











Choosing healthier food for meetings and events

Here are some ideas for healthier menu items for workplace meetings and events. They cover finger food as well as more substantial meals like barbecues.

When looking for healthier menu items, you may not always find it easy to identify the ingredients in the options available. You may need to ask questions when placing your order with a caterer. For example, the default option for sandwiches may be white bread, but you may be able to request whole grain or wholemeal bread.

CHOOSE FOODS WITH	EXAMPLES	
<p>1. More colourful seasonal vegetables</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose sandwiches, wraps, quiches and meat dishes that include plenty of colourful vegetables. • Choose mixed dishes with lots of vegetables, such as salads, vegetable platters and bite-sized vegetable fritters.
<p>2. More colourful seasonal fruit</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide fresh fruit such as fruit kebabs, fruit platters, fruit salads or a bowl of fruit for at least some of the sweet items or desserts.
<p>3. More whole grain breads, pasta, rice and crackers</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of white breads, choose mostly whole grain, multigrain or wholemeal breads, rolls, wraps, pita bread or crackers. • Choose salads and other dishes that include whole grains such as brown rice, wholemeal pasta or quinoa.
<p>4. More legumes like chickpeas, red kidney beans and lentils</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose dishes with legumes, such as wraps and pita that include tofu, falafel, hummus or alfalfa sprouts. • Choose more vegetarian dishes based on legumes such as bean salad, lentils, vegetarian patties or falafel.
<p>5. More nuts and seeds</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose dishes with nuts and seeds, such as salads. • Offer nuts and seeds as snacks, instead of chips – for example, bowls of nuts and seeds or multigrain nut and/or seed crackers.

CHOOSE FOODS WITH		EXAMPLES
6. Fewer processed meats		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose fresh lean meat, fish and skinless chicken over processed meats such as ham, bacon, salami or meat patties. • Chicken skewers and meatballs are good alternatives. • If including processed meat, offer only small amounts of meat and plenty of vegetables.
7. No deep-fried food		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instead of deep-fried food, choose grilled or oven-baked food, such as baked samosas, baked crumbed fish bites or baked vegetable wedges.
8. Fewer pastry and other bakery items		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If choosing bakery items (such as pies, scones, sweet pastries, cakes or biscuits), limit their number and size.¹ • Include wholemeal flour or whole grains such as rolled oats in slices, and wholemeal flour or bran in scones. • Choose bakery items with no or minimal icing. • Choose filo pastry instead of other pastry.
9. Fewer fats, oils, sauces and spreads		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request smaller amounts of sauces and mayonnaise or ask for them to be served on the side. • Instead of cream, ask for yoghurt as the default garnish. • Request that dishes contain no cream or only a limited amount. • Ask for an alternative to butter, such as table spread, peanut butter, avocado or hummus, to use in sandwiches and rolls. • If using a table spread, ask for margarine or another plant-based spread instead of butter. • Ask for hummus and other vegetable dips instead of creamy dips for a vegetable platter.
10. No sugar-sweetened drinks or 100% fruit juices		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make plain water freely available. • Instead of sugar-sweetened drinks, choose some drinks sweetened with 'intense' sweeteners but offer water as the main drink.²

For further information, see *Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for Organisations* and the support resources in the *Toolbox*.

¹ See *Guidelines when offering bakery items*.

² See *Drink recommendations for meetings and events*.