

GUIDEBOOK SERIES

Enhancing your workforce
nutrition programme



HEALTHY FOOD AT WORK

A practical guide for employers to offer their
employees healthy snacks and meals at work

**WORKFORCE
NUTRITION ALLIANCE**

**A healthy workforce
makes a healthy business**

Version

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Workforce Nutrition Alliance

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Acknowledgements

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BACKGROUND

Introduction

A practical tool

This guidebook serves as a practical tool to help employers provide healthy meals and snacks to employees in resource poor settings. It is part of building a successful workforce nutrition programme – and a strong workforce – in your organisation.


This guide is one in a series of four produced by the Workforce Nutrition Alliance on the pillars of a strong workforce nutrition programme: breastfeeding support, healthy food at work, nutrition education and nutrition-related health checks.

All four guides are publicly available on our [website](#) with the aim of helping employers to enhance their workforce nutrition programmes.

Who we are

The Workforce Nutrition Alliance was launched by the Consumer Goods Forum (CGF) and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) in October 2019. It aims to impact three million employees in member organisations and supply chains by 2025.

We encourage employers that are excited about improving their workforce nutrition programme to enrol in one of our implementation support programmes.



1

Before you start
with this guidebook

GUIDEBOOK INTRODUCTION

FIRST TASTE

Before you start



Who is this guidebook for?

Employers that offer single meals, multiple (paid) meals, snacks or drink choices to employees during the workday and wish to improve their offering of healthy food. Employers that do not yet offer food to employees, but are interested in doing so in a healthy manner, will also find this guidebook useful.

While this handbook serves as a practical guide for businesses, it can also be used by other organisations that offer food to employees, such as non-profit, civil society, academic, or government organisations.



What is covered in this guidebook?

Guidance is shared on how to provide healthy meals and drink options to employees. The guidebook also provides useful information on how offering healthy food to employees can benefit your businesses. It helps you make your first step towards offering better food in your “healthy food at work” initiative as part of your workforce nutrition programme.



Why is this guidebook important?

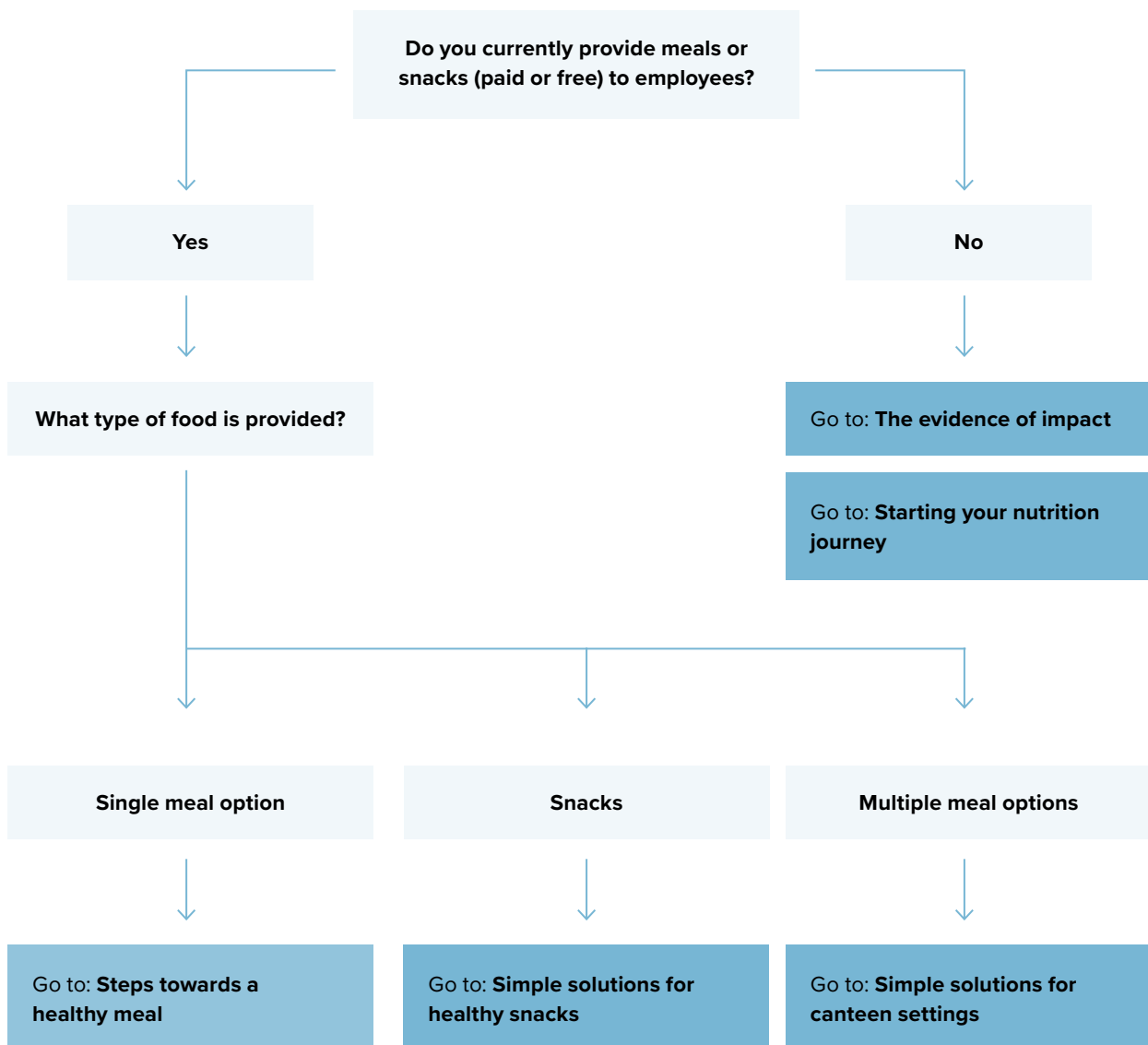
Following a nutritious diet can have a positive impact on employee health and wellbeing. Employers can directly impact the health of their workforce and in doing so benefit their business by offering healthy food during the workday. It is also a way to contribute to the nutrition targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as healthy nutrition initiatives significantly benefit employee health.

