

# Better Lives. Stronger Communities.

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Healthy People



## OSU Extension Healthy Eating at Meetings Guidelines

Ohio State University Extension promotes healthy lifestyles, including healthy food choices and regular physical activity, through our statewide programming efforts. As such, we recognize the importance of modeling our commitment to healthy lifestyles by striving to create a healthy work environment. Offering healthy selections at group work events is one way to assure that we are providing the healthiest possible environment for ourselves and our co-workers and encouraging healthier choices.

Due to the strong relationship between diet and health and the increasing rates of overweight and obesity, we are committing to provide healthy selections when serving foods and beverages in the workplace or at events. The intention of these guidelines is not to dictate what individuals can eat or bring into the office for special occasions. Rather, these guidelines are intended to assist OSU Extension employees in using university resources to purchase foods and beverages consistent with current health research and recommendations. Therefore, the guidelines apply to all in-services, meetings, trainings, conferences, events, etc. By working together and striving to follow the recommendations outlined below, we will promote better health and help reduce risks for chronic diseases.

## Selecting and Working with a Caterer

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- Find a caterer who is interested in working with you; not everyone welcomes change. As a customer, you might introduce new ideas that the caterer has not considered before. You might be able to help him or her realize the potential of a growing market of healthy menu choices. Over time, this may be a way for the caterer to differentiate him or herself from other caterers.
- Offering healthy catered foods requires communication with your caterer. One approach for negotiating with a caterer might be “One of our priorities is healthy food for our participants. What healthy options can we add without dramatically increasing the cost?”
- Begin with small changes in food choices or serving sizes:
  - 👍 Replace at least half of the plain white bread or rolls with whole-grain bread products
  - 👍 Water and iced tea instead of sugar-sweetened beverages
  - 👍 Fresh fruit for dessert
  - 👍 Foods provided from local sources
- Have the caterer provide nutrition facts and ingredient lists for the foods prepared so that consumers can make healthy choices, and avoid potential allergens.



## How Large Are Your Servings?

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Even a small change in serving size can provide a healthy option. Think about how large your sandwich, dessert, or beverage typically is. As you work with the caterer, consider serving sizes and healthy food choices. Ask the caterer the following:

- 👍 Can you serve mini bagels, or slice large bagels into halves or quarters?
- 👍 Can you provide 6 oz. bottles or cartons of 100% juice, instead of 16 oz. bottles?
- 👍 Can you give us a selection of 1 ½-inch cookies instead of 5-inch cookies?

## Healthy Food Selections

### Fruits and Vegetables

- Provide fresh, seasonal, locally grown fruits and vegetables whenever possible
- Choose a variety of colors
- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables instead of canned
- Choose vegetables seasoned with herbs instead of butter or cream sauce
- Offer sliced fruits and vegetable platters served with low-fat dips, hummus, or peanut butter



### Dairy

- Choose low-fat cheeses
- Provide low-fat and fat-free/skim milk
- Choose low-fat or fat-free, unsweetened yogurt
- Consider offering dairy alternatives such as unsweetened soy or almond milk

### Protein

- Choose lean meat, fish and poultry
- Provide only 2-3 ounce servings
- Choose healthier cooking methods such as baking, broiling, or roasting, rather than frying
- Consider high protein foods such as eggs, nuts, nut butters, seeds, beans, and tofu



### Breads and Grains

- Provide whole-grain breads, cereals, crackers, and pastas, instead of white
- Offer slices of bread, ½-inch thick or less
- Offer whole grain tortillas or wraps
- Choose mini whole-grain bagels or regular whole-grain bagels cut into quarters

### Desserts

- Provide sliced or whole fresh fruit as dessert
- Consider dark chocolate-dipped strawberries
- Consider angel food cake topped with seasonal fruit
- Provide desserts in small or bite-sized portions



### Beverages

- Make pitchers of water available at all times
- Consider offering water, seltzer, or carbonated water with sliced fruit
- Consider serving flavored, unsweetened carbonated water
- For caffeinated beverages, choose unsweetened iced tea, hot tea, or coffee
- Provide 100% juice only in single serving 6 oz. containers
- Choose low-fat or skim, unsweetened milk or milk alternatives (almond, soy, etc.)











































## Healthy Substitutions

### BREAKFAST

Keep breakfast simple. Include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole-grain bread and cereal options, lean protein, and low-fat dairy options.

