Healthy Meeting & Event Guidelines

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Are you ready to make the healthy choice the easy choice at your events?
The **Healthy Meeting & Event Guidelines** is a tool for anyone who is in charge of food-related events. Making *simple changes* to foods and drinks you offer at group and community events gives residents of Bartholomew County *disease-fighting* foods and the *energy* boost they may need without worrying about too many calories or too much unhealthy fat.

Two-thirds of Bartholomew County adults are obese or overweight. Our food choices, lifestyle and surroundings all affect our health. We know that choosing the right foods can prevent diseases and help us live better lives. Most Bartholomew County residents’ diets are low in fruits, vegetables and whole grains and are high in fat, saturated fat and sugars. Eating a steady diet of unhealthy foods and drinks is associated with four of the 10 leading causes of death: heart disease, certain types of cancer, stroke and type 2 diabetes.

Healthy Communities of Bartholomew County created the *Reach* movement as a county-wide initiative aimed at creating awareness, involvement and environmental changes to increase access to healthy food options and physical activity.
Guidelines for a Healthier Meeting Environment

Guideline #1: Ensure food is necessary at your meeting or event

Food is everywhere we go, all day, every day. With many of us struggling to control our weight in food-filled surroundings, it’s good to think twice about whether it’s necessary to offer food at meetings, presentations and seminars.

To meet this guideline:
- Decide whether or not food is necessary at your meeting.
- Avoid offering food between meal times.

Some suggestions:
- Use incentives other than food to motivate attendance at meetings (such as raffle prizes, product donations etc.)
- Offer healthful beverages instead of food when possible.
- Consider replacing a snack with a physical activity break.
- If food is necessary at a meeting see guideline # 2 to ensure that healthy choices are available.
Guideline #2: Offer healthy choices

There are many healthy and tasty options for foods and beverages. Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and high in vitamins, minerals and fiber. Portion sizes are important, too. Larger helpings of high calorie, high fat foods contribute to overweight in adults and children. Show attendees at your next meeting or function that you care about their health by providing healthy choices.

To meet this guideline:
- Provide water in pitchers or bottles for meeting attendees.
- Make an effort to choose foods from the Green Light Food List (see pages 8 and 9 for suggested food and beverage choices).
- Focus on fruits and vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy products, and lean meat and non-meat protein options.
- Choose **NO MORE THAN 1** item from the Red Light Food List to be served (see pages 8 and 9).

Some Suggestions:
- Choose foods and beverages that are lower in fat and calories.
- Present foods in smaller portion sizes.
- Ensure healthy fats in foods (i.e. foods free of trans fats, broth based soups versus cream based, food prepared with healthy oils etc.)
Guideline #3: Keep food safe to eat

Foods that are safe from harmful bacteria and viruses are vital for healthy eating. From farm to table, everyone shares the responsibility of keeping food safe.

To meet this guideline:
- Wash hands before serving food.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Do not leave foods at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

Tips for Stocking a Healthy Vending Machine

Ask your vendor about including some of these:
- Baked chips
- Reduced-fat cookies and crackers
- Reduced-fat chips
- Fig bars
- Pretzels
- Canned fruit (lite or packed in own juice)
- Animal crackers

As well as:
- Popcorn (lite or low-fat—5g or less/serving)
- Graham crackers
- Reduced-fat crackers
- Granola bar/cereal bars—low-fat (5g fat or less)

For refrigerated units:
- 100% fruit or vegetable juices
Guideline #4: Provide a healthy meeting environment

In addition to offering smart food choices at your meetings and events there are other steps you can take to promote a healthy environment for all attendees.

To meet this guideline:

- Ensure that attendees are aware of healthy food choices or the decision not to provide food at meeting/event.
- Provide a tobacco-free environment.
- For longer meetings/events include a physical activity break for employees.

Some suggestions:

- Organize physical activity breaks for meeting attendees. Focus on activities that can be adapted for people of all abilities, such as stretching exercises that can be performed in a seated position.
- Use ice breakers that involve physical activity.
- To encourage physical activity throughout the meeting tell participants that the dress code is casual.
- Choose a meeting location where participants can easily and safely take a walk.
- Include physical activity as part of the meeting agenda by having “walk and talk” sessions. Encourage participants to go for short walks (in teams of 2-3 people) while they discuss agenda items and networking opportunities.
- If there are stairs, encourage participants to take them.

- Yogurt (flavored, low-fat, non-fat or fat-free)
- Milk (skim or 1%)
- Reduced-fat cottage cheese or pudding
- Fresh fruit
- Mini carrots or other prepackaged vegetables
- Salads with low-fat/non-fat dressing
- Bottled water

For additional tools and resources regarding healthy vending, visit the workplace page at www.WhatsYourReach.org.
Choose This, Not That

Remember, make an effort to choose NO MORE THAN 1 item from the Red Light Food List to be served at your meeting or event.

