

Healthy Eating Practical Suggestions Checklist

Planning Refreshments Options:

- Make the healthiest choices possible when selecting food and beverages.
- Include vegetable and fruit options, whenever possible.
- Try new foods as an effort to increase variety. Variety promotes an adequate intake of essential nutrients and incorporates foods enjoyed by different cultural groups.

Caterer:

- See **APPENDIX B** – Safe Food Handling For Health Unit Functions.

Beverages:

- Ensure that an ample amount of fresh water is available.
- Offer 100% pure fruit or vegetable juice rather than cocktail, punch, “ade” or nectar.
- Offer 2%, 1%, skim milk, or fortified beverages (e.g. soy drink).
- Provide milk in addition to cream for coffee and tea.
- Provide sweeteners for coffee and tea as well as sugar.
- If soft drinks are offered, ensure 50% of the choices offered are diet or calorie reduced.

Breakfast:

- Be selective. Offer foods such as fresh fruit; whole grain breads, toast, flat breads (spreads, margarine, butter on the side) or a variety of lower-fat muffins; hot or cold whole grain cereal; lower-fat cheeses or yogurt.
- Consider lower-fat cooking methods for meat and alternatives e.g. poached, scrambled, or boiled eggs or baked beans.

Sandwiches:

- Ask for sandwiches on an assortment of whole grain breads, pita, roti, tortillas, and rolls.
- Have a variety of lower-fat sandwich fillings such as tuna, salmon, refried beans, cooked lentils, grilled vegetables, lean roast beef, turkey, chicken, ham, pastrami, or lower-fat cheese. Include vegetarian fillings e.g. tofu, hummus, and shredded vegetables.
- Ask for sandwiches to include vegetable fillings such as lettuce, cucumber, tomato, grated red cabbage, peppers, or grated vegetables.
- Ask for sandwiches made with little or no mayonnaise, butter or margarine. Offer mayonnaise, butter or margarine on the side. Offer mustard, chutney, relish and hummus as alternatives.

Main Dishes:

- Look for meatless dishes such as pasta with tomato sauce, vegetarian lasagna, stir-fried vegetables, chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils, soy products, or a rice casserole.
- Choose meat, fish, lentils, beans or poultry and vegetable dishes that are broiled, roasted or steamed instead of fried.
- Offer pasta dishes with a low fat sauce like tomato sauce rather than cream or meat sauces.
- Try to limit the size of main course items, e.g. 3 ounce portions of meat or one cup of pasta.

Salads:

- Have vegetable and fruit salads available.
- Emphasize Ontario seasonal vegetables for salads.
- Ask for dips made with plain yogurt or light sour cream.
- Choose lower-fat salad dressings or have salad dressings served on the side.
- Include hot (e.g. steamed vegetables) and cold salads (e.g. bean salad, green leafy salads).

Desserts:

- Offer fresh fruit or a fruit salad. Emphasize Ontario seasonal fruits.
- Choose lower-fat yogurt
- Have whole grain cookies available.
- If serving cake for a celebration, offer fruit along with it.

Nutrition Breaks:

- Ask for a variety of lower-fat muffins or bagels with lower-fat cheese or lower fat spreads (e.g. hummus, light cream cheese, jam).
- Order a basket of Ontario grown fruits, e.g. apples, peaches, strawberries, etc., depending on the season of the event. Ensure the fruit is thoroughly washed.
- Offer lower-fat cereal bars and/or yogurt (2% MF or less).
- Offer vegetables with lower fat dips.
- If higher fat/calorie desserts are ordered, specify small portion sizes e.g. two bite portions.

Special Dietary Needs:

- Ask participants if they have special dietary needs due to food allergies, intolerance, dietary restrictions, or cultural/religious reasons.
- Ensure that your menu includes adequate choices for those with special dietary needs.
- To consult with a Registered Dietitian, check Middlesex-London Health Unit listing.

Timing:

- See **APPENDIX B** - Safe Food Handling For Health Unit Functions.

Preparation and Cleanup:

- Clean all surfaces for food service, or cover with a clean tablecloth.
- Provide recycling bins for cans and bottles and enough bags for the other garbage.
- After service, clean all tables and work surfaces.