HOW TO USE

Navigating this guidebook

Relevant sections

Depending on the type of food offered in your company, different sections of the guidebook may be relevant to you. Take the first step towards healthier meals by completing this programme assessment. It will direct you to the sections and resources with relevant information for your workforce.



BUSINESS CASE

The evidence of impact

The benefits summed up

Successful organisations know that a healthy workforce benefits everyone, while an unhealthy workforce will negatively impact your company's bottom line.

Healthy food at the workplace is a key pillar of an effective workforce nutrition programme and can complement existing health and wellness programmes offered by your company. Providing snacks and meals is often appreciated by employees as well as consumers who appreciate supply chains who treat their workers fairly. There are many benefits of healthy food at work.^{3,4}

The benefits of healthy food at work



The evidence of impact

In our [Healthy Food at Work evidence brief](#)³, we summarise the evidence for healthy food at work programmes, which shows benefits to workers.^{5,6} Depending on the setting and content of the programme, most studies show some form of improvement in the diets or health status of workers.⁶ One of the most common improvements is office settings in an employee's daily fruit consumption after changes in the physical food environment at work.^{5,7}

In factory settings, dietary improvements to canteen meals improved employee health both in high- and low-income countries. In settings where underweight and micro-nutrient deficiencies were a problem, the availability of free healthy lunches have resulted in improvements in weight gain, productivity, and morale. In one case, there was a 70% increase in factory production over four years, and a 20% increase in annual employee earnings.⁸ In another programme, providing fortified rice within healthy menus and/or iron-folic acid supplements resulted in

a 12 - 32% reduction in anaemia among factory workers.⁹ In another factory setting, a healthy food at work intervention helped lower the risk of heart problems for a population with overweight and obesity challenges.¹⁰

Beyond directly making more nutritious food available at worksites, food packaging influences an employee's food consumption.^{11,12} In one programme, a traffic light system for labelling healthy options guided workers towards healthier choices and resulted in improvements in their overall diets.¹³ Most studies find that it is important to provide information to canteen staff and employees to make sure employees accept healthy nutrition initiatives and are open to changes.¹⁰

Non-formal workplaces

Even though providing healthier food at the workplace might not be an option in more informal work settings such as smallholder farms, companies can still play an important role in increasing the access to nutritious foods for their casual workers or producers.

For employees, nutritious foods may be difficult to access because of their high price, or simply because of logistics. Markets may be too far away to go regularly, limiting the consumption of fresh produce, especially when households do not have access to proper storage facilities such as a refrigeration.

Simple solutions a company can implement to improve access to nutritious foods can include provision of food rations or vouchers for highly nutritious foods (fortified rice, wheat flour, maize flour or oil, milk, eggs, local fruits and vegetables), provision of micronutrient supplements, or market based solutions like working with local vendors or social entrepreneurs to subsidize costs of highly nutritious foods. These food sellers can be encouraged to add nutritious and safe foods to the products they sell. Promoting nutritious foods at the point of purchase, for example through providing information on health benefits, may also nudge your workforce to make healthier choices. Ideally, this would be combined with a nutrition education campaign to create demand for these products. See the Guidebook on Nutrition Education for more information on setting up such a campaign.

Another route to making healthy foods accessible, is through promotion of kitchen or community gardens and animal rearing. Especially in smallholder farmer settings, people may already have the skills to cultivate vegetable crops or raise poultry. This approach has its limitations as some people may not have access to sufficient land, water or even time to manage the gardens and/or animals.



Definition of 'Healthy Food at Work'

Healthy food at work programmes focus on increasing employees' access to healthy and safe meals and snacks at work. Employers may provide healthy food for free, with a subsidy, or at full cost to employees. These programmes change the food environment through healthier canteen meals (some include promotion alongside options), snack offerings, vending machine options, and more balanced portion sizes. All of these shape people's access to nutritious foods and encourage healthier choices. Nutritional supplements available through workplaces can also be considered part of these programmes.

Good practice

CASE 1

Reduced anaemia among female readymade garment workers in Bangladesh¹⁴



Country

Bangladesh



Sector

Textile and garment



Case

To address the high anaemia rates among the female ready-made garment workers in Bangladesh, two types of nutrition programmes were tested.

The first included a lunch package consisting of a daily nutritionally improved (fortified rice) hot meal, a weekly iron-folic acid supplement, and monthly behaviour change counselling. It targeted factories where facilities for meal provision were already existing. The second programme included only a twice-weekly iron-folic acid supplementation and the same monthly behaviour change counselling. It targeted factories that had no meal provision facilities..

The study also included a control group that did not receive any programme support.



Outcomes

- Reduced anaemia among workers in both programmes (23% in the meal and supplement programme, 12% in the supplement programme)
- Reduced occurrence of disease for those receiving meals
- Increased productivity for both healthy food at work programmes

CASE 2

Increasing customer value while improving employee nutrition^a

**Country**

Vietnam

**Sector**

Textile and garment

**Case**

Free lunch or dinner were offered to employees, including rice, soup, meat, and vegetables. The company also offered a subsidized breakfast to discourage employees from visiting street vendors that were a source of food-borne illness.

**Outcomes**

- Increased productivity
- Morale boost
- Higher product quality
- Lower rate of sick days
- Higher employee turnover

CASE 3

Subsidizing meals benefits employees and employers^a

**Country**

Guatemala

**Sector**

Textile and garment

**Case**

To address poor nutrition among workers, subsidized meals with improved nutritional quality were offered to employees, while the company made other food programme updates, including offering a snack, providing breaks and building a new dining area.

**Outcomes**

- Productivity increased
- Morale boosted
- Absenteeism was reduced
- Medical costs decreased
- Annual earnings increased

The background image shows a food service area, likely a school or workplace cafeteria. Several staff members wearing white uniforms, hairnets, and face masks are visible. They are working behind a counter with large metal food trays containing various food items. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

2

The basics of healthy food at work

BUILDING YOUR PROGRAMME

GET GOING

Starting your nutrition journey

If your company does not yet have a healthy food at work programme in place, you may wonder how to get started. These activities can have a big impact with a low-level of investment and get you started on your nutrition journey.



Separated eating space

Providing workers with a dedicated clean space for accessing drinking water, washing hands with soap, and eating snacks or a mid-day meal can help them relax during their breaks and feel energized for the rest of the workday.



Paid canteen or shop

Offering healthy food on site in a paid canteen or shop improves workers' access to nutritious food. This benefit has added impact if workers can purchase healthy food to take home for themselves and their families.



Healthy snacks daily

Providing healthy snacks at one or two moments throughout the day helps workers maintain their energy levels and meet their nutritional needs (see Simple solutions for healthy snacks section). Some companies develop long-term relationships with local vendors who can bring in healthy snacks at break times.



Better nutrition for everyone

"One exciting aspect of this work is its multiplier effect. If we train 2,000 employees in better health and nutrition, we will influence 2,000 families. If each family has 5 people, that's 10,000 people who have positively benefited. And if each of those people tell just one other person about what they learned, we've reached 20,000 people. To make people's lives better, to serve my country and the people in this way, that's exciting!"

Major Murtaza, General Manager of Human Resources for Lenny Fashions Ltd.

Visit [Nutrition Connect](#) to read the full interview with Major Murtaza.

ELEMENTS OF CHANGE

Steps towards a healthy meal

Does serving a healthy meal within your budget seem challenging? Fortunately, you do not need to change the whole menu at once. Taking even one step towards a healthier meal can have a big impact on employee health. We recommend making the following changes, at a pace that is right for your business.



1 Add vegetables and fruits

Most people do not eat enough vegetables and fruits. Help employees stay healthy by gradually increasing the amount and variety of vegetables offered and offer fruit as a healthy snack. Talk to employees about the health benefits of vegetables and fruits to encourage their consumption.



2 Switch to fortified products

Some types of grains and oils are fortified, which means additional nutrients have been added during processing. These products can improve dietary intake of essential nutrients and limit the risks of deficiencies among employees. Always talk to employees about why fortified products are being used before serving them on the menu.



3 Offer a variety of protein foods

Protein foods offer many essential nutrients. Varying the type of protein offered throughout the week can help employees meet their needs. Include protein foods that are less expensive, like pulses or eggs, to keep your budget on track.



4 Shift towards a balanced meal

It's easy to load our plates with too many starchy staples and not enough protein-rich foods and/or vegetables. Gradually shift the menu towards balanced proportions of food. Reallocating the amount of each food group on the menu is a cost-effective change that can help companies save money.

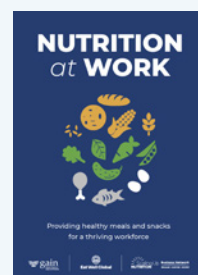


5 Offer drinking water

Clean and safe drinking water should be available to employees. Offer water at mealtimes and throughout the day. Avoid offering sugar-sweetened beverages which provide no nutritional value and lead to ill health.

Step by step guidance

The [Nutrition at Work handbook](#)¹ is a practical guide to providing healthy meals and snacks to employees in resource-constrained settings. It is developed for businesses that offer snacks or a single-meal choice to employees during the workday. This handbook provides information to help managers, chefs, cooks, and caterers decide what and how much to serve.



GETTING IT RIGHT

Measuring portion size

We need to get the right types and amounts of food to be healthy. Measuring the portion size for vegetables, starchy staples and protein foods can help get the portions and proportions right.

A handy technique

Our hands can serve as a useful guide for measuring portion size. Use this system to educate employees on proper portion size and to empower them to make healthy choices at home.



Palm-sized

Meat
Poultry
Fish



Size of a fist

Cereals
Rice (cooked)
Starchy vegetables
Pulses (cooked)



Size of two fists

Leafy greens
Red vegetables
Orange vegetables
Other vegetables

Find out more

Some populations may require more or less food to meet their nutrient needs. See the [Nutrition at Work handbook](#)'s Healthy Meal and Snack Recommendations¹⁷ for detailed information on menu planning. Or consult a local dietitian or nutritionist to determine appropriate portion sizes for your specific workforce needs.



Did you know?

Using standardized measuring cups or scoops helps ensure that employees get the right amount of food and controls cost.

LOW COST, BIG IMPACT

Budget friendly changes

Preparing a healthy meal with limited resources can seem like a difficult task. However, there are ways to reduce the cost of supplying and preparing a meal. Use these tips to prepare and provide more cost-effective meals.



Cooking techniques

Reduce the amount of oil that is used while preparing meals. If the food being cooked seems like it needs more liquid, add a little hot water instead of oil.

Heat pans before adding the oil to the surface. This allows the oil to heat more quickly and spread further, requiring less oil to be used.

Use whole instead of peeled vegetables. Peeling vegetables removes key nutrients found in the skin and reduces the amount of food that is available to serve. Washing vegetables and cooking eliminates food borne illness.



