Healthy Eating Toolkit for Workplaces

EMPLOYER MANUAL

Region of Waterloo
PUBLIC HEALTH

projecthealth.ca
Supporting Healthy Workplaces

This manual is designed to help you make your workplace a supportive and healthy environment.

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1.0 Making a Business Case for Promoting Healthy Eating in Your Workplace

Healthy eating is associated with a lower risk of developing chronic diseases such as obesity, type II diabetes, certain types of cancer, heart disease and osteoporosis.[1] In addition, healthy eating can contribute to the overall health and vitality of employees.[1]

Most employed adults spend at least a quarter of their lives at work. The demands of work may negatively impact eating and physical activity behaviours, which may lead to employees becoming overweight or obese.[2]

Healthy eating is an important part of maintaining the health of employees. Employees who use tobacco and have hypertension, high cholesterol, excess weight, high blood glucose, high stress and are physically inactive, cost employers 228% more than employees without these risk factors.[3] Four of these risk factors (hypertension, excess weight, high blood cholesterol and high blood glucose) are commonly associated with dietary intake.

It is difficult to isolate the cost of unhealthy eating as nutrition related health problems involve several variables and can take decades to occur. However, excess weight alone is a predictor of significant financial losses for workplaces.[2,4]

Employees who have the benefit of optimal health are more likely to be at work and perform well.[5] They are also more likely to remain with an employer that values their health.[5] Workplaces that support health programs have reduced financial burdens related to employee turnover and health costs.[5]

Workplaces can consider resources spent to improve the productivity and health of employees the same way they consider investments in workplace facilities.[6]

It is within the best interest of employers to promote healthy eating in their workplace to prevent financial losses due to poor health, while protecting the vitality of their greatest assets, their employees!

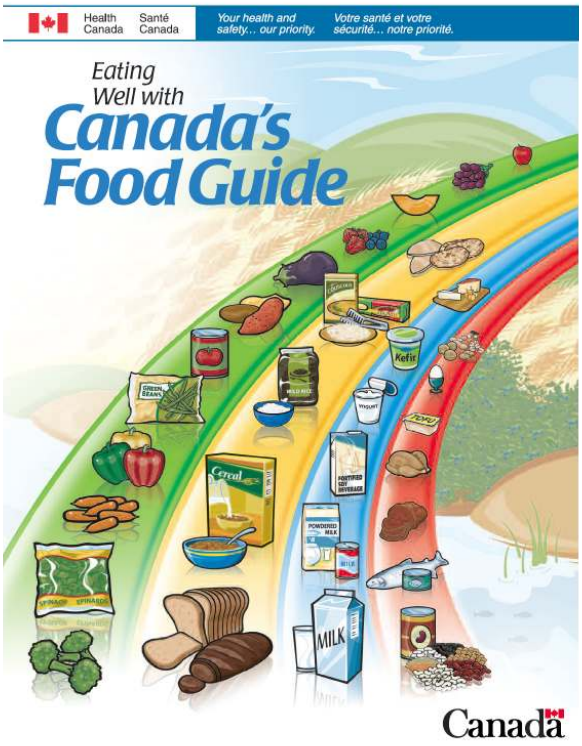
Food for Thought: RETURN ON INVESTMENT

A comprehensive workplace obesity management program estimated a Return-on-Investment of $1.00 to $1.17 for each dollar spent after one year.[7] Participants were given access to telephone coaching by regulated health professionals as well as educational materials through a health improvement website.[7]
The bottom line: investing in nutrition promotion can save money.

2.0 Background Healthy Eating Concepts

2.1 What is "Healthy Eating"?

Healthy Eating means following the recommendations in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide (**See Section 7.4**). Canada's Food Guide, describes the type and amount of food people need to eat in order to follow a healthy eating pattern.[1] Following the recommendations will help your employees get enough vitamins, minerals and other nutrients and reduce the risk of developing nutrition related chronic disease.[1]



Canada's Food Guide recommends the average number of servings that people should try to eat each day from each food group. Some very active individuals may require more food and should eat extra servings from the four food groups that are lower in fat, sugar and salt.[1]

Quite often, the portion sizes that we typically eat are much larger than the recommended portion sizes in Canada's Food Guide.[1] For example, a plate of pasta served in a restaurant may contain 3 cups of pasta, which is equivalent to 6 servings of grain products in Canada's Food Guide. (Almost enough grains for the entire day!)

Canadians are encouraged to consume vegetables, fruits and whole grains while limiting or avoiding foods that are high in added fats, sugar and salt, especially in the case of foods that contain trans fats.[1]

Canada's Food Guide also recommends drinking water regularly to meet hydration needs. Additional water is needed when employees are physically active or during hot weather.[1]

CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE

Visit Health Canada's website to get a copy of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide at: *healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide* or visit: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

2.2 Current Trends

The majority of Canadians do not eat the recommended amount of vegetables and fruit, milk and milk alternatives or grain products.[8]

This may be due to a high intake of foods categorized as "Foods to Limit" by Canada's Food Guide. Over one fifth of the calories we consume come from these foods.[8] Snack foods eaten between meals and foods consumed at fast food restaurants account for a large proportion of these calories.[8]

These trends contribute to an unhealthy eating pattern where diets are high in calories, fat, sugar and salt, leading to the development of diseases such as obesity, heart disease, osteoporosis, type II diabetes and certain types of cancer.[1]

How much is too much?

