

Workplace-Prepared Food Standards





The Importance of Healthy Eating

Almost three-fourths of American adults are overweight or obese.¹ Evidence has linked higher amounts of body fat with several chronic conditions, including 13 types of cancer.^{2,3} In fact, research shows that 18% of all new cancer cases in the US each year are related to excess body weight, an unhealthy diet, alcohol consumption, and physical inactivity.^{4,5}

The good news is that a healthy weight can help to reduce the risk of many chronic diseases, including cancer, heart disease, and diabetes. And the way to reach or maintain a healthy weight is to make good nutrition and physical activity choices on a regular basis.

The American Cancer Society recommends that people choose food and drinks in amounts that help them get to and stay at a healthy weight. To help reduce the risk of cancer, they also recommend that people consume a diet that is high in vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean proteins but is low in red and processed meat, sugar-sweetened beverages, and highly processed foods to help reduce the risk of cancer. This Healthy Eating resource contains healthy food standards information from the Healthy Meeting Toolkit (<https://www.cspinet.org/protecting-our-health/nutrition/healthy-meetings>) from the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA) to help you offer healthy foods at meetings.

NANA Healthy Eating Standards – (Non-Vending Machine)

NANA Healthy Eating Standards	
Calories	<700 calories per meal
Saturated Fat	<10% of calories from saturated fat
Trans Fat	No artificial trans fat
Sodium	<770 mg per meal
Sugars	<35% of calories from sugars
Fruits and Vegetables	Offer fruits and/or vegetables every time food is served. Meals should have at least 1½ cups of vegetables and/or fruits.
Grains (Standard)	Choose whole grains whenever possible (100% whole grain or whole grain as the first ingredient).
Grains (Superior)	All grains must be whole grain rich (51% or more whole grains by weight or whole grain as the first ingredient).
Dairy	If serving yogurt, choose low-fat yogurt with less than 30 grams of sugar per 8-ounce serving. Limit cheese and butter.
Protein Foods (Standard)	Make the majority of the meat options poultry, fish, shellfish, or lean (unprocessed) meat. Provide a vegetarian option.



NANA Healthy Eating Standards

Protein Foods (Superior)	Serve only poultry, fish, shellfish, or on occasion lean (unprocessed) meat options; seek alternatives to processed and red meats.
Avoid (Standard)	Avoid fried foods. Do not place candy or candy bowls in the meeting space.
Avoid (Superior)	Do not serve fried foods. Replace all desserts and pastries with fruit or other healthful foods.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer reasonable portion sizes. • In buffet lines or self-service, support sensible portions by offering reasonably sized entrees and appropriately sized serving utensils and plates. • Serve healthier condiments and dressings, and offer them on the side. • For special occasions and dinner, cut desserts in half or serve small portions. For lunches, breaks, or regular meetings, serve fruit as dessert. • Whenever possible, offer foods prepared in a healthier way (grilled, baked, poached, roasted, braised, or broiled).

NANA Healthy Beverage Standards – (Non-Vending Machine)

NANA Healthy Beverage Standards

Water	Make water the default beverage.
Milk	Offer low- or non-fat milk, calcium- and vitamin-D-fortified soy milk.
Juice	Serve 100% juice or 100% juice diluted with water.
Coffee and Tea	Offer low- or non-fat milk with coffee and tea service, in addition to, or in place of, half-and-half.
Other (Standard)	Do not offer full-calorie sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs). Beverages should contain <40 calories per container.
Other (Superior)	Eliminate all SSBs (including those with <40 calories per container).

Marketing and Promotion

Here are some tips for successfully implementing food standards:

- **Price.** Beverages and foods that meet nutrition standards should be priced competitively (e.g., at or below) to similar items that do not meet the nutrition standards (if you choose a phased-in approach).
- **Placement.** Beverages and foods that meet nutrition standards should be as visible – or more so – than similar items that do not meet the nutrition standards (e.g., they should be closer to eye level).
- **Promotion.** Promotion, including but not limited to language and graphics, should only promote only products that meet the nutrition standards.
- **Hold taste-testings.** Partner with vendors to offer taste-testings of a variety of snack and beverage options that meet the nutrition standards. Have survey cards handy and tally up votes. Share results of taste-testings and keep vending machines stocked with favorite items. **Note:** preferences may be location specific.



- **Administer online surveys.** Provide online surveys in addition to or in lieu of in-person taste-testings. Find out which products and meals customers enjoy, do not prefer, and which healthy foods they eat at home. Use online surveys as opportunities to promote healthy options.
- **Provide education, and promote the program.** Educate leadership and employees about the benefits of offering and choosing healthy foods and beverages. Use available methods to promote healthy options, cultivate support for the program, and promote educational events, taste-testing, etc. Promotional methods might include speaking at staff meetings; posters; flyers; e-cards; emails to staff; newsletter articles; postings on bulletin boards; or signage near vending machines, cafeterias, or concession stands. Work with leadership from the outset for strong buy-in and have messages from them or leadership's signature on promotional materials and messages.

References

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2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Adult Obesity Causes and Consequences. cdc.gov. Accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/adult/causes.html> on March 7, 2022.
3. American Cancer Society. *Cancer Facts & Figures 2022*. Atlanta. American Cancer Society; 2022 Accessed at <https://www.cancer.org/research/cancer-facts-statistics/allcancer-facts-figures/cancer-facts-figures-2022.html> on March 7, 2022.
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