Purchasing food

Buy non-perishable foods in bulk.

Purchase raw food items and prepare them onsite, rather than purchasing prepared or packaged foods.

Purchase frozen vegetables (or freeze fresh vegetables) if possible, to minimize food loss.



Portion control

Measure the amount of food that is served, both to improve employee health and manage costs.

Increase the quantity of vegetables on the plate. Vegetables are typically less expensive than proteins and starchy staples and can add both more volume and nutrients to the meal.



Food waste and food safety

Store non-perishable food items in sealable containers in a cool dark space. Elevate containers off the ground (on crates or boxes) to avoid pests or contamination.

Use refrigeration or freezers to prolong shelf life.

Plan how much food is needed depending on the amount of people being served and only prepare what is necessary.

Monitor the amount of food that is discarded during production and service and take action to minimize waste.



Menu choices

Include fruits and vegetables that are locally available and in season.

Use leftover ingredients for the next day's meal or snack, such as including nuts in a recipe for a meal and using any extra the next day as a snack.

A background photograph of people sitting at outdoor tables, eating and talking. The image is covered with a semi-transparent blue filter. In the center, there is a large white circle containing the number 3.

3

Simple solutions for healthy snacks

PUTTING YOUR PLAN INTO ACTION

STAY ENERGIZED

Steps towards a healthy snack

Snacks are an important aspect of a healthy diet that are often overlooked. Despite being a small amount of food, they contribute a significant proportion of energy and nutrients to our overall diet.



Make a healthy switch

If you serve salty, sugary or fatty snacks, like crisps and chips, cakes or biscuits, switch to healthy snack options.



Offer a variety of healthy snacks

Gradually shift your menu to offer a variety of different healthy snacks throughout the week.



Drinking water

Offer free and clean drinking water instead of sugar-sweetened beverages. Coffee and tea can also be offered as beverages. However, it is important to limit the amount of sugar that is added.



Offer healthy choices

Does your company have a shop, canteen or vending machine that sells snacks? Often, unhealthy options are sold, like cakes, biscuits, chips or sweets. Examine the nutritional quality of those items and consider switching to healthier choices.

Reasons to invest in healthy snacks

Providing a healthy snack during the workday can have a positive impact on employee health and productivity. Consider the following reasons to invest in a healthy snack.

Nutrients

Healthy snacks can provide a high concentration of nutrients that help employees stay energized.

Focus

Healthy snacks can help maintain good blood sugar levels, reduce feelings of hunger and improve concentration.

Choice

Unhealthy snacks contribute high amounts of calories and fat to the diet, while offering healthy snacks during the workday can help employees make better choices.

Only food

Snacks may be the only food employees eat over a long stretch of time, so it is important that they are healthy.

SNACK TIME

Healthy snack ideas

Do employees skip breakfast or come to work hungry? If so, offering a snack at the beginning of the workday can help reduce hunger and improve employee productivity.

If employees are asked to work overtime, it is important to offer a snack in the late hours to maintain energy levels and efficiency.



Fruit and vegetables

Fruits and vegetables contain vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre that employees need to stay healthy.

Fruits

Seasonal and local

Dried fruit

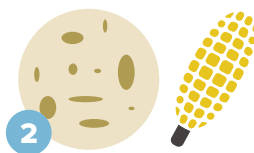
Choose options that are not deep fried have no added sugar or salt

Sweet potatoes

Orange-fleshed and boiled

Seasonal vegetables

e.g. carrots



Starchy staples

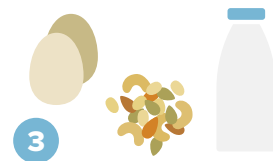
Starchy staples keep employees energized.

Choose fortified or whole grain products when possible.

Fortified or whole grain bread or biscuits

Choose options low in sugar and high in fibre

Fortified porridge



Protein foods

Starchy staples keep employees energized. Choose fortified or whole grain products when possible.

Nuts

Non-perishable options, choose options low in salt

Eggs

Boiled

Dairy

Unsweetened or low-sweet products (e.g. milk, yoghurt)

Find out more

See the [Nutrition at Work handbook](#)'s Healthy Meal and Snack Recommendations¹⁷ for detailed information on planning a healthy snack, or consult a nutritionist or dietitian for more cost-effective and locally available healthy snack ideas.

QUALITY SNACKS

Sourcing healthy snacks

Healthy snacks are often perishable items that have a shorter shelf life than unhealthy items. This can cause challenges for sourcing and storing snack items. If you face this challenge, consider the following options:

Sourcing tips



Agree on healthy

If you serve a large number of snacks each day, negotiate an agreement with a local vendor to deliver healthy snacks.



Work with local vendors

Some companies find it helpful to form relationships with local vendors who bring in healthy snacks at break times. If this is a possibility for your business, consider working with street vendors to improve the nutritional quality of the foods that they sell.



Shelf life

When possible, source non-perishable healthy snacks with a longer shelf life such as nuts and dried fruit.

Making changes to your snack programme can have unexpected consequences including higher costs, sourcing issues, and questions from workers, though these can be overcome. Food safety guidelines also need to be considered.

Learn more about food safety in this [factsheet](#)¹⁵ developed by the WHO, and use their [Five Keys to Safer Food](#)¹⁶ when handling and preparing food.

Budget friendly tips

Purchasing low-cost healthy snacks can be challenging. These budget friendly tips can help you keep the costs down:



Buy in bulk

Purchase snacks in bulk rather than individually packaged items to lower costs.



Local and in season

Choose local foods that are in season for the best price, as local produce is often less expensive than imported items (e.g. imported apples).



Purchasing agreement

If possible, negotiate with a vendor for a low price through a long-term purchasing agreement.



