace environment that supports healthy eating. This means that, whenever possible, healthier food choices should be available (including social committee events). This does not mean that certain foods are allowed and certain foods are not. While encouraging vegetables and fruit, whole grain and lower fat choices, [Canada's Food Guide](#) stresses that all foods can be part of a healthy diet.

How will your workplace benefit from Healthy Eating Guidelines?

- Adoption of guidelines shows your employees that you value their health and well-being.
- Employees who eat well, are physically active and maintain a healthy weight can reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, heart disease, cancer, obesity and other chronic diseases. Other employee benefits include improved overall well-being, increased ability to cope with stress, more energy and increased productivity.
- Healthy Eating Guidelines will increase employees' access to healthier food choices, offer an opportunity to make healthy choices, and help them establish healthier eating patterns during their workday. Establishing Healthy Eating Guidelines will ensure that any implemented changes continue regardless of staff turnover.

The guidelines should be included in policy and procedure manuals or training manuals and staff orientation and the **Healthy Food Choices Checklist** should be used anytime food is offered in your workplace (e.g. selecting snacks served at meetings).



Healthy Food Choices Checklist

Recommendations

PROMOTE HEALTHY EATING

- Choose (or request from catering companies) foods based on meal/event categories outlined below
- When planning meals aim for at least 3 food groups at meals, and 1-2 food groups at snacks
- Keep in mind individual food sensitivities and/or allergies

PROMOTE ONTARIO PRODUCTS

- Look for Ontario products in the grocery store, or ask for them from your caterer or food service provider

BE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

- Use dishes rather than disposable products, or look for biodegradable disposable products (i.e. paper plates instead of foam)
- Recycle food packaging when possible
- Reduce the use of food packaging

Cultural diversity

- Appreciate the cultural diversity of the workplace by seeking input from staff as to the type of foods they would prefer at meetings and events

PRACTICE SAFE FOOD HANDLING

- Follow proper hand washing procedure
- Aim to serve food within 30 minutes after it arrives
- Keep cold foods cold, and hot foods hot
- Don't leave perishable foods at room temperature for longer than 2 hours
- Ensure leftovers are refrigerated as soon as possible
- If you have questions about safe food handling contact York Region Community and Health Services, Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653



Beverages (at meals and snacks)

- ❑ Have fresh water available always
- ❑ 100% fruit or vegetable juice (avoid large-size bottles)
- ❑ 2%, 1%, skim or chocolate milk, or fortified beverages (e.g., soy beverage)
- ❑ Milk in addition to cream for coffee and tea
- ❑ Decaffeinated beverages (e.g. herbal tea)

Breakfast

- ❑ Fresh Fruit (whole or sliced) or fruit cups (packed in juice)
- ❑ Whole grain breads, toast, bagels, pita
- ❑ Hot or cold whole grain cereal
- ❑ Lower-fat muffins and loafs
- ❑ Lower-fat cheeses (20% M.F. or less)
- ❑ Lower-fat yogurt (2% M.F. or less)
- ❑ Offer spreads (light cream cheese, butter, margarine, jams) on the side
- ❑ Consider lower-fat cooking methods for meat & alternatives, e.g., poached or boiled eggs, ham or baked beans.

Example Breakfast

Bowl of bananas and/or apples
100% fruit juice
Whole grain bagels
Light cream cheese and jams
Coffee/tea

Lunch

Sandwiches

- ❑ Whole grain breads, bagels, pita, tortilla, rolls or roti
- ❑ Variety of lower-fat sandwich fillings such as tuna or salmon salad, grilled vegetables, lean roast beef, turkey, chicken, ham, pastrami or lower-fat cheese
- ❑ Ask for sandwiches made with little or no mayonnaise, butter or margarine. Order mayonnaise, butter or margarine on the side. Offer mustard, chutney, relish and hummus as alternatives

Main Dishes

- ❑ Meatless dishes such as pasta with tomato sauce, vegetarian lasagna, vegetarian Pad Thai, stir-fry vegetables with tofu
- ❑ Pizza with vegetable toppings and lower-fat meat toppings (e.g. chicken)
- ❑ Choose leaner meats, fish, or poultry dishes that are grilled, broiled, roasted or steamed instead of fried