Food consumption data in the United States suggests that caloric consumption has increased 18% over the past 40 years,[9,10] resulting in an average increase of 200 to 300 calories per day.[11] **It has been estimated that it takes as little as 50 to 150 extra calories per day to cause an individual to become obese.**[12-15] (The average calorie recommendation for the population is 2000 calories per day). This is supported by a recent Canadian population study, which found that obese men and women ate an average of 200 calories more per day than non-obese individuals.[16]

Therefore, even small increases in caloric intake can have significant negative implications for the overall health of employees.

100 calories is equivalent to 2 tablespoons of chocolate chips.[17]

2.3 Healthy Weights

People who maintain a healthy weight feel better, are less likely to develop chronic illness and enjoy a better quality of life.[18] Alternatively, those who are either under or overweight are more likely to experience health problems.[18]

Body Mass Index

A healthy weight is defined as a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 18.5 to 24.9 kg/m^2.

An individual is classified as underweight if his or her BMI is less than 18.5 kg/m^2. The health risks associated with being underweight include an increased risk of osteoporosis, infertility and a decreased ability to fight infections.[18] In 2004, approximately 2% of the adult Canadian population was underweight.[19]

Overweight is defined as a BMI of 25 to 29.9 kg/m^2. Individuals are considered to be obese at a BMI of 30 kg/m^2 or higher.

Being overweight or obese increases the likelihood of developing type II diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer.[18] In 2005, 48.4% of the adult population in Waterloo Region were overweight or obese.[20]

Waist Circumference

Waist circumference is a measure of abdominal fat in non-pregnant adults.[21] An individual's waist circumference should be no higher than the recommendations in **Table 1**.

Even in individuals with a healthy BMI, a waist circumference above the recommendation is associated with an increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, stroke and hypertension.[21]

Table 1: Waist Circumference Recommendations by Gender and Ethnicity.[22]

Ethnicity	Male	Female
European/Caucasian, Sub-Saharan Africans, Eastern Mediterranean, Middle Eastern	≤102 cm (40 in.)	≤88 cm (35 in)
South Asian, Malaysian, Asian, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Ethnic South and Central Americans	≤90 cm (35 in.)	≤80 cm (32 in.)

For more information on calculating and interpreting Body Mass Index visit: *www.hc-sc.gc.ca*. For more information on measuring and interpreting waist circumference visit: *www.heartandstroke.com*.

2.4 The Importance of Healthy Weights in the Workplace

Obesity is associated with a lower health-related quality of life both mentally and physically, which can decrease workforce participation.[23] Workplaces should consider the health of their employees as a top priority in order to meet human resource needs for the near future. The Conference Board of Canada has reported an expected labour supply shortfall in Ontario starting in 2014 and continuing to grow thereafter.[24]

In 2005, 63% of employed men and 50% of employed women in Canada were either overweight or obese based on measured height and weight.[25]

Obesity rates are highest among males whose usual daily activities involve carrying very heavy loads, labour intensive work, shift-work or working longer hours than regular full-time workers.[25]

Women earning a lower income are more likely than high-income earning women to be obese.[16,25] Similarly, having lower levels of education significantly increases the odds of obesity for both men and women.[16,25]

Workplaces incur a significant cost for overweight and obese employees in the form of losses related to lower productivity, higher rates of injury, disability and absenteeism, increased insurance premiums, worker's compensation, medical costs and early retirement.[2,25-31] Direct and indirect costs of absenteeism combined, account for approximately 17% of payroll expenses in Canadian workplaces.[32]

Table 2 shows the costs associated with absenteeism and medical expenditures related to excess weight compared to the costs of normal weight employees.[2,4] As the table indicates, expenditures rise with increasing weight.

Table 2: The percentage of additional medical expenditures and absenteeism costs in overweight and obese employees compared to normal weight employees.[4]

	Overweight (BMI 25.0-29.9)	Grade 1 Obese (BMI 30.0-34.9)	Grade II Obese (BMI 35.0-39.9)	Grade III Obese (BMI ≥40.0)
Men	113%	134%	190%	250%
Women	130%	170%	227%	211%

In some cases, obesity may reduce the availability or effectiveness of personal protective equipment, causing a higher risk of workplace injury.[2] Obesity can also cause disruptions in sleep, which has been implicated as a risk factor for traffic collisions.[2,33]

Historically, workplaces have taken responsibility for decreasing environmental risks in the workplace, while the onus has been on employees to be responsible for maintaining a healthy weight.[2] However, it is likely that the workplace environment contributes to weight gain.[2,34] Therefore, it may be useful for employers to reduce exposures to unhealthy foods that may contribute to weight gain and to consider strategies that address both work related risk factors and obesity prevention together.[2]

Creating supportive workplace environments may be particularly effective at reaching worksite populations typically resistant to health education, as employees do not have to actively choose to participate.[2,31,35]

Multi-component strategies that target diet, physical activity and behavioural changes at the same time have been effective when delivered through the workplace.[36]

Additionally, investments in nutrition promotion may pay for themselves in a reduction of absenteeism, injury and increase in productivity.[37]

Workplace Example: Scotiabank

In 2001, none of the top 10 drugs covered by Scotiabank's drug plan were related to obesity. By 2007, three of the top 10 prescription drugs were for medical conditions related to obesity.

