

The Ohio State University College of Public Health

General Guidelines for Promoting Healthy Food Choices at Meetings, Seminars, Conferences and other Catered Events



A message from the dean

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Lead by Example

Choices we make in the way we live can directly impact our health and the quality of our lives. Among these choices are the foods we eat.

The College of Public Health is fortunate to be able to provide food at some of our events. As faculty and staff in an accredited school of public health, it seems obvious that we should set an example by offering healthy options when we serve food at school-sponsored events.

Many individuals already make the effort to choose healthy options when eating out. Healthy eating is not about deprivation or dieting. We simply want to make options available for those who want healthier options as well as those who have more rigorous dietary requirements.

Through these guidelines, we can demonstrate that our faculty, staff and students recognize the strong relationship between diet and health.

We present these general guidelines in recognition of our obligation to assist our faculty, staff and guests in making healthy food choices.

Good nutrition comes from moderation and variety

Healthy Eating = Healthy Meeting

- Always serve fruit at breakfast
- Serve more whole grains breads
- Serve baked/grilled/broiled items versus fried or sautéed
- Always serve gravies and sauces on the side
- Always include a vegetarian option
- Consider offering pre-portioned items
- Provide fat-free/low-fat/low-calorie options
- Serve foods that are low in sodium and sugar
- Offer alternative sweeteners
- If serving desserts, serve in small, bite—size portions
- Encourage choosing water— provide pitchers or bottled water
- Serve food for people with dietary restrictions or special diets
- Consider peoples likes/dislikes when planning a meeting or event
- Offer a variety of foods to ensure that everyone’s needs are met
- Serve smaller portions and offer healthy substitutions

Other Healthy Tips

- Always remember to ask the meeting attendees if they have any special dietary restrictions, before ordering the food
- Eat slowly— Take your time, allow your body to tell your brain that you are satisfied and full
- Avoid being the food police— Remember that these are options and encouragements
- Ask the caterers for nutritional information on the food you ordered
- Most University approved caterers are becoming accustomed to allowing these healthy substitutions, **YOU JUST HAVE TO ASK!**



Suggested Menu Options

Breakfast:

- Fresh and dried fruit
- Whole grain breads, mini bagels, mini muffins
- Unsweetened cereals
- Low-sugar and low-fat granola/cereal bars
- Low-fat cheese and yogurt
- Lean ham or Canadian bacon
- Egg substitute

Lunch/Dinner:

- Fresh fruit and vegetables
- Salads (dressing on the side)
- Grilled or roasted vegetables
- Whole grain breads,/rolls/pasta
- Low-fat cheeses (mozzarella)
- Skinless/boneless poultry/seafood
- Lean beef
- Broth-based soups
- Baked potatoes with low-fat toppings and steamed veggies
- Fat-free or low-fat deli meats
- Protein alternatives (tofu/beans)

Desserts:

- Low-fat or low-calorie desserts
- Angel food cake with fruit
- Fresh fruit
- Small cookies
- Rice crispy bars
- Cake (cut into 2" squares)
- Fat-free or low-fat ice cream, sorbet or frozen yogurt (1/2 cup)
- Use dark chocolate whenever possible, rather than milk chocolate

Snacks/Breaks:

- Low-fat cheese and yogurt
- Low-salt pretzels and popcorn
- Baked tortilla or potato chips
- Whole grain crackers
- Low-fat dips (bean or hummus)
- Fresh fruit and vegetables

Beverages:

- Low-fat or 1% milk
- Pitchers and bottled water
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices
- Regular and decaf coffee
- Tea, hot or iced
- Diet (sugar-free) soft drinks
- Low-sugar lemonade and punch

Condiments:

- Fat-free or low-fat dressings
- Low-fat yogurt and cream cheese
- Fat-free or low-fat butter or margarine (without trans-fatty acids)
- Fat-free or low-fat cream and alternative sweeteners for coffee
- Sugar-free fruit spreads
- Low carb/sugar BBQ/steak/hot sauce
- Teriyaki/soy sauce (low-salt)
- Pepper sauce
- Vinegars (balsamic, red wine, white wine, rice wine, etc.)
- Oils (olive, canola or vegetable)
- Herbs and spices, low salt
- Salsa
- Mustard
- Honey

Foods to Minimize:

- Fried foods (french fries and potato chips)
- Full-fat milks and creams
- Butter or cream sauces and gravies
- Regular (sugared) soft drinks
- Danishes, croissants and doughnuts
- Cream based salads (potato/pasta/slaws)
- Bacon or sausage

Often the key is to serve the food in appropriate portion sizes. This way people do not feel cheated, yet they do not overeat. Many restaurants serve portions that are larger than the recommended serving size. This in turn affects how much we eat.

What does a serving size look like?

- 1 tsp. dressing or spread = tip of thumb to first joint
- 3 oz. meat = deck of cards
- 1 oz. lunch meat or cheese = CD disk
- 1 1/2 oz. cheese = 4 stacked dice or 2 slices
- Standard size bagel = hockey puck
- 1 oz. chicken finger = tube of lipstick
- 1/2 c. = 1/2 baseball
- 1 c. = 1 baseball or the size of a fist

Reference/More information:

- NHLBI portion distortion serving size card. <http://hp2010.nhlbihin.net/portion/keep.htm>
- USDA. www.mypyramid.gov
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2005. <http://www.health.gov/DietaryGuidelines/>
- OSU Medical Center; Sorting out Standard Portions. <http://medicalcenter.osu.edu/pdfs/PatientEd/Materials/PDFDocs/nut-diet/nut-other/gastric/sorting-portions.pdf>

By making just a few small adjustments to any meal can greatly improve the nutritional quality of the meal.

<i>Instead of this...</i>	<i>make these substitutions...</i>	<i>and you can reduce the number of calories by...</i>	<i>and the amount of fat by...</i>
Turkey, cheddar, and bacon sandwich on wheat with mayo, tomato, lettuce, and mustard	Instead of cheddar, use part-skim mozzarella Instead of bacon, add alfalfa sprouts Instead of regular mayo, use fat free mayo	150	16 g
Bag of chips	Bag of baked chips	25	9 g
Cookie	Rice crispy bar	170	11 g
Regular soft drink	Water or diet soft drink	160	--