- ❑ Ask for whole wheat pasta, brown rice, baked potatoes or wedges instead of white pasta, white rice or French fries

- ❑ Consider culturally-appropriate, international dishes

Salads and Soups

- ❑ Variety of dark greens such as spinach, mesculun, red-leaf or romaine lettuce
- ❑ Vegetable salads such as tomato and cucumber or green bean salad
- ❑ Vegetable tray

- ❑ Choose lower-fat salad dressings and/or have salad dressings served on the side
- ❑ Pasta, couscous, quinoa, bean or lentil salads
- ❑ Vegetable-based broth soups

Desserts

- ❑ Make dessert about choice
- ❑ Fresh, canned or dried fruit, fruit salad, fruit kebobs

- ❑ Lower-fat yogurt
- ❑ Lower-fat muffins, whole grain cookies (e.g. oatmeal)

Example Lunch

Minestrone Soup with Crackers
 Assorted Sandwiches (tuna, salmon, turkey, ham, vegetables) on whole wheat bread, roll, bagel or pita
 Vegetable platter with low-fat dressing
 Assortment of Cookies
 Jugs of fresh water

Snacks

- ❑ Fresh vegetables or fruit
- ❑ Fruit salad or kebobs
- ❑ Vegetable or fruit tray
- ❑ Whole grain crackers and lower-fat cheese (20% M.F. or less)
- ❑ Lower-fat yogurt (2% M.F. or less)
- ❑ Bean or vegetable based dips (e.g. hummus) served with pita, baked tortilla chips or vegetables

- ❑ Lower-fat/high fibre cereal and/or granola bars
- ❑ Trail mix, dried fruit, mixed nuts
- ❑ Plain popcorn
- ❑ Ensure foods are offered in snack-size portions
- ❑ Have a fruit tray or basket available.
- ❑ Variety of lower-fat muffins or bagels with lower-fat spreads (e.g. light cream cheese, jam)

Example Snack

Mini carrots
 Whole grain pitas
 Hummus dip
 2%, 1% or skim white or chocolate milk
 Jugs of fresh water

For questions or assistance, please call your Public Health Nutritionist at 905-895-4512 ext. 74333.



Healthy Eating Workplace Guidelines - TEMPLATE

Company Name:

Category:

Number:

Approved by:

Reference:

Page:

Date:

Guidelines to be reviewed on a biannual basis. Last reviewed XX/XX/XXXX

GOAL

_____ *<Insert company name>* shows a commitment to the health and well-being of its employees by incorporating the guiding principles into workplace practice.

GUIDING STATEMENT

_____ *<Insert company name>* is committed to supporting healthy eating at meetings, workshops, fundraising events and work functions; healthy choices in the vending machines; and whenever/wherever food is sold or offered to our employees.

_____ *<Insert company name>* is committed to the guiding principles that are fundamental to the Healthy Eating Guidelines. Balancing these principles will help to ensure that our staff are provided with an environment supportive of healthy eating.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

_____ *<Insert company name>* will follow these guiding principles to direct decision-making for the selection of foods available to our employees.



1. **Promote Healthy Eating.** We will provide options for healthy eating according to [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#) at our meetings, workshops, other events as well as in lunchrooms and/or cafeterias, vending machines and when conducting fundraising activities. Management will act as role models to ensure that both our messages and actions support a pattern of healthy eating.
2. **Promote Ontario Products.** Whenever possible we will select Ontario produce and food products to support Ontario's food and agriculture industries. Eating local products benefits consumers, local economies and the environment.
3. **Be Environmentally Friendly.** We will seek out on an ongoing basis practices that protect the environment by minimizing waste from food, food packaging and disposable dishes, and recycle as per municipal and provincial regulations
4. **Recognize Cultural Diversity.** We will select food choices that reflect the cultural diversity of our workplace. The inclusion of culturally diverse foods demonstrates that cultural differences are valued and respected within the organization.
5. **Practice Safe Food Handling.** We will adhere to safe food handling practices and purchase food from vendors in compliance with the Food Premises Regulations.

PROCESS

_____ *<Insert company name>* personnel shall use the **Healthy Food Choices Checklist** when selecting, purchasing and providing foods for workplace meetings, workshops, other events and whenever/wherever food is sold or offered to our employees.

