

Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for Organisations

Encouraging workplaces¹ to support health and wellbeing



Introduction

Healthy eating is essential for good health. Unhealthy diets are one of the biggest risk factors contributing to preventable chronic diseases like diabetes, cancer and heart disease. Research shows that increasing access to healthy food supports people to make healthy food and drink choices.

Promoting healthy eating in the workplace can support a healthy, productive workforce. At the same time, it is a tangible way for workplaces to support their health and safety obligations to their staff and visitors.

A more holistic view extends the concept of health to include a strong connection with the environment. From the perspective of te ao Māori (the Māori world), human health is connected to and interrelated with the health of the environment, and people have a responsibility as kaitiaki or guardians of the land.

'Manaaki whenua, manaaki tangata, haere whakamua.'

'Care for the land, care for the people, go forward.'



Overview

PURPOSE

Healthy Food and Drink Guidance (Guidance) for Organisations supports workplaces to demonstrate their commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff and visitors by providing and promoting healthy food and drink options.



In applying *Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for Organisations*, an organisation may include:

- all food and drink provided by or able to be purchased on the organisation's premises, including from vending machines
- catering:
 - on site at the organisation's facilities
 - off site where the organisation arranges or hosts a function (eg, conferences, training)
- gifts, rewards and incentives, funded by the organisation
- any fundraising involving food and drinks
- discouraging association with products inconsistent with healthy food and drink, as defined by the *Guidance*
- establishing or supporting a breastfeeding-friendly workplace for women returning to work after parental leave.



SCOPE FOR THIS GUIDANCE

It is for each organisation to decide on its own scope for what this *Guidance* does and does not apply to in that organisation. We suggest the following ideas for what an organisation may include and exclude.



In applying *Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for Organisations*, an organisation may exclude:

- food and drink that staff bring to work to eat or drink
- gifts to staff from clients
- self-catered shared meals, on and off site (eg, food for special occasions, self-funded Christmas parties or celebrations)
- self-funded gifts, rewards and incentives
- alcohol policies (refer to your organisation's alcohol policy or consider developing one). Where alcohol is provided, check 'host responsibility' requirements. Among these requirements are to provide food, and to include low-alcohol and non-alcoholic drinks, including water. For more information, see: www.alcohol.org.nz/help-advice/ease-up-on-the-drink/tips-for-employers



Principles underpinning this Guidance

This *Guidance* is consistent with the *Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults*. It is based on the following healthy eating principles.



1. Offer a variety of healthy foods from the four food groups.	2. Food should be mostly prepared with, or contain, minimal saturated fat, salt (sodium) and added sugar.	3. Tap water is the main cold drink option.
<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • plenty of vegetables and fruit • grain foods, mostly wholegrain and those naturally high in fibre • some milk and milk products, mostly low and reduced fat • some legumes, nuts, seeds, fish and other seafood, eggs, poultry (eg, chicken) and/or red meat with the fat removed. 	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer mostly 'whole' foods and foods that are less processed² • limit the selection and portion size of baked products and pastries • no deep-fried foods • no or limited confectionery (eg, sweets and chocolate). 	<p>This means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourage people to drink water (see 'Provide access to drinking-water' on page 6) • no sugar-sweetened drinks³ • limit the availability and portion size of no-added-sugar fruit juices and drinks with intense (artificial) sweeteners.⁴

WHEN DEVELOPING A POLICY FOR YOUR ORGANISATION, CONSIDER:

- the needs of people with special dietary needs, including those with allergies and intolerances (eg, gluten-free), vegetarians and vegans
- how to make healthy food and drink choices available for different cultural preferences and religious beliefs
- choosing seasonal and locally produced food and drinks where possible
- how to avoid single-use plastic packaging and encourage the use of biodegradable or compostable packaging
- reducing food waste when catering by asking people to RSVP.

2 'Less processed' describes foods that have had a minimal degree of processing, so have their original physical and nutritional properties as much as possible, with no or minimal added ingredients. Examples include whole grains, and fresh, frozen or canned vegetables and fruit.

3 Drinks that contain added sweetener, usually sugar. The main categories of sugar-sweetened drinks are soft drinks and fizzy drinks; sachet mixes; fruit drinks; cordials; flavoured milks; flavoured waters; iced teas and coffees; and energy and sports drinks.

4 Intense sweeteners (also known as artificial sweeteners) are used to sweeten drinks with little or no energy (kilojoules). Intense sweeteners permitted for use in New Zealand include aspartame, sucralose and stevia.

Applying this *Guidance* to your workplace

You can take a variety of approaches to putting the healthy eating principles into practice in your workplace. The options range from following a formal process under the direction of senior leadership to taking an informal approach. The formal process could be a high-profile, whole-of-organisation approach, where you create a Healthy Food and Drink Policy for your workplace, along with a plan to implement it. Alternatively, an informal approach could involve small changes to the food and drinks available at your workplace over time.

Of course, you can use elements of both approaches to create one that best suits your workplace.

The following list identifies a range of resources that are available to support you in whichever approach you decide to take.

For a more detailed description of each resource, see the Appendix. You can download these resources from the Ministry of Health website (www.health.govt.nz).

