Healthy Catering in the Workplace: 
Importance, Guidelines and Policy Suggestions

Alicia Powers, PhD
Associate Professor, 
Health Sciences, 
Furman University
Principal Investigator, 
LiveWell Greenville
Healthy Catering in the Workplace

* Importance of healthy catering in the workplace
* Guidelines to follow when catering events for the workplace
* Policy suggestions to encourage healthy food when catering events in the workplace
Importance of Healthy Catering in the Workplace

Demonstration of workplace commitment to Culture of Wellness and Health and Well-being of Employees

Accessibility
Importance of Healthy Catering in the Workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To the Workplace</th>
<th>To the Employee</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduced staff turnover</td>
<td>Increased job satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced absenteeism</td>
<td>Increased skills for health protection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased productivity</td>
<td>Improved health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduced health care/insurance costs</td>
<td>Improved sense of well-being</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Guidelines

* Consider not providing food at every meeting
* Offer only beverages at mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks
* Provide less healthy options in moderation
* Serve food in smaller portions
General Guidelines

* Limit
  * Saturated fat
  * Trans fat
  * Added sugar
  * Sodium

* Include
  * Water
  * Whole grains
  * Fruits
  * Vegetables
  * Lean protein options
General Guidelines

ChooseMyPlate.gov
Breakfast Meetings

* Serve fruit and 100% fruit juice and vegetable juice
* Offer skim milk in addition to other coffee additions
* Choose whole grain baked goods in mini-portions
* Offer peanut butter and lower sugar fruit spreads with whole grain baked goods
* Offer a yogurt/oatmeal bar with granola, nuts, fresh fruits and dried fruits
Follow MyPlate guidelines to determine overall offerings
Consider a boxed salad lunch that offers a low fat, protein option and request a low calorie dressing on the side
Offer whole grain breads, wraps and pastas
Offer fruit as the dessert
Hot Served Meals and Buffets

* Follow MyPlate guidelines to determine overall offerings
* Choose lean proteins in smaller portions
  * Beans, chicken, turkey, fish, shellfish, tofu, nuts or seeds
* Offer whole grain baked products, pasta, rice or other sides
* Offer a variety of vegetables
* Offer fruit as the dessert
* Consider including tomato-, pesto- or vegetable-based soups, sauces and toppings

* Request healthier cooking methods, such as broiling, roasting, steaming, sautéing, grilling, poaching and baking
Break Foods/Snack Foods

* Whole fruits
* Raw vegetables
* Low fat cheese and a whole grain
* Hummus and a whole grain
* Yogurt bar with fresh fruit, granola, nuts and seeds as toppings
* Trail mix bar with a variety of fresh and dried fruits, nuts, seeds and small bits of candy
Use the following checklist to ensure that your meeting promote healthy eating for all participants:

- Does the menu for your meeting include a variety of food choices?
- Did you include both fruits and vegetables with each meal and snack?
- Are whole grain breads, cereals, rice and pasta incorporated into meals?
- Did you request low calorie items where possible?
- Did you specify that dressings, sauces and condiments should be served on the side?
- Did you request mini-versions of items like muffins, bagels?
- Will you provide water in pitchers at breaks and meals?
- Are there options for participants with special dietary needs, such as vegetarian, lactose-intolerant, etc.?
Policy Suggestions

* Caterers used for all events are able to provide a variety of healthy options.
* Healthy food choices will be available at all events.
* Healthy food choices will be promoted at all events.
Healthy food choices will be presented more prominently than less healthy food choices at all events.

At least one fresh fruit and one healthily prepared vegetable will be available at all events.

Water will be available at all events.
Resources

Healthy Meetings Guide
A tool for planning healthy meetings and events.

Meeting Well
A Tool for Planning Healthy Meetings and Events

UC Berkeley Guide to Healthy Meetings and Events
A tool for campus event planners

Healthy Catering Guide
A tool to help your organization make healthier choices

LiveWell Greenville’s
www.livewellgreenville.org