Minimize waste

Minimize waste by testing the acceptance of healthy snack options with a few workers before offering them to all employees. See the Quality Improvement section of the [Nutrition at Work handbook](#)¹ for more information.



Nutrient cost optimization

Do you judge the value of food by the cost? If so, consider a different perspective: The foods we eat provide nutrients that are necessary for life. However, some foods have more nutrients than others. Foods like cakes and biscuits have a low nutritional value per their cost. Whereas foods like eggs, fortified or whole grains, and produce are rich in nutrients compared to their cost. Serving foods that have a high nutritional value can help employees stay healthy, while avoiding unnecessary costs.



Fruit offering increases intake

“One company established a programme to improve its workers’ access to fruit during the workday. A strong 64% of surveyed employees reported increasing their fruit consumption with the initiative¹⁸.”

A chef in a white uniform is seen from the side, working in a kitchen. In the foreground, there is a large metal bowl filled with a salad of sliced cucumbers, tomatoes, and leafy greens. The background shows other kitchen equipment and a person in the distance. The entire image has a blue tint.

4

Simple solutions for canteen-settings

PUTTING YOUR PLAN INTO ACTION

HEALTHY OPTIONS

Offering a balanced choice

In case your organisation is offering multiple meal options in its canteen, increasing the number of its healthy food products is a proven route to encourage healthier eating. It needs to be done skilfully though. Each workplace is unique, and so are its people. Making sure your restaurant offers enough choice to appeal to different food preferences and meet different dietary needs is vital. In these settings providing information to inform food options is especially important.



All-round advice

Replace the unhealthy

An easy starting point is to replace some of your less healthy food and drink products with healthier versions. You can even make a healthier version of the same dish, for example by adding vegetables, reducing quantities of sodium and sugar, and choosing a healthier cooking method, such as baking instead of frying.

Create healthy options

Make sure that for every type of meal or eating moment, there are enough healthy options available such as lunch, snacks, drinks, dinner, that make up at least half of the items offered.



Simple solutions

Planning

Plan menus with healthy options ahead. You'll find it easier to balance the menu and plan ahead for healthy ingredients.

Fry no more

Where possible, use healthier cooking methods as a default such as baking, grilling or steaming instead of frying.

Smart ingredient swaps

Check where you can make simple ingredient swaps, such as using herbs for more flavour instead of salt.

Introduce small changes

Move towards a healthier offering in small steps, so that employees can get used to the new menu. They may not even notice.

Experiment

Experiment with a variety of healthier options and then be guided by which is most popular. Don't stick to products that simply don't sell.

Monitor

Collect data and evaluate outcomes to understand what is working well and where you may want to make some changes. Outcomes to monitor could include consumption, food waste, cost, and employee acceptance.

Collect feedback

Engage employees in the process and consider their recommendations to ensure acceptance by your workforce of the changes.

Nudge

Make use of pricing, placement, and tableware to encourage employees to choose the healthier options. Read more about this in the section Use pricing, placement and tableware.



Practical guidance

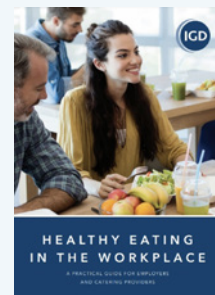
Table 01

| | Basic principles | Healthy options or alternatives |
|----------------|--|--|
| Complete meal | Use standard portion sizes based on employee needs. See healthy meal and snack recommendations . ¹⁷ | Use at least one unit from each of the following food groups: Protein foods, starchy staples, fats and vegetables. |
| Side dishes | Vegetable, protein and carbohydrate side dishes without added fat and salt. | Suggest healthy combinations of side dishes. |
| Sweet snacks | Limit portion sizes to one unit and reduce the amount of sugar. | Provide fruits as healthy alternatives. |
| Savoury snacks | Limit portion sizes to one unit and reduce the amount of saturated fats and salt. | Include nuts or seeds, provide vegetables as healthy alternative or addition. |
| Drinks | Reduce sugar content in beverages. | Offer clean drinking water. |



Healthy Eating In The Workplace

IGD partnered with the Behaviour and Health Research Unit (BHRU) at the University of Cambridge to conduct a large experiment with 17,000 people to test ways of encouraging people to make healthier choices. Their [guide](#) provides effective and practical tips to encourage people to make healthier choices at work based on the learnings from the experiment. It's specifically relevant for businesses that offer multiple meal options in their canteen.



Food and drink items classification

The workforce food-provision assessment in Annex A is a helpful resource to select nutritious foods as it provides a colour coding system. Food and drink items in the green category form the basis of a healthy diet and offering these contributes to a healthy food environment at the workplace.

BUILD AWARENESS

Providing nutritional information

Nutrition information helps consumers make informed choices. In a catering environment, showing simple messages is priority because more detailed nutrition information is difficult to absorb in this setting.



All-round advice

Highlight nutritional content

Highlight nutritional content of healthy products such as vitamins and minerals, fibre, protein, etc. prominently at the point of choice. Also show nutritional content of unhealthy products such as sugar or sodium and/or fat content.

Make it visible

Publish the information on easily visible signs on or above the counter, on menus or on menu boards, shelf edges and product packaging.



Simple solutions

Label consistently

Keep labels consistent for easy recognition.

Label per portion

Make sure the nutritional information on the label reflects the portion served, for example per meal or per snack portion.

Label clearly

Check if the labels can be read clearly from where customers may be standing, remember that some people's eyesight may not be as sharp as yours. Also use colours or signs that make the information easy to understand.

