

# **Eat Smart**

# **Meet Smart**



**How to Plan and Host Healthy Meetings,  
Events and Conferences**

A PUBLICATION OF THE WESTERN AND NORTHERN CANADIAN  
COLLABORATIVE FOR HEALTHY LIVING

**Eat Smart Meet Smart** will help you plan meetings, events and conferences that are healthy for your participants — and healthy for your organization. Meetings, events and conferences are a central part of today's work world, and many involve food and drinks as well as long periods of sitting. This guide provides ideas for how you can make healthy food choices and add physical activities that will help keep participants alert, productive and engaged while at work, and encourage healthier choices at home, too.

# Table of Contents

<b>It Just Makes Sense</b>	<b>2</b>
The Food Effect	2
Healthy Choices	2
Everything in Moderation	3
<b>When, What &amp; How Much to Order</b>	<b>4</b>
When to Order	4
What to Order	4
• Feature vegetables and fruit	4
• Serve lower-fat milk and alternatives	5
• Highlight high-protein foods	5
• Emphasize healthy carbohydrates	6
• Be careful what drinks you choose	6
• Reduce added fat, salt and sugar	7
• Offer smaller portions	8
How Much to Order	9
<b>Healthy Doesn't Have to Mean Boring</b>	<b>14</b>
Breakfast or Morning Snacks	14
Afternoon Snacks	15
Lunch or Dinner	16
<b>Meetings that Last More than One Day</b>	<b>18</b>
You're the Boss	18
<b>Making Your Meetings Both Safe and Environmentally Friendly</b>	<b>19</b>
Food Allergies and Restrictions	19
Food Safety	20
Go Green	21
<b>Eat Smart, Move Smart</b>	<b>22</b>
Activities for Any Meetings	22
<b>Activities for Longer Meetings</b>	<b>23</b>
For More Information	24

# It Just Makes Sense

Serving healthy food and drinks at meetings, events and conferences just makes sense.

We spend at least eight hours of our day at work, five days a week, and often many of those hours are spent sitting in meetings. On the weekends, some of us go to additional meetings and events, conferences, seminars or workshops where we sit for even more hours — and, just like at work, often have little or no say in what we are served to eat and drink.

It makes both good business sense and good health sense to serve nutritious food and drinks wherever and whenever people gather together.

## The Food Effect

Have you ever had a hard time keeping your eyes open during a PowerPoint presentation? Maybe it was what you ate before the presentation, rather than the presentation.

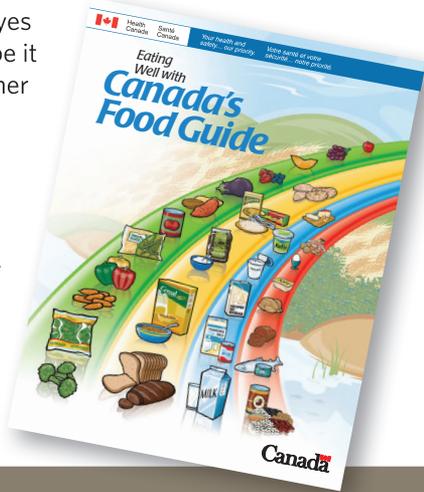
What we eat and drink at meetings and other functions has a direct effect on how well we feel and how healthy we are. Food — the right food — gives us energy so we can work better, be more productive and actually enjoy our lives more, both on the job and at home.

## Healthy Choices

Canada's Food Guide explains that we need to eat a variety of foods from the four food groups to maintain a healthy body weight and receive all the nutrients we need for good health.

According to the guide, as adults, we should be choosing:

- seven to eight servings of vegetables and fruit per day
- six to seven servings of grain products (at least half whole grain), including bread, rice, pasta and cereals, per day



## Did you know...

Only one-third of Canadians eat the seven to eight daily servings of vegetables and fruit recommended by Canada's Food Guide. Eating vegetables and fruit helps maintain good health and keep energy levels high. It also helps protect against the effects of aging and reduces the risk of chronic disease.



- two to three servings of milk and alternatives, such as cheese, yogurt, kefir and fortified soy drinks, per day, and
- two to three servings of meat — cooked fish, shellfish, poultry, lean meat — and meat alternatives, such as eggs, beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, nuts and nut butters, per day.



**The healthiest food choices are:**

- **Low in fat.** Everyone needs some fat, but too much fat and the wrong kinds of fat can make you gain weight and increase your risk of diabetes, heart disease and cancer.
- **Low in salt.** Eating too much sodium (salt) can raise blood pressure, which can lead to heart disease and stroke.
- **Low in sugar.** Sugar can increase your blood sugar levels, your weight and the fats (triglycerides) found in your blood.
- **High in fibre.** Eating a lot of fibre-rich foods can help lower your blood cholesterol levels, control your blood sugar levels and help prevent high blood pressure.

