

Guidelines for Healthy Meetings



Introduction:

There is evidence that a healthy diet and physical activity can reduce the risk of chronic disease. Employers, community groups and faith communities can make it easier for people to make healthy food choices by providing healthy food at meetings and other events they sponsor.

The following are general guidelines to use when planning foods for meetings and other events. It is important to provide healthy food choices to help people eat well. We hope that this information will help you to provide healthy foods to your members, clients and staff.

General Guidelines:

- Serve low calorie and low fat foods. Avoid heavily processed foods with trans fats (partially hydrogenated oils)
- Serve fruits and vegetables whenever possible.
- Serve small portions (e.g. cut bagels in halves or quarters)
- Serve fat free or 1% milk, soy milk, 100% fruit or vegetable juice, water or iced tea (unsweetened), “aguas frescas,” instead of soft drinks.
- Provide pitchers or bottles of water
- Meals can include a dessert such as - fresh fruit, a fruit crisp or cobbler, or small cookies..
- Include a vegetarian option at all meals.
- Provide low fat milk, fat free half & half, and/or lactose free milk for coffee
- Healthy food certainly can taste good. You might want to ask for a sample menu ahead of time to plan for healthier options.



- Use a combination of low fat mayonnaise and plain yogurt for potato, tuna, egg, or pasta salads.
- Serve at least two vegetables with each meal, and avoid butter or cream sauces.
- Choose steamed, boiled, baked, grilled, or stir fried foods instead of deep fried.
- Provide raw vegetables or pretzels (low salt) instead of potato chips or french fries.
- Include whole grain breads, rice or corn tortillas
- Offer low fat spreads for bread, salsa and dips for fruit and vegetables.



For more information, click on these links:

Feeling Good Project:

<http://www.dph.sf.ca.us/PHP/MCH/FeelingGood.htm>

Food Label Reading: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>

Food Safety: www.fightbac.org

Learn more about whole grains, trans fats, and other nutrition information: www.mypyramid.gov

Interactive Menu Planner:

<http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/menuplanner/menu.cgi>

Sample Menus:

http://www.mypyramid.gov/downloads/sample_menu.pdf

<http://www.sph.umn.edu/news/nutritionalguidelines.html>

Healthy Ethnic Meal Planning:

http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/lose_wt/eth_dine.htm

Menu Planning for Healthy Meetings

Lunch/Dinner Suggestions:

For serving size suggestions:

<http://hin.nhlbi.nih.gov/portion/servingcard7.pdf>

Appetizers/First Course

- Fresh fruits and vegetables with yogurt dip, hummus, or bean dip

- Leafy green salads with salad dressing on the side

- Soups that are broth-based or creamed using pureed vegetables or evaporated skim milk



Entrees

- Sandwich platters - cut sandwiches in half so people can take smaller portions. Offer low fat mayonnaise on the side. Use whole grain breads

- Pasta dishes made with part skim mozzarella and part skim ricotta cheese (e.g. lasagna). Serve pasta with tomato or other vegetable based sauce rather than cream sauces.



- Protein servings limited to a 3 ounce portion (fresh seafood, skinless poultry, lean beef-eye of round, London broil, tofu). Grilled, steamed, broiled, baked, boiled or roasted rather than deep fried.

- Soft corn tortilla with melted low fat cheese, vegetables & salsa

- Brown rice (steamed) and whole black beans with grilled vegetables

- Stir fry vegetables with rice or buckwheat noodles

- Baked potatoes with low fat sour cream and vegetable toppings on the side like green onions, broccoli, sweet pepper, and beans.

- Salads with dark green lettuces; spinach; beans and peas; grilled lean meat, tofu, tempeh and low fat cheeses



Food Suggestions for Breaks (am & pm):



- Fresh fruit - whole or cut up (with yogurt dip; optional)

Example: oranges, apples, strawberries, melon, pears, bananas

- Whole grain muffins (cut in half if they are not mini muffins)

- Whole grain breads instead of Danish, croissants, pan dulce, cinnamon rolls, sweet buns, or doughnuts

- Whole grain bagels with low fat cream cheese, jam, or hummus- cut bagels in halves or quarters. Avoid heavily cheesed, chocolate chip, or salt bagels.

- Low fat yogurt, soy yogurt



- Low sugar breakfast cereal



- String cheese or queso fresco

- Baked Chips with salsa

- Whole grain crackers, low salt pretzels, graham crackers, fig bars

- Dried fruit or trail mix

Example: raisins, dried apricots, dried apples, dates, prunes, low salt almonds, walnuts, cashews, peanuts

- Raw vegetables with low fat dip or hummus

Example: carrots, cucumber, celery, broccoli, tomatoes, jicama, sweet peppers



Revised 8/24/05

City and County of San Francisco Nutrition Services

Adapted from the New York State Department of Health Center for Community Health