Label well

Don't only use the label 'healthy' but think about alternatives like 'fresh' or 'hand-made' as well. Take care when making claims about food or nutrition such as 'low fat', 'high protein' or 'good for you'. Make sure the labels are compliant with legal requirements in your country. Be careful not to make nutritional or health claims that are not scientifically proven (for example, say 'vitamin A is important for vision and eye health' instead of 'eating this dish will improve your vision'). See the Guidebook Nutrition Education to help you think through which information to share, and in which format.



Practical guidance

What to put on the label

Label the name of the item and combine with relevant information about: Calorie content, high vitamin content (such as vitamin A for leafy green and orange vegetables or vitamin C for fruits), high mineral content, such as iron and zinc, fibre content

Where to put the label

Place labels on shelf, behind counter, or stick to product. Optionally also show information on menus.

Warning signs

Consider using warning signs for products high in salt or sugar.



Labelling system

Consider introducing a recognisable labelling system such as a traffic light system or Nutriscore. The [workforce food-provision assessment](#)¹⁹ can help you to determine the appropriate colour coding.

LOOKING GOOD

Use pricing, placement and tableware

Pricing of healthy food products and their placement in your canteen influence how likely your workforce is to buy healthy food items. The tableware used also impacts employees' choices for portions of food and drink consumed. Experiment with these factors to see what works for your canteen setting.



All-round advice

Pricing

Customer demand is influenced by price in a workplace restaurant, as in any other environment. So, you could subsidise your healthier choices, perhaps with a slight price increase for other options, to maintain your revenue.

Placement

If you put products in people's direct line of sight and in easy reach, they are more likely to grab them. Even those with the strongest willpower may find it difficult to resist an impulse treat at the checkout. Think about how you can use this to promote healthier products instead of less healthy products.

Tableware

There is some evidence to show that people serve themselves more if they use larger tableware, including plates, bowls, bottles and glasses. Use smaller tableware for unhealthier products, where and when possible.



Simple solutions

Pricing

Review your pricing structure and price healthier options in line with or cheaper than the rest of your offering, or better still, cheaper. For example, check that a portion of fruit is cheaper than a fried snack.

Consider other ways you can offer your customers great value, perhaps incentivising healthier options such as a discount or loyalty scheme, offering free fruit or including healthy products in a meal deal or as the 'meal of the day'.

Placement

Make sure healthy options are enjoyable and attractive looking and present them as the standard option.

Consider how to use product placement to encourage healthier behaviours such as making clean and safe water highly visible and freely available and offering fruit at the checkout.

Avoid placing foods and drinks that are high in fat, sugar or salt by the payment point or in other easy to grab areas.

Tableware

If you have self-serve areas, check whether you could use a smaller plate or container to encourage people to serve themselves less of the unhealthy options.

If you have separate plates or dishes for fruit and vegetables, don't reduce the size of these.



5

Tracking change

MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS

TRACKING CHANGE

Monitor your progress

Monitoring is a key success factor for any workforce nutrition programme. Collecting data and evaluating outcomes can help you quantify the programme's impact and inform future decisions. Monitoring can also alert you to coming challenges before they become problems. Including a plan for monitoring from the start will help keep the programme on track.



First answer the following questions:

What do you want to know?

How will you gather and measure data?

Who is responsible for the process?

What do successful outcomes look like?

What will you do with the information that is collected?

We've included some examples (see next page) to help you think through the outcomes that you may want to monitor to help determine if your program is a success and whether it needs any course correction. Your company might already gather data, such as procurement data in the canteen or annual employee satisfaction surveys. Make sure to use and build upon the existing data collection, to make this process most efficient.

1. Reach

Start with tracking how many employees have access to the improved food options you're offering.

Measurement example

The percentage of workers with access to nutritious and safe foods and drinks at the workplace.

2. Consumption

Monitoring consumption helps you understand if people are benefiting from the healthier options provided. Procurement data can serve as a good indication for consumption.

Measurement examples

The percentage of workers reporting that they consume more nutritious foods such as fruits and vegetables.

The percentage of cafeteria or canteen sales derived from healthy meal or snack options.

3. Health

Monitoring health outcomes related to nutrition helps you understand if your programme has an impact on health. See the Guidebook Nutrition Focused Health Checks for more information on this topic.

Measurement examples

The percentage of workers with improved anthropometric measurements (weight, BMI, waist circumference, etc).

The percentage of workers with improved biological markers (haemoglobin, cholesterol, blood glucose, blood pressure, etc).

4. Healthy menu quality

Tracking your menu's nutritional quality can provide valuable data on what changes have been successful.

Measurement example

The percentage of food and drink items served that fall into the green category of the [workforce food-provision assessment tool](#).¹⁹

5. Employee acceptance

Providing employees the opportunity to give menu input can increase their acceptance of the programme.

Measurement examples

Acceptance rate (percentage of workers who rated the meal, menu, or changes positively)

Participation rate (percentage of workers who select healthier food options)

6. Waste

Tracking food waste can provide valuable insights on how efficiently the programme is operating. Consider if employees are throwing away large portions of the meal or if excess food is being produced.

Measurement examples

Plate waste or production waste.

7. Cost

Monitoring food and production costs can help you decide when menu or staffing changes are needed.

Measurement examples

Food cost, production cost or total cost.



Quality Improvement

Quality Improvement is a process that can help you identify potential problems and test solutions, before making big changes. See the Quality Improvement section of the [Nutrition at Work handbook](#)¹ for more information.

6

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TOOLS TO LEARN MORE

LEARN MORE

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Annex **A**

**WORKFORCE FOOD-PROVISION
ASSESSMENT TOOL**

ANNEX A

Food and drink items classification

Using available information from menus, caterer food procurement, stock from vending machines or other retail locations within the workplace, take inventory of food and drink items provided to employees and estimate procurement volumes. Classify foods and drinks¹ based on the following guidance and assess the percentages of green, amber and red items out of the estimated procurement volumes. Your aim should be to have over 70% of green food items and under 10% of red food items.