## Everything in Moderation

Healthy eating is balanced eating. Healthy eating does not mean that *everything* you serve has to be low in fat, salt or sugar and high in fibre.

At your meetings and events, you can still offer the treat of a cookie or pastry now and then. Just make sure that you offer *more* choices that are healthy and fewer choices that are not. Whenever you do serve the less healthy choices — such as cookies or pastries — you cut them in half.

## What's in this guide

The following pages contain great tips for what to serve and how much to serve at meetings, events and conferences.

You'll find:

- tips on when and what kind of food you should serve
- sample menus for meals and snacks
- ideas for how to make your meetings “green,” and
- essential information about food safety.

You will also find ideas for how you can build in opportunities for participants to be physically active during any meeting, event or conference — short or long.

# When, What & How Much to Order

## When to Order

You may not need to order food and drinks for every meeting you hold. Consider offering food only at longer meetings or at meetings held during what would normally be a meal-time for participants, such as:

- between 7:30 and 9:00 am
- between 11:30 and 1:00 pm, and
- after 4:30 or 5:00 pm.

At other times — or for short meetings under two hours — you may want to offer drinks only. (Water should be available at all meetings.)

Remember to let participants know whether or not you are serving food and/or drinks. It will help them plan their workday and work at eating better.

## What to Order

When you are sure you need to order food for a meeting:

### Feature vegetables and fruit

Packed with good nutrition, vegetables and fruit can also be tempting food choices. Why not:

- Serve washed and ready-to-eat fresh vegetables and fruit (watch for local berries in season), either on their own or with a low fat dip or yogurt.
- Use fruit in salads or kabobs (fruit kabobs make a great snack or dessert), or for toppings on cereal at a breakfast meeting.
- Add raw, grilled or roasted vegetables to salads, sandwiches, pasta and soups.
- Provide 100% fruit or vegetable juices as well as water.



## *Always ask why first*

Dr. Paul Fieldhouse believes we should first ask why we are offering food before we go ahead and order it.

“Not every meeting requires food,” says the Nutrition Policy and Research Analyst for the Government of Manitoba’s Health and Healthy Living department, “and unless the meeting is over a meal time, do we really need to provide it? A lot of people go from meeting to meeting to meeting and there is food at every single one. We need to think about the habit of automatically serving food, and if we do serve food, to at least make sure it is healthier than what we used to serve — donuts and danishes and soft drinks. We need to show what real food looks like, and help change the way people think about what’s good to eat by changing our everyday foodscape.”

- Supply dried fruit, vegetable bars, or fruit cups for snacks, fruit cobblers, fruit squares or grilled fruit for desserts.
- Order a vegetable soup or salad for lunch or as the start to a hot meal, and at least one vegetable as a side dish with a hot meal.
- Plan a potluck salad bar for regular staff meetings, instead of the usual brown-bag lunch.



### Serve lower-fat milk and alternatives

Milk and alternatives, such as cheese, yogurt, kefir and fortified soy drinks, are good sources of protein. They also provide a number of nutrients that are essential for strong bones and teeth. Choose to serve:

- 2% or less milk with tea or coffee.
- 2% or less milk as a drink, and
- low fat (2% or less) yogurt cups or low fat cheese (less than 20% milk fat) chunks or slices for snacks.

### Highlight high-protein foods

High protein foods can help boost energy levels and keep us more alert for longer. To increase protein without increasing fat:

- Serve tuna, char or salmon, lean chicken, turkey, ham, beef or other lean meat, low fat cheese, eggs or tofu in sandwiches or as part of meals.
- Provide 2% or less milk or fortified soy drinks and yogurt at meals and snack breaks.
- Offer bean soup or chili at lunch or a bean dip or hummus for snacks, with chopped vegetables or whole grain crackers.
- Provide individual cups of trail mix made with nuts, dried fruit and whole grain cereals as a snack.

## *Eat smart, eat local*

Remember that food choices can — and should — be customized to suit local or cultural eating preferences and locally available food choices.

For example, the Northwest Territories has published its own version of *Canada's Food Guide*.

Called the *NWT Food Guide*, it highlights local meat choices, such as seal and caribou, and includes bannock as a grain product.

## Emphasize healthy carbohydrates

Some carbohydrates — such as white breads, rice and pastas, cookies and cakes — can make us feel tired and unable to concentrate soon after we eat them. Other carbohydrates — such as vegetables, fruit, whole grains and low fat dairy products — do just the opposite: they provide our bodies with the long lasting fuel we need to function properly throughout the day. Emphasize healthy carbohydrates at your meetings by choosing:

- whole grain cereals, breads and bagels for breakfast
- brown rice and whole grain pastas for hot meals or cold salads
- whole grain bread or wraps for sandwiches, and
- whole grain bars, muffin (bran or oatmeal, for example) and crackers for snacks.