## For Beverages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green light foods</th>
<th>Red light foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Carbonated water with no sugar, bottled water or ice water</td>
<td>Soft drinks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee or tea, regular and herbal, hot and cold, unsweetened</td>
<td>Sweet Tea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% fruit or vegetable juices</td>
<td>Fruit-flavored drinks or fruit punches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skim or 1% low-fat milk</td>
<td>Whole or 2% milk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## For Breakfast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Green light foods</th>
<th>Red light foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fresh fruits, dried fruits, unsweetened juices</td>
<td>Sweetened canned fruits and juices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-fat yogurt</td>
<td>Regular yogurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small bagels—3.5” or smaller</td>
<td>Regular or large bagels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small or mini muffins—2.5” or smaller</td>
<td>Muffins, croissants, doughnuts, sweet rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small low-fat muffins or low-fat granola bars (5g fat or less/serving)</td>
<td>Regular butter, cream cheese, peanut butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toppings of light margarine, low-fat cream cheese, jam or jelly</td>
<td>Sweetened cereals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsweetened cereals</td>
<td>Waffles or French toast made from white bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-grain waffles and French toast</td>
<td>White bread or English muffin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole-grain bread or English muffins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### For Snacks

**Green light foods:**
- Cut-up fresh fruits or vegetables with low-fat dip
- Low-fat yogurt dip
- Whole-grain crackers (5g fat or less/serving)
- Low-fat, “lite” popcorn (5g fat or less/serving)
- Baked or low-fat chips, pretzels
- Small slices of cake (2” square)
- Angel food cake with fruit topping
- Baked tortilla chips with salsa

**Red light foods:**
- Chips or cookies
- Ranch dip
- Regular crackers
- Regular popcorn or buttered popcorn
- Regular chips
- Large slices of cake
- Regular cake
- Regular chips with dip

### For Lunch or Dinner

**Green light foods:**
- Salads with dressings on the side
- Low-fat or fat-free salad dressings
- Soups made with vegetable puree or skim milk
- Pasta salads with low-fat dressings
- Sandwiches on whole-grain breads
- Lean meats, poultry, fish, tofu
- Baked potatoes with low-fat or vegetable toppings
- Vegetables—fresh or steamed
- Whole-grain bread or rolls
- Margarine without trans-fatty acids
- An entrée with no more than 12 to 15 grams fat
- Lower-fat/lower-calorie desserts: fresh fruit, low-fat ice cream, low-fat frozen yogurt, sherbet, sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping

**Red light foods:**
- Salads with added dressing
- Regular salad dressings
- Soups made with cream or half-and-half
- Pasta salads made with mayonnaise or cream dressing
- Sandwiches on croissants or white bread
- High-fat and fried meats, bacon, poultry with skin, cold cuts, oil-packed or fried fish
- Baked potatoes with butter, sour cream, and bacon bits
- Vegetables in cream sauce or butter
- Croissants or white rolls
- Butter
- An entrée with more than 15 grams fat
- Higher-fat and higher-calorie desserts: ice cream, cheese cake, pie, cream puffs, large slices of cake
We are seeing growing numbers of people at an unhealthy weight in our community. These guidelines will help meeting planners choose lower-fat, lower-calorie foods and drinks for events.

As users of this guide, we can model our commitment to good health by making our meetings and events healthier and sharing that vision with others across our county. Most importantly, by following these guidelines, you can improve your own health and the quality of your life. You may also reduce your risk for long-term diseases such as heart disease, cancer and diabetes.

So think about all the food-related events you are involved in (meetings, trainings, church suppers, fundraisers, luncheons, receptions, etc) and promote good health by signing the attached Policy Implementation Agreement and following these guidelines at your next event.

Lead by Example

When group leaders role-model healthy eating and physical activity, it makes a powerful statement. Show your members or employees that you are concerned about their health and well-being.

- Sign the Healthy Meeting Guidelines Policy Implementation Agreement (see page 11).
- Share this document with other leaders in your community. Challenge them to lead by example.
- Buy healthy foods when you dine out.
- Prepare and eat healthy meals at home.
- Do not forget to build physical activity into your events as well.
- Encourage physical activity in your organization and “walk the talk” yourself.
Healthy Meeting Guidelines
Policy Implementation Agreement

For use within any organization/agency or community group where foods or beverages are served.

Whereas:

______________________________
(fill in your business, church, etc. name here)

is concerned about the health of our ________________________________
(employees, members)

Whereas:
People have become more and more interested in eating smart and moving more;

Whereas:
Heart disease, cancer and stroke—the top three causes of death in Indiana—are largely affected by what we eat and how active we are;

Whereas:
Foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole grain breads and pastas, and low-fat dairy products are better choices for preventing many diseases;

Therefore:
Effective ______________________, it is the policy of ____________________________
(today's date) (fill in your organization's name)

that all activities and events (examples of events may include: meetings, potluck events, catered events, community-sponsored events) sponsored or supported by this organization will always include opportunities for healthy foods and beverages by:

- Ensuring food is necessary at meetings and events
- Offering healthy choices
- Keeping food safe to eat
- Providing a healthy meeting environment

______________________________  ________________________________
Signature                                           Title

______________________________  ________________________________
Name of Organization, Church, Community Group, Worksite, School, Health Care Facility   Date