The focus of the assessment is on the diversity of food provided within the workplace to minimise the availability of foods and drinks that fall in the red category proportionally to those in the green category, forming the basis of a healthy diet, and thus creating a healthy food environment at the workplace. Food safety is a prerequisite for all food and drink items provided, although not directly evaluated for the purpose of this assessment.²

Starchy foods

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

Whole grains and their products (e.g. wholemeal breads, unsweetened wholemeal breakfast cereals/ porridges, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, millet, sorghum, quinoa, oats, rye, maize, barley, spelt, semolina, teff)

Minimally processed plain **vegan dairy alternatives** (e.g. rice/oat/quinoa drinks, yogurt and cheeses)³

Plain unsweetened **fortified grains and their products** (fortified wheat/maize flour, fortified breakfast cereals, fortified rice)

Plain oven baked or boiled **starchy roots, tubers and plantains** (e.g. sweet potatoes, potatoes, cassava, taro, yam, konjac root, plantain)

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

Refined unfortified grains and their products (e.g. unfortified white rice, white bread/ crackers, white pasta or noodles, refined breakfast cereals)

Low sugar/sodium, low added fats and oils, high fiber, **fortified grain products** (e.g. fortified breakfast cereals/porridges, fortified biscuits/crackers)⁴

Frozen pre-cooked **starchy roots and tubers**, such as potatoes, with added salt, fats and oils

Sweetened **vegan dairy alternatives** (e.g. flavoured/ chocolate drinks, flavoured/ chocolate vegan yoghurts and drinkable yoghurts, sweetened vegan cream cheese spread)

RED FOOD ITEMS

Dough-based sweets, such as bakery and pastry items (e.g. biscuits, cookies, cakes, muffins, waffles, mochi)

Deep fried starchy foods such as deep fried bread, roots, tubers, and plantains (e.g. potato crisps and chips, plantain chips, corn chips, deep fried noodles, deep fried sweet doughs, such as donuts, sweet dumplings)

Ultra-processed vegan products (e.g. plant-based burgers, chicken nuggets/ patties, fish fingers/patties, bacon, ham, sausages, cheese slices and strings, meatballs)

Fruits and vegetables

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

Fruits (fresh or frozen)

Vegetables and mushrooms (fresh, frozen or dried without added salt and/or fats)

Naturally fermented, low sodium **fruits and vegetables** in brine

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

Dried fruits and **dried** salted and/or with added fats and oils **vegetable snacks**

Canned/jarred fruits and vegetables (e.g. pickled in brine or vinegar, marinated, concentrated, preserved in syrup, preserved in oil, pastes and spreads)

RED FOOD ITEMS

Deep fried (battered or unbattered) **fruits and vegetables** (e.g. deep fried apples, peaches, strawberries, banana/ apple chips, deep fried artichokes, zucchini, eggplants, onions, broccoli, mushrooms, onion crisps and chips)

Pulses, nuts and seeds

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

Fresh, dry or frozen **pulses and legumes** (all bean varieties, chickpeas, lentils, soybeans, peas, etc.)

Natural chickpea hummus

Plain nuts and seeds (unsalted, unsweetened and without added fats or oils)

Natural nut and seed butters, unsweetened, unsalted and without added fats or oils (e.g. tahini, almond/cashew/ peanut/ hazelnut butter)

Plain pulse and nut flours and their products (lentil/chickpea/pea/ soybean flours, breads, pasta/noodles, almond/coconut flours, breads, etc.)

Plain tofu and tempeh

Minimally processed plain **vegan dairy alternatives** (e.g. soy/almond/cashew/coconut drinks, yoghurt and cheeses)

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

Nuts and seeds that are salted, sugared and/or with added fats or oils

Sweetened **vegan dairy alternatives** (e.g. flavoured/ chocolate drinks, flavoured/ chocolate vegan yoghurts and drinkable yoghurts, sweetened vegan cream cheese spread)

Canned/jarred pulses and legumes in brine

Nut and seed butters that are salted, sugared and/or with added fats and oils.

Sweet hummus and other sweet pulse spreads (e.g. sweetened red/black/mung bean paste)

RED FOOD ITEMS

Deep fried plant-based items (e.g. deep fried tofu/tempeh, deep fried plant-based cheeses, deep fried falafels)

Ultra-processed vegan products (e.g. plant-based burgers, chicken nuggets/patties, fish fingers/patties, bacon, ham, sausages, cheese slices and strings, meatballs)

Meat and fish

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

Fresh or frozen **lean meat** (e.g. chicken or turkey breast, rabbit, game, lean cuts of beef, lamb, pork, horse, camel, or deer)

Fresh or frozen **organ meats** (e.g. liver, kidney, stomach, tripe/intestines, heart, lungs, brain, blood, tongue)

Fresh/frozen **fish** (freshwater or marine water fish)

Fresh or frozen **shellfish** (e.g. crustaceans such as shrimp, lobster, crab, crayfish; and mollusks such as clams, scallops, mussels)

Low-sodium **small dried fish**

Natural canned fish and shellfish in brine or oil (e.g. tuna, salmon, octopus, sardines, herring, mackerel, shrimp)

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

Minimally processed **fatty cuts of meats** such as beef, pork, lamb, chicken (e.g. pork belly, chicken thighs and wings)

Natural canned meat in brine or oil (e.g. beef, pork, chicken, turkey)

Smoked and/or dried fish with added salt and spices (e.g. smoked salmon/tuna/trout, salted dried codfish/ mackerel)