## Be careful what drinks you choose

Drinks such as pop, slushies, fruit-flavoured drinks, iced tea and lemonade contain a lot of added sugar. Instead, provide:

- pitchers of water
- 100% pure fruit or vegetable juices (low sodium), and
- 2% or less milk or fortified soy beverage
- diet or sugar free beverages



## Make 'em walk for their food

Norm Silins was the General Manager of Olympic Services for Bell Canada, in charge of telecommunications technology for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. Norm attended to a lot of meetings — as many as three a day — and was responsible for ordering food for a number of intensive, all-day planning sessions. He learned the hard way “what food will give you energy and what food will bring you down.”

Says Norm: “Work and productivity suffer with bad food choices. I now serve food a little bit away from where people are sitting. If they have to walk to get it, they'll eat less than if it's right in front of them.”

Coffee and tea can be a healthy source of fluid — although people should limit their intake of caffeine to about 400 mg a day, which is about three 6 ounce cups of coffee a day and a bit more if you drink tea, which contains less caffeine. Just make sure you also provide decaffeinated or herbal options, and:

- supply 2% or less milk and a sugar substitute, and
- avoid creamers and flavoured creams, coffee whiteners, packaged hot chocolate and apple cider mixes (real cocoa made with low fat milk is okay).

## *Did you know...*

Many soup kitchens or shelters would be happy to take any leftovers that do not require refrigeration, such as whole fruit and vegetables and baked goods without cream or meat fillings.

## **Reduce added fat, sugar and salt**

It might seem hard at first, but in fact it's very easy to reduce fat, sugar and salt in the food and drink we serve at meetings, events and conferences. To make simple but healthy changes to what you order:

- Ask for food to be prepared with little or no added fats and oils
- Request meat, fish or poultry dishes to be baked, poached, grilled, steamed or broiled (never fried)
- Always offer a vegetarian option at meals
- Ask for sauces and salad dressings (always low in fat and salt) to be served on the side
- Ask for the bread in sandwiches to be buttered lightly or on one side only
- Choose broth or tomato-based sauces and soups, rather than creamed
- Offer fruit spreads for bread, muffin or bagels instead of butter or margarine
- Avoid serving processed cheese and meat (bologna, bacon, pepperoni, etc.); and
- Limit cakes, pastries, donuts, cookies and squares, and do not put out bowls of candy or mints on the meeting tables.



## Offer smaller portions

For many of us, it's not what we eat but how much that's the problem. Many restaurants today automatically "supersize" their portions, and we've become used to thinking of these as the "correct" portion sizes. In fact, to be healthy, our portions should generally be much smaller. (See Canada's Food Guide or "How Much to Order" for more information on portion sizes.)

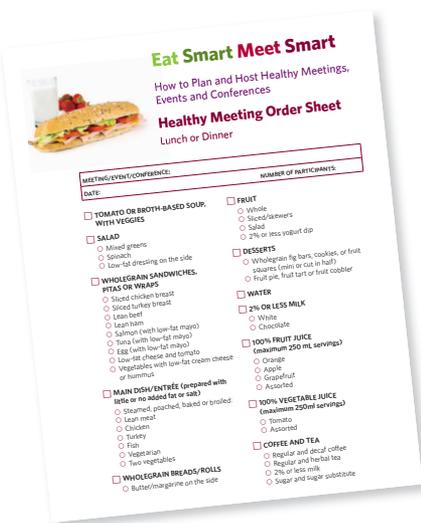
Help your participants by:

- providing mini-bagels, cookies and muffins (or cut larger ones in half)
- asking for sandwiches and wraps that contain only two slices of meat or poultry
- cutting cheese (low fat) into small squares or slices, and
- offering fruit juices and other drinks in maximum 250 mL (1 cup) sizes only.

## Creative solutions for northern and remote communities

Sue Hamilton, Territorial Nutritionist for the Government of Nunavut, points out that "fresh produce, whole grain products and low fat cheese and salad dressings may not always be available in remote communities — but there are ways to offer healthier food choices."

Sue suggests working with local caterers to come up with creative solutions for adding fruit and vegetables to meeting menus, such as using canned legumes and frozen vegetables as a base for salads and offering frozen fruit, such as berries, for dessert. Also, she says, "telling a store manager that you will need fat-free yogurt, whole grain bread or low fat salad dressings for an upcoming meeting can help introduce these foods into the community."



# How Much to Order

It's always tricky trying to figure out how much to order for a meeting, event or conference. Too much, and it might go to waste; too little and some people may go hungry. Here are some basic guidelines that follow the recommended serving sizes from *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*.

