



# Implementing a healthy eating workplace policy and program

## Steps for success

- Set a timeline and goal date for full implementation.
- Start communications early in order to help employees understand the program and the rationale behind it. Be sure to communicate with all employees.
  - Provide a range of communications in multiple formats about the importance of healthy eating and the value of offering healthy food and beverage (e.g. at orientation, employee webpage or intranet, monthly newsletters/mailings, presentations, webinars, posters in breakrooms or kitchens).
  - Promote healthy eating programs currently available to employees, spouses and dependents.
  - If the facility has onsite retail dining, vending or catering for company meetings, events and activities, begin discussions and plans to transition to healthier options.
  - Remember to include what changes are occurring and the 'why', 'how' and 'when'; also highlight successes and help to promote customer buy-in and support.
- Review current workplace food and beverage policies:
  - Ensure policy addresses all locations and types of food and beverage offered.
  - Ensure policy limits opportunities for employees to consume food or beverage with minimal nutritional value and those that are highly processed and contain added sugar, sodium and/or fat.
- Post healthy eating messages. Impactful areas include: in the cafeteria, vending areas, breakroom or gathering spaces.
  - Ensure the physical environment supports healthy eating.
  - Consider the extent of the policy and determine how inclusive it will be.
    - If just starting, policies may refer strictly to a specific area of focus (e.g. catered company meetings, food offered in vending machines or cafeteria). Consider separating policies for foods purchased by employer and those available for purchase by employees.
  - Encourage onsite retail dining and contract arrangements to follow a healthy food service standard and to use nutritional guidelines that support company-wide initiatives.
    - Focus on a common ground and recognize that if the products do not sell, the policy will not be successful; take into account what vendors and suppliers offer and what products are available in the region.
    - Factor in adequate time for transition and for customers to acclimate to the changes.

## Strategies for increasing access to healthy food and beverage

- Use evidence-based nutrition guidelines, such as the Dietary Guidelines for Americans: [www.dietaryguidelines.gov](http://www.dietaryguidelines.gov)
- Develop a system adopted at the worksite to identify and promote healthy options
  - Scoring: Gold, Silver, Bronze, Green, Yellow, Red or Good, Better, Best
  - Rating scale: 1-3 stars, company mascot or logo
- Aim to increase availability of high scoring or rated options to occupy at least 50% of menu, selection or other, while working to reduce and remove those that score lowest.
- Increase promotion of high scoring or rated options, while working to reduce and remove promotion of those that score lowest.

## Resources

- CDC – Tips for Offering Healthier Options and Physical Activity at Workplace Meetings and Events: <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/downloads/tips-for-offering-healthier-options-and-PA-at-workplace-508.pdf>
- UC Berkeley Healthy Meeting & Event Guide: <https://uhs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/wellness-healthymeetings.pdf>
- Utah Department of Health - Worksite Wellness Policy Tools: <http://choosehealth.utah.gov/worksites/heres-how/policy-tools.php>
- Washington State Department of Health – Healthy Nutrition Guidelines: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/CommunityandEnvironment/WorksiteWellness/HealthyNutritionGuidelines>

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