RED FOOD ITEMS

Highly processed meats, fish and shellfish (e.g. salted, seasoned, smoked and/or dried meats such as cooked ham, prosciutto, bacon, chicken/turkey breast, meatloaf, salami, sausages, pastrami, salted, seasoned, meat/fish spreads and pastes, surimi, fish fingers/balls/patties, meatballs)

Deep fried battered or unbattered meat, fish and shellfish (e.g. deep fried chicken or turkey breast/nuggets/ wings/tenders/patties, deep fried pork, beef, lamb, deep fried cod, catfish, halibut, seabass, trout, deep fried shrimps/mussels, deep fried tuna chops, deep fried meat/fish-balls or patties)

Eggs, milk and dairy

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

Eggs

Unsweetened milk and dairy products (e.g. milk, plain evaporated/ powdered milk, yoghurt, kefir, kumis, sour and fermented milk, buttermilk low sodium and low fat cheese such as quark, Skyr, ricotta, cottage cheese, Swiss cheese)

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

Sweetened dairy products (e.g. flavoured/chocolate milk, sweetened condensed milk, flavoured/chocolate yoghurts and drinkable yoghurts, sweetened cream cheese spread)

High sodium and/or fat dairy products (e.g. mascarpone, cream, cream cheese, crème fraîche, sour cream, paneer, khoa, stilton, brie, camembert, goat's cheese hard cheeses such as cheddar, parmesan)

Yoghurt-based preparations that are salted and/or with added fats and oils (e.g. labnah, tzatziki, raita)

RED FOOD ITEMS

Deep fried eggs, dairy products and dairy based sweets (e.g. deep fried battered cheese sticks/ balls, fried curd, fried mozzarella, fried ice-cream)

Highly processed dairy products (e.g. American cheese slices, cheddar cheese slices, nacho cheese, cheese spreads, cheese strings)

Dairy based sweets (e.g. custards, puddings, ice-cream, milkshakes, dairy snacks, milk/cheese sweet/ syrupy balls, patties or dumplings such as pedha, guija, rasogolia, dulce de leche, frozen yoghurt)

Fats and oils

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

Extra virgin **olive oil**

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

Animal fats and oils (e.g. lards, tallows, butter, fish oils)

Other **vegetable fats and oils** (e.g. sunflower oil, rapeseed/canola oil, coconut oil/butter, palm oil, groundnut oil, soybean oil, avocado oil, sesame oil, linseed oil, corn oil, grapeseed oil, cocoa butter, cottonseed oil, peanut oil)

Fortified vegetable oils (e.g. vitamin A, D, E fortification)

RED FOOD ITEMS

Hydrogenated fats (e.g. margarine, vegan butter)

Condiments

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

Plain unsweetened **vinegar** (e.g. white/ apple cider/rice/ balsamic vinegar)

Fresh or dried **herbs and spices** (e.g. oregano, parsley, coriander, pepper, chili pepper, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon)

Lemon juice

Plain vinaigrette

Plain low-sodium tomato sauce

Plain salsa

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

Salt

Low salt, low sugar natural **tomato ketchup and mayonnaise**

Plain **soy sauce**

Chutneys

Plain **tabasco** or other types of **chili sauces**

Higher sodium tomato and pesto sauce

Mustard

RED FOOD ITEMS

Highly processed sauces (e.g. cream-based salad dressings, ranch/barbecue/ teriyaki/buffalo sauce, pancake syrup, nacho cheese sauce)

Sweeteners and confectionary

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

RED FOOD ITEMS

70% dark chocolate or higher

100% fruit or low sugar
jams/marmalades

Sugars and sweeteners (e.g. refined/brown sugar, jaggery/palm sugar, coconut sugar, honey, maple/agave/corn syrup, molasses, stevia, artificial sweeteners)

Confectionary (e.g. rock/gummy candy, fruit jellies, nougats, caramel, lollipops, snack/sweet bars, dessert sauces and toppings, milk/white chocolate, pralines, chocolate spreads, candied/chocolate-coated fruits and nuts, toffees)

Beverages

GREEN FOOD ITEMS

Unlimited clean and safe **water**⁵

100% vegetable juices/purees, without fruit juice or with minimal fruit juice added

Plain, **unsweetened tea, herbal tea/infusions, coffee, ginseng/barley coffee, cocoa**

AMBER FOOD ITEMS

100% fruit juices/purees or **fruit and vegetable juices**/purees or **low sugar fruit and vegetable juices**, smoothies, concentrates

Minimally sweetened tea, herbal tea/infusions, coffee, ginseng/barley coffee, cocoa

RED FOOD ITEMS

Sugary and/or carbonated beverages (e.g. soft drinks such as cola-type drinks and fruit-flavoured soft drinks, sports/functional drinks, high sugar fruit juices/concentrates)

Alcoholic drinks (e.g. wine, beer, liquors, spirits, cocktails, punch, sangria, fermented fruit drinks)

1 The guidance on food and drink items classification has been elaborated by The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), based on a review of different methodologies used in assessing food provision in workplaces or other institutional settings, among which is the Australian Healthy Eating Advisory Service's traffic light system.

2 GAIN defines a "safe" food as a food that does not increase the probability of poor health outcomes when part of a broader recommended diet in the context where it is consumed. Safe food is that in which attributes derived from the value chain (pathogens, parasites and contaminants, including agrochemicals and food chain mycotoxins), which could cause adverse health outcomes, do not exceed internationally agreed thresholds, established by Codex Alimentarius standards.

3 The term "food fortification" refers to the practice of adding one or more essential nutrients (e.g. iron, folic acid, calcium, vitamin A) to a widely consumed food.

4 Ibid

5 Wherever possible, GAIN promotes the consumption of clean and safe tap water, which is not to be included in the estimation of procurement volumes.



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