FOOD/ BEVERAGE	PER PERSON*
<b>VEGETABLES &amp; FRUIT</b>	
<p style="text-align: right;"><b>Eat Smarter</b></p> <p>100% Natural fresh, frozen, canned, dried or baked</p> <p>No added fat, sugar or salt (sodium)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">↑</p> <p style="text-align: left;"><b>Eat Smart</b></p>	<p><b>VEGETABLES:</b></p> <p>Fresh, frozen or canned (no salt) — 125 mL (½ cup)</p> <p>Mixed greens, cabbage or spinach — 250 mL (1 cup)</p> <p>100% Vegetable juice (low sodium) — 125mL (½ cup)</p> <p><b>FRUIT:</b></p> <p>Fresh whole fruit — 1 medium</p> <p>Fresh or frozen sliced fruit — 125 mL (½ cup)</p> <p>Canned fruit in 100% pure juice — 125 mL (½ cup)</p> <p>100% unsweetened fruit sauce (i.e. apple sauce) — 125 mL (½ cup)</p> <p>Dried fruit bar/snacks (100% fruit) — 14 g - 20 g</p> <p>Dried fruit (i.e. raisins) — 40 g or 60 mL (¼ cup)</p> <p>100% pure fruit juice — 125mL (½ cup)</p> <p>Fruit canned or frozen in light syrup — 125 mL (½ cup)</p> <p>Baked vegetables (i.e. potato wedges) — 125 mL (½ cup)</p> <p>Salsa (low sodium) — 60 mL (¼ cup)</p>

\*Serving sizes are based on *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*



FOOD/ BEVERAGE	PER PERSON*
<b>GRAIN PRODUCTS</b>	
<p data-bbox="136 305 168 472">Eat Smarter</p> <p data-bbox="189 305 380 516">Whole grains listed first on the ingredients list</p> <p data-bbox="189 410 317 435">High in fibre</p> <p data-bbox="189 459 380 516">Lower in fat, sugar and salt (sodium)</p>  <p data-bbox="136 1052 168 1182">Eat Smart</p>	<p data-bbox="412 305 838 329">Whole grain bread or bun — 1 slice (35 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 337 944 362">Whole wheat pizza crust — 1/6 of 12 inch pizza (35 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 370 944 427">Whole wheat naan, roti, pita or wrap — 1/2 of a 17 cm diameter piece (35 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 435 880 459">Whole wheat English muffin — 1 muffin (52 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 467 912 516">Whole wheat or multigrain grain bagel — 1/2 large (45 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 524 923 548">Whole wheat bannock — 2.5" x 2.5" x 0.75" (37 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 557 870 605">Whole grain crackers (low fat and sodium) — 20 g to 25 g</p> <p data-bbox="412 613 955 662">Cooked grains (i.e. quinoa, bulgur, barley, couscous, buckwheat, brown or wild rice) — 125 mL (1/2 cup)</p> <p data-bbox="412 670 880 695">Whole grain noodles/pasta — 125 mL (1/2 cup)</p> <p data-bbox="412 703 827 727">Hot whole grain cereal — 175 ml (3/4 cup)</p> <p data-bbox="412 735 912 760">Cold whole grain cereal — 30 g or 250 mL (1 cup)</p> <p data-bbox="412 768 934 792">Granola type cereal — 30 to 35 g or 80 mL (1/3 cup)</p> <p data-bbox="412 800 806 824">Whole grain pancake or waffle — 35 g</p> <p data-bbox="412 833 721 857">Rice cakes (plain) — 2 medium</p> <p data-bbox="412 865 880 914">Whole grain bran or fruit muffin (lower fat) — 1/2 (35 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 922 902 971">Granola bar or whole grain cookies (lower fat) — 30 to 38 g</p> <p data-bbox="412 979 774 1003">Popcorn (plain) — 500 mL (2 cups)</p> <p data-bbox="412 1011 891 1060">Refined pitas, wraps, crackers, cereals, noodles, pasta or white rice</p> <p data-bbox="412 1068 668 1092">Pretzels — 10 sticks (5 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 1101 891 1149">Whole grain tortilla chips (lower fat) and baked pita chips — 15 - 20 chips (47 g)</p> <p data-bbox="412 1157 732 1182">Whole grain fig bars — 2 (32 g)</p>

\*Serving sizes are based on *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*