TOOLBOX RESOURCES:

In the *Toolbox* supporting this *Guidance*, you will find:

- example presentation to management or the leadership team
- example implementation plan
- example Healthy Food and Drink Policy
- example article for your organisation's intranet
- a tool for assessing your workplace's food and drink environment
- a cafeteria checklist
- choosing healthier food for meetings and events
- creating healthy food platters
- guidelines for bakery items
- drink recommendations for meetings and events
- a vending machine guide.

How to support healthy eating in your organisation

PROVIDE FACILITIES TO STORE AND PREPARE MEALS

Provide staff with access to food preparation and storage facilities such as fridges, microwaves, lockers or cupboards.

PROVIDE ACCESS TO DRINKING WATER

Provide access to drinking-water for all staff and visitors. This could be tap water and/or water fountains. Encourage staff to bring their own water bottle. If you provide water coolers, they need to be replenished, cleaned and serviced regularly.

SUPPORT WOMEN WHO BREASTFEED

Encourage and support mothers returning to work after parental leave to continue breastfeeding by providing:

- suitable areas that they may use for breastfeeding and for expressing and storing breast milk
- suitable breaks for staff who wish to breastfeed during work, where this is reasonable and practicable.

To further help employers understand their obligations in relation to breastfeeding,⁵ the *Code of Employment Practice on Infant Feeding* provides guidance on the range of factors to consider, such as health and safety, facilities and resources. For more information, see:

- Employment New Zealand, www.employment.govt.nz/hours-and-wages/breaks/breastfeeding-at-work/
- Ministry of Health, www.health.govt.nz
- Women's Health Action, <https://womens-health.org.nz/breastfeeding-friendly-workplaces/for-employers/>

PROMOTE HEALTHY FOOD AND DRINKS

Actively promote healthy food and drink options. Display posters and resources about healthy eating.

The section below lists some websites with resources that promote healthy eating.

ONLINE SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT THE GUIDANCE

Find practical tools, ideas and resources to build wellbeing in your workplace or other organisation at:

- Wellplace.nz, wellplace.nz/resource-library/healthy-kai-guidelines/
- Health Promotion Agency, www.nutritionandactivity.govt.nz/nutrition
- HealthEd, Ministry of Health, www.healthed.govt.nz
- Vegetables.co.nz, www.vegetables.co.nz
- Heart Foundation, www.heartfoundation.org.nz/hospitality-hub

If you would like one-to-one support to implement the *Guidance*, email the Heart Foundation at: food@heartfoundation.org.nz

⁵ The *Employment Relations (Breaks, Infant Feeding, and Other Matters) Amendment Act 2008* requires employers to provide appropriate facilities and breaks for employees who wish to breastfeed during work, where it is reasonable and practicable to do so. The amendments balance employees' work commitments with the need to support their work-life balance and child care responsibilities.

Further reading

Ministry of Health. 2013. *Guidance on Supporting Breastfeeding Mothers Returning to Work*. URL: www.health.govt.nz/your-health/healthy-living/food-and-physical-activity/guidance-nutrition-and-physical-activity-workplaces/guidance-supporting-breastfeeding-mothers-returning-work

Ministry of Health. 2020. *Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults*. URL: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/eating-and-activity-guidelines

National District Health Board Food and Drink Environments Network. 2019. *National Healthy Food and Drink Policy* (2nd edn). Wellington: Ministry of Health.

New Zealand Beverage Guidance Panel. 2014. Policy Brief: Options to reduce sugar sweetened drink (SSB) consumption in New Zealand. URL: www.fizz.org.nz/pdf/research/17%20Policy%20Brief.pdf



Appendix: Summary of resources in the *Toolbox* for organisations

NO.	RESOURCE	PURPOSE
1	<i>Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for Organisations</i>	<i>Healthy Food and Drink Guidance for Organisations</i> (this resource) outlines the importance of having healthy food and drink in workplaces, the principles that underpin this Guidance and how organisations can apply the principles.
2	<i>Healthy food in the workplace presentation</i>	The PowerPoint presentation summarises why having a food policy is important for your workplace, gives an overview of what could be in scope and suggests how to get started.
3	<i>Example implementation plan</i>	This plan suggests how to create a Healthy Food and Drink Policy and implement it in your organisation.
4	<i>Example Healthy Food and Drink Policy</i>	This is an example of a Healthy Food and Drink Policy that an organisation might develop.
5	<i>Example article for your organisation's intranet</i>	This example article for your internal communications, such as your intranet, is one way to increase staff awareness and engage staff in the process of implementing a Healthy Food and Drink Policy.
6	<i>Workplace nutrition assessment tool</i>	You can use this tool to help you assess the food environment in your workplace and assess progress once your organisation has adopted a policy.
7	<i>Cafeteria checklist</i>	This checklist helps you assess food and drinks available in your workplace cafeteria and assess progress.
8	<i>Choosing healthier food for meetings and events</i>	This guide suggests how to choose healthier options for food and drinks at workplace meetings and events.
9	<i>Creating healthy food platters</i>	These instructions on how to create healthy food platters offer one simple way of providing healthy food for events.
10	<i>Guidelines when offering bakery items</i>	These guidelines on types and portion sizes of bakery items help in making more nutritious choices.
11	<i>Drink recommendations for meetings and events</i>	These recommendations support choices of low- and no-sugar drinks for workplace meetings and other events.
12	<i>Vending machine guide</i>	This guide gives ideas for healthier options to include in vending machines.



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