



# Greater Cincinnati Regional Food Policy Council

ADVANCING A HEALTHY, EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM FOR ALL



## HEALTHY WORKPLACE FOOD & BEVERAGE TOOLKIT: Guidance for Caterers and Food Vendors

### Healthy Eating Objectives

- Increase fruit and vegetable consumption.
- Increase high fiber foods (nuts, seeds, legumes) and whole grains.
- Increase consumption of foods high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as fish.
- Limit saturated and trans fats and/or replace them with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats.
- Limit sodium (salt) and added sugars.
- Limit processed foods.
- Offer alternative options for people with dietary restrictions (vegetarian/vegan/gluten-free) or people managing chronic diseases.
- When possible, buy local food. View [Buy Local Toolkit](#) for more information.

### General Guidance on Meals

- When serving meals, use smaller plates.
- Cut large portions in halves or quarters when possible.
- Serve grilled, roasted, broiled, baked, or poached foods.
- Use herbs, spices, salt-free seasoning blends, flavored vinegars, peppers, garlic and citrus juice/zest to add flavor.
- Offer at least one fruit and/or vegetable every time food is served.
- Offer whole grain products when serving grains.
- Serve sides (or ingredients in dishes) such as:
  - Whole grains (quinoa, barley, wheat berry, bulgur, tabbouleh, couscous).
  - Beans and legumes (if using canned, use no or low-salt items).
  - Rice (black, brown, red, wild, mixed).
  - Pasta (whole grain).
- Offer water (can be sparkling or flavor infused), low fat dairy, 100% juice, coffee, or tea.
- Offer fruit as dessert.
- Offer local meal items when possible.

### Nutrition Suggestions for Meals

- Less than 700 calories.
- Less than 800 mg sodium (preferably no more than 525 mg).
- Less than 5 g saturated fat.
- Less than 105 mg cholesterol.
- Less than 0.5 g trans fat and no products containing partially hydrogenated oils.
- At least 2 servings (1–1.5 cups) of vegetables and/or fruits.

*Nutrition standards are provided as a benchmark to use if nutrition information is available.*

### Avoid or Limit Serving

- Regular soft drinks and sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Sugar and sugar substitutes.
- Bakery items such as biscuits, corn bread, croissants, Danishes, muffins, pastries, etc.
- High-sodium, high-fat meats such as bacon, sausage or ham.
- Sauces and gravies that are high in sodium or that contain whole milk, heavy cream, sour cream, cheese, butter and egg yolks as key ingredients.
- Canned foods that contain salt/sodium or heavy syrups.
- Dishes with cheese as a key ingredient.
- Butter or margarine.
- Fried foods.
- Chips
- High fat, high-sugar desserts such as cookies, cakes, pies, or ice cream.



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### HEALTHIER SANDWICHES

Here are some tips for making a healthier and more delicious sandwich!

#### Bread

- Use fiber-rich whole grain breads.
- If serving on flatbread, pita, tortilla, or wrap, use smaller sizes and whole grain.
- Serve sandwiches as halves or quarters.

#### Meat / Protein

- A serving of deli meat should be no more than 4 oz. (ideally 2 oz.).
- Vegetarian proteins (beans, hummus, nut butters, tahini, tofu) should be offered as an alternative.
- Check nutrition information and use varieties with the lowest amounts of sodium.

#### Cheese

- Use avocado or hummus in place of cheese for a dairy-free or vegan option.
- Limit cheese, as it is usually high in sodium and saturated fat. Avoid processed cheeses.
- If using cheese, compare nutrition information to select lower sodium and lower fat varieties. Slice extra thin.

#### Vegetables and Fruits

- Add sliced or shredded vegetables including beets, carrots, celery, cucumbers, onions, peppers, radishes, tomatoes and zucchini.
- Add sliced fruits such as apple, avocado and pear.