FOOD/ BEVERAGE		PER PERSON*
<b>MILK &amp; ALTERNATIVES</b>		
<b>Eat Smarter</b> 	Lower in fat and salt (sodium)	Unflavored low fat milk (skim, 1% or 2%), soy or rice beverage — 250mL (1 cup)
	No added sugar	Low fat hard or soft cheese from milk (≤ 20% MF) — 50 g (1 ½ oz)
<b>Eat Smart</b> 		Fortified soya loaf and slices — 50 g (1 ½ oz)
		Cottage cheese, dry curd (no salt added, ≤ 2% MF) — 115 g or 125 mL (½ cup)
		Plain yogurt/kefir from low fat milk (≤ 2% MF) — 175 g (¾ cup)
		Soygurt (≤ 2%) — 175 g (¾ cup)
		Flavoured low fat milk or fortified soy beverages — (skim, 1% or 2%) — 250mL (1 cup)
		Sweetened low fat yogurt and flavoured yogurt drinks (≤ 2% MF) — 175g (¾ cup)
		Cottage cheese (lower sodium, ≤ 2% MF) — 115 g or 125 mL (½ cup)
		MF=Milk Fat ≤=Less than or equal to
<b>MEAT &amp; ALTERNATIVES</b>		
<b>Eat Smarter</b> 	Lean baked, broiled, boiled, poached, roasted, grilled or barbequed	Lean beef, pork or ham, wild game, skinless chicken or turkey, fish (fresh or canned in water) — 75 g (2 ½ oz) or 125 mL (½ cup ground)
	Little or no added fat, sugar or salt (sodium)	Eggs — 2
<b>Eat Smart</b> 		Tofu — 150 g or 175 mL (¾ cup)
		Soy product (i.e. veggie burger) — 1 patty (70 g)
		Peanut butter or other nut/seed butter — 30 mL (2 Tbsp)
		Cooked beans/legumes — kidney beans, lentils, chickpeas — 175 ml (¾ cup)
		Nuts and seeds, plain and unsalted — 60 mL (¼ cup) or 20 almonds (36 g), 10 walnuts (25 g), 10 pecans (25 g), or 46 peanuts (37 g)
		Fish canned in oil, lean deli/luncheon meat or sausages (i.e. turkey) — 75 g (2 ½ oz) or 125 mL (½ cup ground)
		Hummus — 60 mL (¼ cup)

\*Serving sizes are based on *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide*

FOOD/ BEVERAGE	PER PERSON*
<b>MIXED DISHES</b>	
<b>Sandwiches/ Wraps/ Pita</b>	English muffin with egg, cheese and ham — 1 (137 g) Grilled lean meat sandwich with vegetables and cheese — 1 sandwich (246 g) Burger (beef/veggie/salmon) with vegetables and cheese — 1 burger (102 g) Wrap or pita (meat/fish/tofu) with vegetables and cheese — ½ wrap (195 g) Lean deli sub sandwich with vegetables— 6 inch (228 g) Salmon, tuna, or egg salad — 1 sandwich (162 g)
<b>Meat/Fish / Poultry Based</b>	2 egg omelet with vegetables and meat— 1 omelet (158 g) Chili Con Carne — 250 mL (267 g) Meat lasagna — one 3" x 3.5" piece (232 g) Caribou stew — 250 mL (259 g) Pasta with meat sauce — 250 mL (263 g) Pizza — 1/6 based on medium 12 inch pizza (105 g) Sushi — 4 sushi (104 g) Stir fry — 250 mL (229 g) Fajita — 1 fajita (223 g)
<b>Vegetarian Based</b>	Vegetarian lasagna — one 3" x 3.5" piece (256 g) Pasta with tomato sauce — 250 mL (211 g) Pizza — 1/6 based on medium 12 inch pizza (93 g) Sushi — 4 sushi (104 g) Stir fry — 250 mL (171 g) Bean and brown rice casserole — 250 mL (187 g) Spicy Dahl — 175 mL (146 g)
<b>Salads</b>	Mixed greens, cabbage, spinach — 250 mL (77 g) Pasta and vegetable salad — 250 mL (187 g) Bean, lentil, chickpea or quinoa salad — 175 mL (187 g)
<b>Soup</b>	Broth based: chicken rice, beef noodle, vegetable gumbo and tomato soups — 250 mL (1 cup) Meal style: chunky soup, stews and low fat milk/cream based soups — 250 mL (1 cup)
<p>All ingredients used to prepare dishes include fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruit, whole grain breads, pastas and brown rice; lean meats, fish and poultry, low fat milk (<math>\leq</math> 2% MF), low fat cheese (<math>\leq</math> 20% MF), and condiments low in fat, sugar and salt (sodium).</p>	

\*Serving sizes based on recommended amounts from Nutrient Values of Some Common Foods.

