

Catering in the workplace

Healthy choices

Healthy catering in the workplace is an important part of helping staff, clients and visitors to be healthy.

Workplaces may offer catering for a number of reasons, for example during meetings, conferences, events or social activities.

The video below introduces you to healthy workplace catering. It includes an overview of the Healthy Choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces, and the 'traffic light' system for classifying foods and drinks.

You'll also discover healthy and delicious catering ideas and tips for making healthy changes to your workplace catering.

You can find out how the food and drinks you offer through catering are classified under the Healthy Choices guidelines, with a free online menu assessment.

If you are accessing this factsheet offline you can view this video at:
<https://youtu.be/raVTwzD6efs>



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The guidelines for healthy catering

For healthy catering in the workplace, the Healthy Choices guidelines recommend:

- foods and drinks from the **GREEN** (best choices) category are the main choices offered
- **GREEN** choices are promoted and encouraged
- **RED** (limit) foods and drinks are not provided.

For healthy catering, you can offer **AMBER** (choose carefully) foods and drinks, as long as the majority of choices are from the **GREEN** category.

Remember, **AMBER** choices should not be encouraged at the expense of healthier **GREEN** options.



Providing healthy catering

Making sure the policies in your organisation include requirements for healthy catering is an important part of the whole of setting approach to supporting healthy eating.

The Healthy choices: catering and policy guidelines for workplaces includes a healthy eating policy template that you can adapt for your organisation.

The simple actions you can take to provide healthy catering in your organisation depend on whether or not you currently have a catering provider, or a set process for ordering catering.

Steps to providing healthy catering within your workplace



Gain support from management

First speak to your organisation's management about providing healthy catering that meets the Healthy Choices guidelines. You can explain to managers that healthy catering:

- promotes the health and wellbeing of staff and visitors
- can lead to increased productivity
- shows that the organisation is committed to supporting good health.



Develop a healthy catering policy

Having a healthy catering policy will help make sure that providing healthy foods and drinks is part of your organisation's regular procedures and that it becomes part of your workplace culture.

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Sourcing healthy foods and drinks

Starting from scratch gives you an excellent opportunity to offer healthy foods and drinks through catering.

For ideas, refer to the Healthy Choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces, research 'healthy workplace catering' online or check with your local council to see if local healthy catering guides are available.

It is a good idea to ask staff about the foods and drinks they prefer to make sure they are happy with what is provided.



Finding a healthy provider

Many catering companies offer a healthy range. To find a healthy provider you can:

- speak with your current caterer about their healthier options
- speak with other local caterers or retail food outlets in your area
- contact your local council, who may have a list of caterers who are providing healthier options
- research 'healthy catering companies' on the internet.



Assessing your catering menu

Find out how the food and drinks you offer through catering are rated against the Healthy Choices guidelines, with a [free online menu assessment](#).

If your catering menu doesn't have any **RED** items in it, you might be eligible for Healthy Choices marketing material.



Contracts with providers

If your organisation is putting out a tender for a new caterer, make sure you include requirements for healthy foods and drinks in the tender specifications.

Once you have found a caterer that provides healthy options, you can sign a contract which includes a catering service agreement, which specifies that healthy catering is required for your organisation.

This will help ensure that healthy catering is sustained and embedded in organisational procedures.

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Workplaces with catering providers

If your organisation has a catering provider, follow these steps to make sure that healthy foods and drinks are provided.



Who supplies catering in your workplace?

First, it is important to understand who provides the catering for your workplace. Catering may be supplied by a provider (either on-site or external) or purchased by employees from a supermarket or retail outlet.

Your workplace may have a contract with a preferred caterer, or may use different providers as needed.



Working with external suppliers

If your organisation has a contract with a caterer, work with the caterer to make healthy changes. First you will need to understand the terms of the contract. Be sure to find out:

- who the supplier is
- the length of the contract and expiry date
- whether the contract states that healthy foods and drinks are required.

It is important to make sure that any contracts with caterers clearly state that having healthy foods and drinks on the menu is a requirement and that no **RED** food and drinks are to be provided.

If you are able to change your current contract, if your contract will soon be renewed or if you are about to sign a contract with a new supplier, you can include a service agreement in the contract which states that the catering menu needs to meet the Healthy Choices guidelines.

If you have a contract with a caterer that cannot be changed and is not up for renewal, you should encourage the caterer to make healthy changes before the contract expires.



Finding healthier options

The [Healthy Choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces](#) has many healthy catering ideas, and includes a Healthy catering guide and sample menus to help you provide healthy foods and drinks at meetings and events.

Many caterers have healthier meals, snacks and drinks that meet the Healthy Choices guidelines, so be sure to ask your caterer about their healthier options. For more ideas research 'healthy workplace catering' online.

If your caterer would like more information about providing healthy foods and drinks, you can encourage them to contact the Healthy Eating Advisory Service.

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Catering purchased by staff

If catering is bought by employees from a supermarket or local retail outlet, make sure they are aware that the organisation will only pay for catering that is in line with organisational policy.

Having a list of recommended healthy options is helpful, and this list should be included in your organisation's policy about healthy catering. The policy should also outline products that cannot be offered due to dietary requirements (e.g. allergies).

For healthy catering ideas refer to Section 4 of the Healthy Choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces.