



# Healthy Meeting Guide



[www.diabetes.org/atwork](http://www.diabetes.org/atwork)

# Healthy Meeting Guide

Providing employees with healthy food choices in the workplace can go a long way to support a culture of wellness. The challenge is determining what constitutes “healthy,” especially in an age in which supposedly “good-for-you” foods are promoted everywhere you turn.

**A**s an employer, you can set an example. Your influence can encourage employees to make lifestyle changes and help food service companies recognize the value of offering healthier menu items. In addition, you can practice what you preach and demonstrate you believe that a healthy diet is the cornerstone for a healthy life.

Overweight/obesity is a leading risk factor for developing type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (which itself is the most serious complication of diabetes). Research shows that if you lose 7% of your body weight (15 pounds if you weigh 200 pounds) by reducing the number of calories you eat and becoming more physically active, you can reduce your risk for type 2 diabetes by nearly 60%.

This guide will help you integrate healthy behaviors into your overall corporate culture. Try integrating changes slowly, perhaps in conjunction with a Stop Diabetes @ Work lunch and learn or

This guide is a part of Wellness Lives Here, the American Diabetes Association’s initiative to educate and motivate people to adopt more healthy habits. Learn more about the initiative, including how you can become nationally recognized for your wellness efforts, by visiting [wellnessliveshere.org](http://wellnessliveshere.org).



during a specific awareness month. Over time, your company can become a more health-conscious and more productive place to work.

## Physical Activity: One Half of the Healthy Meeting Equation

There are benefits to adding physical activity to your meeting. You can increase energy and participation from your attendees.

There are a few different ways you can incorporate physical activity into your meeting depending on your timeframe:

- Stand up and stretch for 1-2 minutes.
- Take a 5-minute walk break.
- Break for 15-30 minutes and go on a group walk.
- For meetings with outside groups, point out the stairs at the beginning of the meeting.
- Give permission to attendees at the beginning of the meeting to stand as needed during the meeting to stretch, stand or “pace” the room.



## Catering Healthy Meetings

There are many ways you can start implementing healthy eating guidelines for your meetings, catered functions and events. If possible, display the nutrition content for the food you are serving. This will help your employees make healthy food choices. Work with your caterer while negotiating the contract to provide healthy food and provide nutrition information for the food choices available. You can use the American Diabetes Association's MyFoodAdvisor ([www.diabetes.org/mfa](http://www.diabetes.org/mfa)) to find the nutrition content of thousands of different types of food.

## Preparation

Entrees and side dishes should be prepared using minimal oils that are rich in healthy fats such as olive oil, canola oil and corn oil. Deep-fried foods (e.g. fried chicken, French fries) should be avoided as they are very high in calories and unhealthy fats. Low-fat cooking methods, such as grilling, broiling, sautéing, poaching, roasting, baking, stewing, microwaving, or braising, are recommended.

## Entrees

Portion sizes matter! Request 3-4 ounces or smaller portions of fish, chicken, turkey or other lean meats. Offer a vegetarian alternative at all meals. Choose reduced-fat cheese when available.

## Sauces/Dressings

Serve foods with dressings and sauces on the side or pass them separately. Offer oil and vinegar in separate containers as an alternative salad dressing. Offer light or fat-free dressing options made with healthy fats (olive oil, canola oil, corn oil) if available. Whipped butter, trans-free margarine and reduced or low-fat sour cream can be served on the side for items like rolls or baked potatoes. Avoid sauces made with cream or sour cream as they are very high in calories and unhealthy fats.

## Vegetables and Fruit

Offer vegetables and/or fruit at every eating occasion. All are acceptable. Provide more than one choice when possible.

## Soups

Broth-based soups are best. Avoid cream-based soups.

## Salads

Include plenty of vegetables in salads and stay away from high-fat meats like bacon and other cured meats. Offer a salad at all lunch and dinner meals when possible. Avoid high-fat salads such as potato salad and macaroni salad.

## Dairy

Dairy can be high in fat and calories. When serving coffee and tea, you can provide half and half but be sure to provide at least one type of lower-fat milk, such as 2% or skim. Serve reduced-fat yogurt, cheese and sour cream.

## Breads/Cereals

Provide whole grain breads, crackers and side dishes such as brown or wild rice blends or whole wheat pasta when possible. Avoid prepared cereals with significant added sugar.

## Dessert

If dessert is served, keep portion sizes small. Try mini or bite-sized desserts. Try fruit-based or low-fat dairy desserts such as a fruit tart, cobbler, fresh berries with chocolate sauce, or low-fat ice cream. Provide fresh fruit at every meal as a dessert option.

## Beverages

Offer water, unsweetened tea, coffee, diet soda, or other sugar-free drinks. Avoid all beverages with added sugar including regular soda, lemonade, sweet tea, fruit punch and sports drinks. Serve reduced-fat or low-fat/non-fat milk instead of whole milk.

# Healthy Menu Ideas

## Breakfast

Choose healthy options:

- Fresh fruit
- Reduced-fat yogurt or yogurt and fruit parfaits
- Reduced-fat cheese if available
- Eggs any style
- Whole grain cereal with minimal added sugar, small whole grain waffles/pancakes, mini whole wheat bagels, whole wheat English muffins, mini bran muffins
- Oatmeal with mix-ins such as chopped nuts, dried fruit, and cinnamon
- Jellies, peanut butter\*, whipped butter, trans-free margarine, reduced-fat cream cheese
- Canadian bacon, turkey bacon or turkey sausage
- Water, coffee, tea, and low-calorie beverages including a selection of 100% fruit juices

Instead of:

- Pastries, biscuits, full-size muffins, croissants, and donuts
- Sauces for eggs
- Regular bacon and sausage
- Sugary cereal, granola, and breakfast bars

## Lunch & Dinner

Consider these ideas for your next lunch or dinner meeting:

- Make half the plate (if plated) or half the dishes salads or vegetables.
- Request that all grains including side dishes and breads be 100% whole grain (i.e. brown or wild rice, whole wheat pasta, 100% whole wheat bread or rolls).
- Offer “make your own” salad, sandwich or potato bar. Include plenty of vegetables, lower-fat cheese and lean meats or lower-fat cold cuts.

- When serving pizza, choose thin crust that is made from whole grain flour. Ask for less cheese and more vegetables. Skip the meat. Make sure you have salad and fruit available too.
- Serve broth-based soups.
- When offering pastas, serve with non-cream sauces on the side.
- Provide plenty of vegetables and sliced or whole fruit.
- Offer fish, shellfish, poultry such as chicken without the skin, and lean meats trimmed of all visible fat.

Stay away from:

- High fat processed meats including hot dogs.
- High calorie sides such as potato salad, potato chips, macaroni and cheese and cream-based soups.

## Breaks/Snacks/Desserts

Consider serving these items to keep energy levels high for the duration of your meetings:

- Nuts\*
- Fresh fruit
- Vegetables with hummus
- Unbuttered popcorn
- Non-fat yogurt
- Whole grain chips with salsa, bean dip or guacamole

Instead of:

- Cookies, brownies, muffins, cakes, or pastries
- Snack or granola bars

\*Be mindful of nut allergies.