FOOD/ BEVERAGE	PER PERSON*
<b>CONDIMENTS — SAUCES, DIPS &amp; SALAD DRESSINGS</b>	
<p>Select condiments lower in fat, sugar and salt (sodium)</p> <p>Ask for these “on the side”</p>	<p><b>CONDIMENTS:</b>            Ketchup, steak sauce, soy sauce, vinegar, teriyaki sauce, marinades — 15 mL (1 Tbsp)            Horseradish, hot sauce, mustard, Worcestershire — 5 mL (1 tsp)</p> <p><b>ENTRÉE SAUCES:</b>            Spaghetti sauce — 125 mL (½ cup)            Pizza, pesto, salsa, cheese, white sauce or gravy — 60 mL (¼ cup)</p> <p><b>DIPPING SAUCES:</b>            BBQ, hollandaise, tartar, mustard, sweet and sour, or vegetable dips (i.e. spinach/onion) — 15 mL (1 Tbsp)</p> <p><b>DIPS:</b>            Legume (i.e. hummus) or lower fat dairy based — 30 mL (2 Tbsp)</p> <p><b>SALAD DRESSINGS:</b>            Low fat salad dressing, mayonnaise — 15 mL (1 Tbsp)</p> <p><b>PRESERVATIVES:</b>            Jam/Jellies (lower sugar) — 15 mL (1 Tbsp)</p>
<b>DESSERTS</b>	
<p>Prepared with whole grains, and little or no added fat, sugar and salt (sodium)</p>	<p>Fresh fruit with yogurt (<math>\leq</math> 2% MF) — 125 mL (½ cup)            100% unsweetened fruit sauce — 125 mL (½ cup)            Whole grain fig bar — 2 (32 g)            Whole grain low fat cookie (i.e. Oatmeal raisin) — 1 (30 to 38 g)            Whole wheat low fat bran, fruit muffin, quick breads (i.e. banana bread) — 35 g            Fruit crisp/cobbler — 125 mL (½ cup)            Fruit sorbet or low fat frozen yogurt — 125 mL (½ cup)            Angelfood cake — 1/12 of 25 cm diameter (28 g)            Whole grain bread pudding — 125 mL (½ cup)</p> <p>MF=Milk Fat  <math>\leq</math>=Less than or equal to</p>

\*Serving sizes based on recommended amounts from Nutrient Values of Some Common Foods.

# Healthy Doesn't Have to Mean Boring

Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures, and eating healthy foods should be just as much of a pleasure as eating not-so-healthy ones. We've assembled a series of sample menus that allow for lots of choice — **covering at least three of the four food groups at meals and two at snacks** — as well as lots of good tastes.

## Breakfast or Morning Snacks

For all-day conferences, meetings between 7:30 and 9:00 am, or over two hours:

### Sample 1:

- Assorted fruit (whole or sliced) or fruit salad
- Whole grain bread or bagels (small or cut in half) and/or low fat, whole grain muffin (small or cut in half)
- Peanut butter and/or low fat cream cheese
- Fruit jam or jelly
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), 100% fruit juices and 2% or less milk.

### Sample 2:

- Assorted sliced fruit or fruit salad
- Frittata made with spinach and mushrooms
- Whole grain bread or bagels (small or cut in half)
- Fruit jam or jelly
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal) 100% fruit juices and 2% or less milk.

## *Tips for self-catered meetings*

You probably don't need a professional caterer for smaller meetings or simple menus. Your local grocery store carries everything you may need to provide a healthy meal or snack. To make your work easier:

- Look for items that require minimal preparation, such as pre-cut fruit and veggies. They may be more expensive, but will save you time.
- Ask the deli department or bakery to slice foods for you.

For mid-morning meetings over two hours or morning breaks in all-day conferences:

### Sample 3:

- Assorted sliced fruit
- Low fat yogurt (vanilla, plain and fruit flavours)
- Low fat granola
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), 100% fruit juices.

### Sample 4:

- Assorted whole fruit
- Low fat cheese (less than 20% fat) and whole grain crackers, water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), and 2% or less milk.



## Afternoon Snacks

For mid-afternoon meetings over two hours or afternoon breaks in all day conferences:

### Sample 1:

- Vegetable tray with low fat yogurt and/or low fat sour cream dip
- Trail mix or nut/seeds served in small cups
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), 100% fruit juices, 2% or less milk, and diet or sugar free beverages.

### Sample 2:

- Fruit skewers
- Low fat yogurt (vanilla, plain and fruit flavours)
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal).

## Northern bites

If you live in the north, consider substituting traditional foods and dishes for those suggested here. For example:

- instead of bagels or muffin for breakfast, serve whole wheat bannock
- instead of ham or beef in sandwiches, try sliced baked caribou or muskox
- instead of vegetable soup for lunch, serve Arctic char or muktuk chowder
- instead of chicken for dinner, try moose or seal stew with vegetables.

### Sample 3:

- Assorted whole fruit
- Low fat cheese (less than 20% fat) and whole grain crackers, or whole grain tortilla chips with salsa or blackbean dip
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), and 2% or less milk.

