

Nutrition & Physical Activity Policy Implementation Resource

Planning Healthy Meetings and Events

The following tips and suggestions can help you to provide healthy foods at your meetings in a low waste reduction and sustainable manner. Providing healthy foods and physical activity at meetings and events will energize meeting participants and show them how easy it can be to lead a healthier life.

General Tips for Planning a Healthy Meeting

- Offer low-fat and low calorie foods and/or smaller portions (e.g., 1/2 sandwiches, 1/2 bagel)
- Choose steamed, poached, baked, grilled, or broiled foods instead of fried or sautéed foods
- Ensure that no trans fats are used
- Serve fresh vegetables and fruits
- Include a vegetarian and vegan option
- Provide at least some whole grain breads, grains, and cereals
- Serve sauces, salad dressing, and condiments on the side
- Provide pitchers of water
- Offer non-fat or low-fat milk for coffee
- Ask for local, seasonal, or organic items
- If serving dessert, provide fresh fruit, fruit cobblers, small cookies, or small serving of sorbet



Planning Ahead for Waste Reduction From Your Meals

The County Nutrition and Physical Activity Policy requires that waste reduction and sustainability measures are taken in accordance with the County's 75% waste reduction goal and Strategic Vision for environment/sustainability.

- Remember that the main goal is to prevent waste by ordering the right amount of food, reducing packaging waste, and using washable dining ware
- Ask for RSVP's in advance so you can order the right amount of food
- Consider whether your menu can be based on finger foods so you don't need to provide cutlery
- Serve the meal buffet-style or on serving trays, instead of in boxes or as individually wrapped items. Ask for reusable serving trays or platters

Planning Ahead for Waste Reduction From Your Meals (continued)

- Serve water or other drinks in pitchers and reusable cups rather than in cans or bottle
- Serve condiments or other items in large containers or reusable bowls rather than in individual packages
- Use reusable dining ware if you can. If reusables are not practical, explore using compostable plates, cups, and utensils if compost collection is offered at your event location (Remember, paper plates and cups are compostable)
- If providing paper napkins, use recycled-content napkins
- Avoid using Styrofoam
- Confirm with your site that recycling bins will be provided and check if composting bins can be provided (The waste hauler for the city where your event takes place may be able to provide composting bins and pick-up: <http://bit.ly/recyclingcontacts>)
- Make it easy for people to recycle by placing all disposal bins (trash, recycling, and compost) next to each other and identifying them with signs
- Donate leftovers (See <http://bit.ly/donatingfoodalamedacounty> for sites accepting donations. Contact the sites directly in advance to see if a donation is feasible)

Healthy Meal Suggestions:

Breakfast:

- Fresh fruit (whole or sliced on a platter)
- Sliced lean ham or Canadian bacon, turkey sausage, or smoked salmon instead of bacon or sausage
- Fruit and yogurt smoothies or parfaits
- Whole grain toast, fruit breads, bagels (mini or cut in half) instead of pastries and doughnuts
- Fruit spreads, low-fat cream cheese, hummus, and other low-fat spreads
- Vegetable omelets, frittata, eggs made with egg whites, or hard-boiled eggs
- Non-fat or low-fat yogurt
- Oatmeal and other high grain/high fiber cereal

Lunch/Dinner:

- Fruit and vegetable platters with low-fat dip or whole fruit
- Broth-based soups rather than cream-based
- Turkey or bean chili
- Mixed green or spinach salads with low-fat dressing on the side
- Salads with grilled/lean meat, seafood, or low-fat cheese
- Vegetable, bean, or tofu salads made with low-fat or fat-free dressing
- Grain salads such as wild rice, couscous or tabbouleh made with low-fat dressing
- Sandwich platters: choose lean meats and vegetable options, cut sandwiches in half (include some with whole grain bread) and serve condiments (mustard and low-fat mayonnaise) on the side
- Vegetable, bean, or turkey stuffed pita sandwiches or wraps
- Meat servings: limit to 4 oz. portion (seafood, skinless poultry, lean beef – eye of round, London broil, pork tenderloin); choose broiled, grilled, baked, steamed, poached instead of fried or sautéed
- Pasta dishes made with tomato or other vegetable-based sauces rather than cream sauces
- Vegetable pizza or lasagna made with part skim-milk mozzarella and/or part-skim ricotta cheese



Refreshments/Appetizers:

- Hummus with pita bread/baked pita chips and/or fresh vegetables
- Fresh fruit and vegetable tray with low-fat dips
- Pretzels, light or air-popped popcorn, baked chips, trail mixes
- Baked tortilla chips with salsa, guacamole and/or black bean dip
- Bagels cut in half or quarters with low-fat cream cheese, hummus, or fruit spreads
- Energy, cereal, or granola bar
- Low-fat or non-fat yogurt
- Assorted low-fat cheese platter with whole grain crackers and fruit

Desserts:

- Fresh fruit salad or fruit platter
- Fruit crisp or cobbler
- Angel food cake with fruit puree
- Fruit sorbet
- Small cookies
- Small pieces of dark chocolate

Beverages:

- Water, mineral water or flavored mineral water
- Low-fat or non-fat milk
- 100% fruit juice or vegetable juice (limit to 1/2 cup servings)
- Regular and decaffeinated coffee or tea
- Unsweetened iced tea

Additional Resources

Healthy Meeting Tips (Network for a Healthy California)

www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/cpns/Pages/WorksiteFitBusinessKit.aspx#2

Meeting Well Guide Book (American Cancer Society)

www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/meetingwell.asp

Ideas for 10 Minute Physical Activity Breaks (Eat Smart Move More North Carolina)

www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/FaithfulFamilies/Texts/FF_App-D_IdeasForBreaks.pdf

Greening Meetings (U.S. EPA and other partners)

www.bluegreenmeetings.org/

Greening Large Events (StopWaste.Org)

www.stopwaste.org/docs/specialevents-swp.pdf

On-Line Snack Standards Calculator (California ProjectLEAN)

www.californiaprojectlean.org/calculator_MH_S.asp?#180

For more information and answers to questions related to meals and vending, contact Nutrition Services, Alameda County Public Health Department at: (510) 595-6454

Information about the County's waste reduction and sustainability goals

<http://acsustain.org>