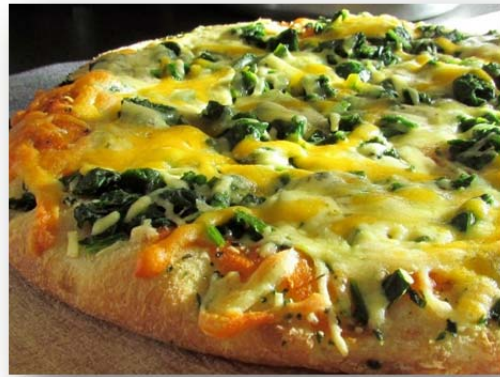
Instead of:	Ask For:
 Whole milk	 Low-fat or fat-free/skim milk or milk alternatives (almond, soy, etc.)
 Sweetened yogurt	 Low-fat, plain yogurt
 Regular cream cheese	 Low-fat cream cheese, hummus, or natural peanut butter
 High-fat meats such as bacon or sausage	 Lean meats like Canadian bacon
 Muffins or scones	 Fresh fruit
 Sweetened juice drinks	 100% fruit juice in single serving 6 oz. containers
 Sugared cereal	 Whole-grain cereal
 Donuts or Danishes	 Mini bagels
 Pancakes or Waffles	 Scrambled eggs, hard boiled eggs, or vegetable omelets
 Croissants or biscuits	 Whole-grain toast

### LUNCH/DINNER

Instead of:	Ask For:
 Cream-based soups	 Broth-based soups such as minestrone, vegetable, chicken noodle, chicken rice, or black bean
 High-fat cheese	 Low-fat cheese
 High-fat lunch meat such as bologna or salami	 Lean deli meat such as ham, roast beef, turkey, or chicken
 White bread or buns	 A variety of wraps or whole-grain breads such as rye, whole-wheat, and pumpernickel
 Fried vegetables	 Stir fry or steamed vegetables
 Potato chips	 Sliced fruits or vegetables
 High-fat sour cream	 Low-fat or non-fat sour cream
 Mayonnaise-based salad such as coleslaw, macaroni, or potato	 Green, leafy salad or fruit salad
 Creamy salad dressings such as Thousand Island, Ranch, or French	 Light dressing or vinegar and oil

## IS PIZZA ON THE MENU?

- Request that pizza be cut into small pieces.
- Always provide a vegetarian option.
- Always serve with green, leafy salad, if possible.



Instead of:	Ask For:
👎 3 or 4 meat choices	👍 One meat per pizza
👎 High-fat meat such as pepperoni, bacon, or sausage	👍 Low-fat meat such as Canadian bacon, chicken, or ham
👎 Thick or deep-dish crust	👍 Thin crust
👎 Meat or cheese only pizza	👍 Vegetables such as peppers, onions, mushrooms, olives, and/or tomatoes
👎 White bread crust	👍 Whole-wheat crust
👎 Alfredo or cream sauce	👍 Tomato or pesto sauce
👎 Regular cheese	👍 Low-fat cheese or half the amount of cheese

## Food Safety Tips

Planning a healthy meeting is about more than just providing nutritious foods. It is also important to take all necessary steps to prevent people from getting sick.

Meeting planners should use these tips to follow basic food safety procedures:

- Hot foods should be kept hot at 135°F or above, and cold foods should be kept cold at 41°F or below.
- Any perishable foods which are not kept hot or cold as previously described should be discarded after holding for 4 hours or more at room temperature.
- Anyone handling food must wash their hands before doing so.
- People who are sick should never handle food or utensils.
- Make sure to verify that any off-campus food vendor has a valid health permit from the issuing health jurisdiction.



## Other Pointers for Planning Healthy Meetings

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- Include a variety of colors, textures, temperatures, and flavors
- Provide fresh fruit and/or vegetables at every meal
- Offer low-sodium options
- Provide appropriate portion sizes
- Include protein at every meal (lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds, nut butters, beans, Greek yogurt, etc.)
- Post nutrition information next to food items
- Vegetarian options should always be available
- Make pitchers of water available throughout the meeting
- Remember, snacks are not a necessity at every break
- Incorporate physical activity and stretch breaks into the schedule
- Fruit makes a great dessert!
- Make food safety a priority
- When possible, choose local foods
- Accommodate for potential food allergies



## Resources

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Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Benefits of health promotion programs*. Available at: [cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/businesscase/benefits/productivity.html](http://cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/businesscase/benefits/productivity.html)

Center for Disease Control and Prevention. *Choosing foods and beverages for healthy meetings, conferences and events*. Available at: [cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/Healthy\\_Worksite\\_Food.pdf](http://cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpao/hwi/downloads/Healthy_Worksite_Food.pdf)

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Ohio State University Extension. *Food Safety*. [foodsafety.osu.edu/](http://foodsafety.osu.edu/)

Ohio State University Extension. *Local Foods*. [localfoods.osu.edu/](http://localfoods.osu.edu/)

U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2011) *The 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Available at: [health.gov/DietaryGuidelines](http://health.gov/DietaryGuidelines)

U.S. Department of Agriculture. [choosemyplate.gov/](http://choosemyplate.gov/)

## Acknowledgements

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