## Lunch or Dinner



### Sample 1:

- Garden salad with low fat dressings on the side
- Whole grain sandwiches, pitas, wraps or tortillas, with fillings made from:
  - sliced chicken or turkey breast or lean meat
  - salmon, char, tuna or egg mixed with low fat mayonnaise
  - vegetables with low fat cream cheese or hummus
- Low fat, whole grain fig bars or fruit cobbler
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), 100% fruit juices, 2% or less milk, and diet or sugar free beverages.

### Sample 2:

- Chickpea or lentil salad with vegetables
- Whole grain rolls
- Assorted fruit with 2% or less yogurt dip
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), 100% fruit juices and 2% or less milk.



### Sample 3:

- Lemon Mustard Chicken with Barley Pilaf and Ginger Orange Carrots\*
- Baked Apples\*
- Water, coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), and 2% or less milk

\*Recipes for these tasty and nutritious dishes are posted on *Healthy U* Alberta ([www.healthyalberta.com](http://www.healthyalberta.com)).



## *New belt or new lifestyle?*

The Government of Alberta's *Healthy U* website ([www.healthyalberta.com](http://www.healthyalberta.com)) includes real-life stories of people who have made healthy changes to their lives. One of those people is Patrick Davis.

One day after Patrick wolfed down a double burger combo at his desk, he went to loosen his belt, only to discover that he'd already reached the loosest setting. But instead of buying a new belt, Patrick said "no more fast food, no more desk lunches. Now I go for a short walk every lunch hour, even if it's just to the salad bar down the street." And his old belt now fits again.

# Meetings that Last More than One Day

If your meeting or conference is scheduled to last more than one day, you will most likely be working with a caterer or a hotel chef to plan meals and snacks.

Be clear before you book with the caterer or chef that you want healthy food and drinks only. If the caterer or chef does not want to modify set menus or change cooking methods to provide the healthy food you have asked for, find another.

Remember to stress that you do not want to serve the same foods to participants over and over again — healthy eating does not have to be boring eating!

## You're the Boss

Ask your caterer or chef to avoid fried foods and to prepare all foods with as little fat, salt and sugar as possible. Also ask your caterer/chef to serve:

- vegetables and fruit with every meal or snack
- whole grain cereals, breads, pastas and brown rice
- smaller portion sizes for full meals
- mini bagels, muffins (cut them in half) or cookies (2 - 3" diameter)
- fresh fruit as a dessert option (with other desserts made with fruit or with fruit toppings)
- sauces, salad dressings and salad toppings — such as croutons or cheese — on the side
- a vegetarian option at every meal, and
- a fish entrée for at least one meal.

## *Aiming high in Yukon*

In 2006, Judy Shannon took on a gigantic challenge: organizing a four-day conference for about 350 people in Whitehorse, Yukon, where healthy food is often hard to find and all food is expensive.

"I wanted people to come to the National Energy and Mines Ministers' Conference here and experience something they never had before," says the Mineral Development Officer for Yukon's Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, "and then I wanted them to say they can't wait to come back!" I wanted them to experience meals that were healthy, but that they would never forget, that highlighted the variety and quality of Yukon products.

To achieve her goals, Judy worked closely with the chef at the host hotel to develop menus for both meals and snacks. "Chefs love to highlight their talent," she says, "so I just told him my budget and what I wanted then let him loose, and he was fantastic. The food was different and it was good and people raved about the meals."

# Making Your Meetings Both Safe and Environmentally Friendly

## Food Allergies and Restrictions

Some people are allergic to certain foods, such as shellfish, peanuts, tree nuts and fish. Others need to restrict what they eat for religious or health reasons (for example, someone with high blood pressure may have been told to severely limit salt, while someone with diabetes must be very careful about his or her sugar intake). Still others may be vegetarians or vegans by choice.

To help make sure you meet the dietary needs of the people attending your meetings, events or conferences:

- For staff in your office, keep a file listing each person's allergies or dietary restrictions
- For any employee at risk for a severe allergic reaction, ask for a copy of his or her emergency treatment plan so you know what to do in case of an accident
- For visitors, ensure you have a selection of food and drink options that they can pick and choose from (naturally low fat, low salt, low sugar selections, such as vegetables and fruit, are usually suitable for everyone), and
- For registered events or conferences, make sure your registration forms have a space where participants can indicate any food allergies or dietary restrictions.



## Food Safety

A food-borne illness may occur when a person eats food infected with disease-causing bacteria, viruses or parasites. The most common symptoms of a food-borne illness are stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, headaches and/or fever. These symptoms may appear within a few hours or as long as a few days after eating contaminated food. They usually last only a day or two, but the symptoms can linger as long as a week to 10 days. In severe cases of food-borne illness, the effects can be permanent.