#### Condiments and Seasonings

- Use herbs, spices and salt-free seasonings to add flavor.
- Offer traditional condiments upon request.
- Offer or use healthier, more flavorful options such as fresh fruit relish or chutney, guacamole, horseradish, hummus, or salsa. (Check nutrition information, if available).



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### HEALTHY BREAKFAST OPTIONS

Here are some tips for making a healthier and more delicious breakfast!

#### Whole Grains

- Serve whole-grain bread, rolls and bagels, hot or cold whole-grain cereals and whole-grain English muffins.
- Choose cereals and cereal bars with at least 3 grams of fiber in each serving, if possible, aim for 5 grams per serving.
- Serve cereal bars that are made with whole grains such as oats, dried fruits and nuts.
- Avoid cereals and cereal bars that list sugar at or near the top of the ingredients list, or list multiple types of added sugar, such as high-fructose corn syrup, brown sugar and dextrose.
- Limit serving bakery items such as Danishes, doughnuts, muffins, pastries, biscuits, corn bread and croissants.

#### Meat/Proteins

- Prepare eggs with very little or no added fat.
- Choose lean meat, legumes and nuts.
- Limit serving high-sodium, high-fat meats such as bacon and sausage.

#### Dairy

- Serve skim or low-fat milk, yogurt, cottage cheese and other dairy foods.
- Choose yogurt with less than 20g total sugars per 6 oz. serving.
- If using cheese, compare nutrition information to select lower-sodium and lower-fat varieties.
- Limit butter, margarine and cream cheese.



#### Vegetables

- Serve fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables.
- Serve 100% juice drinks without added sugar.
- Serve fruit and vegetable smoothies prepared with low-fat and low-sugar ingredients.



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**HEALTHY WORKPLACE FOOD & BEVERAGE TOOLKIT: Guidance for Caterers and Food Vendors**

**Guidance by Food Category**

<p>Beverages</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water (plain, sparkling and infused) – no more than 10 calories per serving.</li> <li>• Coffee or tea – no more than 10 calories per serving.</li> <li>• Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk and milk alternatives (soy, almond, etc.) – no more than 130 calories per 8 fl. oz.</li> <li>• Juice – 100% fruit or vegetable juice (or juice and water)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ No added sugars/sweeteners</li> <li>◦ No more than 120 calories per 8 fl. oz. (preferred serving size), 150 calories per 10 fl. oz., or 180 calories per 12 fl. oz.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Condiments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use herbs, spices and salt-free seasonings to add flavor.</li> <li>• Offer traditional condiments upon request.</li> <li>• Offer or use healthier, more flavorful options such as fresh fruit relish or chutney, guacamole, horseradish, hummus, or salsa. (Check nutrition information.)</li> </ul>
<p>Dairy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit cheese, as it's usually high in sodium and saturated fat. Compare nutrition information; varieties such as mozzarella and Swiss may be better choices.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Milk, cheese, cottage cheese and sour cream should be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Yogurt should have no more than 20 g Total sugars per 6 oz. serving. Offer fruit and/or nuts as toppings.</li> <li>• Cheese should be served in small quantities and thinly sliced (for sandwiches), grated or crumbled (as a garnish), or served in small cubes (for a reception).</li> </ul>
<p>Fruit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fruit can be served as a side or for dessert (if dessert is needed at all). Suggestions include seasonal fruit, fruit medley, fruit kabobs and mixed berries.</li> </ul>
<p>Protein</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portions ideally should be 3 oz. and no more than 6 oz. (cooked weight).</li> <li>• Healthier cooking methods include baked, broiled, braised, grilled, poached (fish), roasted, stir-fried or sautéed in broth or with a small amount of healthier oil.</li> <li>• Vegetarian proteins (beans, hummus, nut butters, tahini, tofu) offered as an alternative.</li> </ul>



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**Guidance by Food Category**

