

Healthy Food & Beverage Workplace Meeting Guidance

Purpose

(Your agency) is committed to supporting the health and well-being of our employees and the people we serve. The work environment can be a major factor in shaping lifestyle choices made by its staff. These guidelines aim to foster a culture of health and to support staff in making healthy food and beverage choices.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), sugary drinks are the leading source of added sugars in the American diet. Frequent consumption of sugary beverages is associated with weight gain, obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, kidney disease, fatty liver disease, and tooth decay. The CDC lists healthy food access in the workplace as a key intervention of successful evidence-based workplace health promotion programs.

What people eat and drink can be influenced by supportive guidelines in the workplace. These guidelines will serve to create a healthier work environment for staff and guests by ensuring the availability of healthy food and beverage choices at all events sponsored by (your agency).

Scope

These guidelines apply to:

1. All employees of (your agency).
2. All organization-sponsored functions where organization funds are used to purchase food and beverages (e.g., work meetings, celebrations, organization-sponsored parties/events, etc.)

Guidelines

Staff are highly encouraged to incorporate the following recommendations whenever hosting any (your agency) events for which food and/or beverages will be purchased:

Water, seltzer/carbonated water, milk, and/or unsweetened tea and coffee should be provided at all events to reduce sugary beverage consumption. Other beverages can be available, but a healthy beverage should be provided as well. Budget would not have to be increased; for example, water is a no-cost option.

Healthy Beverages Tips:

- Offer cool, fresh drinking water.
- Garnish water with citrus or cucumber slices to make it a more attractive and appealing option. Or provide citrus wedges on the side.

- Provide sparkling/seltzer/carbonated water instead of soda.
- Provide unsweetened coffee and tea, including decaffeinated options.
- Instead of offering half-and-half, whole milk, or creamer for coffee and tea, offer fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk or unsweetened milk alternatives (soy, oat, almond). These can also be offered as a beverage option.

Healthy Food Tips:

- Consider whether you need to provide food at the meeting. (For example, if the meeting is not during a mealtime or less than two hours from a mealtime, food may not be necessary. Consider offering water only.)
- Fruit, vegetables, and/or whole grain options should be provided at all events serving food. Other foods can be available, but healthy food options should be provided as well.
- Include at least one fruit or vegetable option if food is being served.
- Serve whole grain foods (e.g., whole wheat pasta, brown rice, whole wheat bread/pitas/tortillas) if available.
- Ask for salad dressings and condiments to be served on the side. If it is not possible, ask if salads can be lightly dressed.
- Provide a healthy option (e.g., fresh fruit) whenever you are providing desserts. If possible, cut traditional dessert servings in half.

Definitions

- *Sugary Beverage*: A beverage sweetened with various forms of sugar that add calories. Examples include soda, fruit drinks, lemonades, sports drinks, energy drinks, and sweetened teas.
- *Added sugars*: cane sugar, beet sugar, brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, lactose, malt syrup, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, and sucrose.

References

Centers for Disease Control: Using the Workplace to Improve the Nation's Health at A Glance 2015

Center for Science in the Public Interest [CSPINET Nutrition Policy](#).

Healthy Beverage Partnership. (2017). *The hidden impact of sugary drinks on your kids*. [Hidden Sugar](#).

Healthy Beverage Partnership (2016). *Healthy Beverage Partnership Policy Toolkit*. Building Healthy Communities Together.

2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. [8th Edition. December 2015](#).

Healthy Meetings Swappable Items

Common Choice:	Healthier Choice:
Breakfast	Breakfast
Juice drinks, juice	Water, unsweetened coffee, unsweetened tea
Fruits in heavy syrup	Fresh fruit
Regular, high-sugar yogurt	Low-fat yogurt with low sugar
Regular-sized, refined grain bagels	Small whole grain bagels- 3 ½" or smaller
Croissants, doughnuts, sweet rolls, pastries	Small mini muffins, low-fat granola bars
Butter, full-fat cream cheese, stick margarine	Nut butter, low-fat cream cheese, or hummus
Sweetened cereals and refined grain cereals	Unsweetened whole-grain cereal
Lunch & Dinner	Lunch & Dinner
Salads with added dressing	Salads with low-fat dressing on the side
Regular salad dressings	Low-fat, low-sodium salad dressing
Soups made with cream or half-and-half	Soups made with vegetable puree, non-fat milk, or vegetable-based soups
Pasta salad made with mayonnaise	Whole-grain pasta salads with light vinaigrette
Sandwiches on croissants or white bread	Sandwiches on whole-grain breads
High-fat and fried meats, processed meats, poultry with skin, oil-packed or fried fish	Lean meats and plant proteins (poultry, fish, tofu, tempeh, legumes)
Cooked vegetables in cream or butter sauce	Roasted, sautéed, or grilled veggies with herbs
Breadbasket with butter	Vegetable plate with hummus
Croissants or white rolls with butter	Whole-grain bread rolls with olive oil
Desserts with higher saturated fat (ice cream, cheesecake, pies, cream puffs, cake, pastries)	Fruit or dessert cut in half
Snacks	Snacks
Cookies	Cut up fruit
Chips	Cut up vegetables
Crackers made with refined grains	Whole grain crackers (5g fat or less per serving)
Potato chips	"Lite" popcorn (5g fat or less per serving)
Ice cream bars	Plain yogurt with berries
Candy	Whole grain granola bars (less than 10 g sugar/bar)
Cupcakes, snack cakes	Fruit with yogurt dip
Chips and dip	Veggies with hummus, low-fat dressing, or salsa
Beverages	Beverages
Soda or fruit-flavored drinks	Water (plain or flavored, carbonated or not, with no sugar), coffee or tea, sparkling water, 100% fruit or vegetable juices
Whole milk, 2% milk, or half-and-half	Low-fat, non-fat, or unsweetened non-dairy milk (soy/almond)
Juice drinks	100% juice