Meat, chicken and turkey, seafood, eggs, vegetables and fruit, milk and milk products may all carry the germs responsible for food-borne illnesses. When you handle these foods, you may also transfer the germs to other foods, as well as to counters, tables, cutting boards or utensils.

To help prevent food-borne illnesses at your meetings, events or conferences:

- Make sure all food and drinks are delivered
  - at the right serving temperature (hot or cold)
  - just before serving time, and served within 30 minutes of delivery
- Supply (or ask your caterer to supply) serving utensils for each dish
- Make sure everyone responsible for preparing, displaying or serving food washes his or her hands well with hot water and soap before starting.

## *Did you know...*

Health Canada estimates that there are 11 to 13 million cases of food-borne illness in Canada every year.

## *Changing in Saskatchewan*

Change can be a slow and difficult process. Look at how many years it took the recycling message to be accepted by Canadians — but the change in thinking and practice did indeed happen, and our country is now one of the leaders of the worldwide recycling movement. And it can happen with healthy eating as well.

For example, one year after the Heartland Health Region in Saskatchewan introduced a food and nutrition policy, a remarkable three-quarters of staff surveyed reported that the policy had helped them eat more nutritiously at work either “a lot” or “somewhat.” It’s a great start.

- Keep cold food — such as salads and dairy products — cold (4°C or colder) by nesting dishes or bottles/milk containers in bowls of ice, or bringing out small quantities from a refrigerator at regular intervals
- Keep hot food hot (60°C or warmer) by using chafing dishes, slow cookers or warming trays, or bringing out small quantities from an oven or microwave at regular intervals, and
- Do not leave perishable food, such as cheese plates, prepared sandwiches or cut fruit and vegetables, at room temperature for more than two hours. After two hours at room temperature, throw all perishable food away.

## Go Green

To promote “greener,” more environmentally friendly meetings:

- Choose reusable, washable plates, glasses, coffee cups, serving containers and utensils
- Use cloth napkins if possible
- Supply water in pitchers rather than bottles
- Provide food, drinks and condiments in bulk containers rather than single servings to minimize waste, and
- Place recycling containers in the room for cans, bottles and paper.



# Eat Smart, Move Smart

Any meeting that lasts over an hour should have a physical activity break to keep participants fresh, engaged and energized. It's especially important to schedule regular activity breaks for meetings that stretch over many hours or days.

## Activities for Any Meetings

To infuse energy (and fun) into any meeting, build time for physical activity into your agenda and:

- Encourage people to walk around the building (but not back to their desks!) or up and down the stairs for at least part of every break
- Play up-tempo music during breaks so people can walk in time or even dance around the room if they'd like to. Or how about a group performance of the Macarena?, and
- Lead your group in a three- or four-minute stand-up-and-stretch break, where everyone gently stretches their necks, shoulders, arms, hands, legs, feet and back.

### *Voluntary but encouraged*

"You should strongly encourage physical activity," says Toby Green, Physical Activity Manager for the B.C. Ministry of Health, "but remember that all physical activities should be completely voluntary."

Toby recommends that meeting organizers allow participants to go at their own pace. "Advise them to do only what feels good and to stop immediately if anything hurts," he says. He also advises that activities should be simple and safe, and "unless you warn people in advance to bring their runners or a change of clothes, the activities shouldn't require any special clothes or shoes — or professional leaders, for that matter, unless you're offering organized classes as part of a longer conference."

# Activities for Longer Meetings

For all-day or longer meetings, events and conferences:

- Schedule both short and longer, 20- or 30-minute physical activity breaks — perhaps at lunch — which might include a walk around the neighbourhood
- Consider making the dress code for your meeting “casual” to encourage people to move more
- Hire a professional leader to provide an early morning aerobics, tai chi or yoga class for interested participants (make sure you mention it in your registration forms)
- Pick a meeting place that has on-site fitness facilities or advise participants of local gyms and fitness classes, walking routes, running or biking trails, and
- Offer draw prizes for participants who manage to be physically active for at least 30 minutes each day of a multi-day meeting.



## For More Information

Additional Eat Smart, Meet Smart resources are available online.

These include:

- a healthy meeting certificate you can put up at your meetings to show you have followed the Eat Smart, Meet Smart guidelines
- a healthy meeting workplace policy
- a healthy meeting checklist
- interactive easy-to-use order sheets for meals and snacks that you can save and send to your caterer, and
- more about how to accommodate food allergies and dietary restrictions, including a form for participants to fill out as part of their registration package.

To find these additional resources, please go to:

[www.healthyalberta.com](http://www.healthyalberta.com)



### *Did you know...*

In season, locally grown and produced foods are fresher and are often less expensive than imported products. Buying local also supports local farmers and producers and helps reduce the number of trucks on the road.





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