Beef & Pork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beef and pork labeled “loin” and “round” usually have the least fat.</li> <li>● “Choice” or “select” grades of beef are healthier choices than “prime.”</li> <li>● Fat should be trimmed before cooking.</li> <li>● Ground beef should be at least 95% extra lean.</li> </ul>
Poultry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use skinless chicken and turkey or remove the skin before cooking. (Most of the fat is in the skin.)</li> <li>● Use lean ground turkey and chicken, but check the nutrition information, if available. It can have excess fat.</li> </ul>
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One or two whole eggs are suggested per serving.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Prepare scrambled poached and hard-boiled eggs; fry eggs with no-fats or healthier fats/oils (See oils section).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Beans & Legumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Beans and legumes (if using canned, use no or low-salt items)</li> </ul>
Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Oily types of fish are better choices because they tend to be rich in omega-3 fatty acids.</li> <li>● Fish higher in omega-3 fatty acids include: bass (striped bass, freshwater bass, sea bass), herring, mackerel, pompano, salmon, swordfish, trout, tuna.</li> <li>● Other acceptable fish and seafood include: catfish, cod, crawfish, flounder, grouper, halibut, orange roughy, perch, pollock, scallops, shrimp, sole, snapper, tilapia.</li> </ul>
Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Better choices are almonds, hazelnuts, peanuts, pecans, pistachios and walnuts.</li> </ul>
Oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Cook foods with liquid plant-based oil instead of butter, lard or shortening.</li> <li>● Healthier oils include avocado, canola, corn, olive, peanut, safflower, sesame, soybean and sunflower. Canola, corn, olive and safflower contain the least amounts of saturated fat.</li> <li>● No partially hydrogenated oils or trans fats.</li> </ul>



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**Guidance by Food Category**

Breads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Use smaller size flat breads, pitas, tortillas or wraps.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Serve sandwiches as halves or quarters.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Serve whole grains such as quinoa, barley, wheat berry, bulgur, tabbouleh, couscous and pasta.</li> <li>● Serve whole grain rice such as black, brown, red, wild and mixed.</li> </ul>
Salad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prepare salads with interesting ingredients such as various types of greens, dried fruit, fresh fruit, avocado, nuts, seeds, red and yellow peppers, corn, beans, peas and whole grains such as corn, quinoa or bulgur.</li> <li>● Cheese may be used as a garnish on a plated salad.</li> <li>● Limit high sodium ingredients such as bacon, croutons, olives and capers.</li> <li>● Limit heavy, creamy dressings. Vinaigrette-type dressings are typically a healthier choice. Always include oil &amp; vinegar made with a healthier oil as an option.</li> <li>● Serve dressings on the side.</li> </ul>
Sauces (Including Gravy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sauces don't need to be avoided completely. Sauces add flavor and may help keep meats and vegetables from getting too dry.</li> <li>● Limit heavy sauces that contain whole milk, heavy cream, butter and egg yolks as key ingredients.</li> <li>● Pasta/Italian dishes should be prepared with tomato sauces, not cream sauces.</li> <li>● Serve sauces on the side when possible.</li> </ul>
Snacks/Sides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sliced fruits, vegetables or unsalted nuts are strongly preferred.</li> <li>● Small amounts of whole-grain chips served with veggies and salsa or hummus are recommended.</li> </ul>
Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Soups can be high in sodium. For premade soup, check nutrition information if available and offer varieties with the lowest amount of sodium. Soup made from scratch is typically a better choice because you can control the amount of sodium. Use lots of vegetables, whole grains, beans and legumes.</li> <li>● Cream soups should be made with fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.</li> </ul>
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Should be prepared and served without butter. Acceptable sauces should be served on the side.</li> <li>● May be enhanced with herbs, spices, salt-free seasonings, a small amount of healthier oil or a flavored vinegar or a squeeze of citrus.</li> <li>● Healthier cooking methods: grilled, marinated, roasted, steamed, stir-fried or sautéed in broth or with a small amount of healthier oil.</li> </ul>