To address this growing problem without singling out obese workers, Scotiabank has created a supportive environment by implementing healthier menus, setting nutritional guidelines for foods served at work functions and providing nutritional counselling for employees.[38]

2.5 Weight Bias

"Effort is not required to continue eating when food is present; effort is required to refrain from eating when food is present". [12]

We often think of eating as being a personal choice which can be improved by providing individuals with education. Nutrition education can improve knowledge, however, it does not necessarily influence food choice.[9,12,15,39]

Weight Bias

Lack of willpower is often identified as the reason for failing to maintain a healthy diet, however, an environment with an increased availability of cheap (or free), convenient, calorie-dense foods is more likely to be responsible.[12]

Unfortunately, we tend to think of weight as a personal responsibility. As a result, weight stigmatization continues to permeate our society leading to a lower quality of life for overweight and obese individuals.[2,40,41]

In the workplace, overweight and obese workers face disadvantages in wages, hiring, promotions and job termination because of their weight status.[2,23,40]

The bias that weight is easily modifiable and that weight loss is a matter of personal effort and self control is shared by the media, regulatory agencies, consumer groups and many health practitioners.[15,40]

Although personal responsibility is an important part of the equation, by focusing on personal responsibility alone, the other determinants of eating behaviour are ignored.[2]

Education only approaches directed at groups or individuals to promote healthy eating have not been effective, as the other drivers of obesity are not addressed, especially if the environment does not support individual efforts.[12,14,36,42,43]

2.6 How the Environment Impacts Individual Choice

"Obesity has been described as a mismatch between human physiology and the environment in which we live".[14]

There are many factors that influence eating behaviours. Taste is the most important factor influencing food choice,[44,45] followed by cost.[39,42,43,45-48] In fact, studies show that price modifications are more effective at motivating people to purchase healthier foods than health messages.[43]

Portion Sizes

The amount of food eaten is influenced by portion size,[12,48-51] as the amount of food served suggests that it is an appropriate amount to eat.[10,52]

Meals eaten away from home typically encourage people to eat too many calories because of high calorie density and large portion sizes.[11,43,45,53-55]

One study showed that when eating out, people purchased an average of 827 calories per meal, while 34% of patrons purchased 1000 calories or more per meal.[11] (The average recommended daily intake is 2000 calories per day).

Over the past few decades the largest increases in portion sizes have occurred in fast foods such as:

- Hamburgers (18%)
- Cheeseburgers (24%)
- French fries (57%)
- Sweetened beverages (62%)[10]

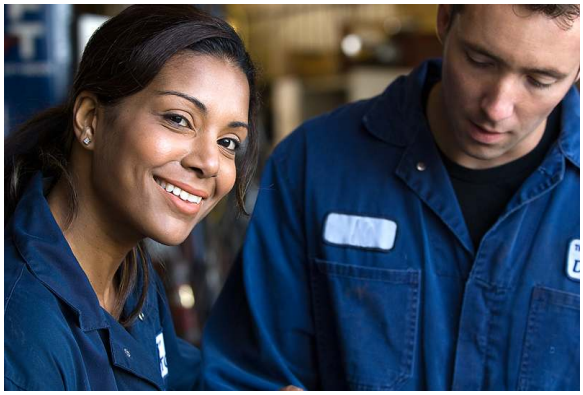
People often underestimate the calories in food, especially for unhealthy items. In one study, participants underestimated calorie content by over 600 calories per meal.[56]

Trends in food prices and portion size (especially for tasty foods high in calories, fat, sugar and salt) make it difficult for individuals to resist the current eating environment and follow a healthy diet.

Food For Thought: PORTION SIZE

People who are served larger portion sizes consume more food but do not report greater feelings of fullness. This is true even when it involves food that tastes bad. In one study, people were given stale 14-day old popcorn in boxes twice the normal size. Even though they complained about the taste, the participants who were given the larger boxes of stale popcorn ate 34% more popcorn those given stale popcorn in normal sizes boxes.[12]
The bottom line: larger portion sizes cause people to eat more.

Social Norms and Cues



Food and eating can create a sense of belonging and community[57] and unspoken social norms can dictate individual behaviours.[57,58] For example, having other people present while eating can influence both the amount and types of food that people eat.

This effect can be profound, with one researcher finding that meal size became 96% larger when subjects ate with seven or more people.[51] Eating with others, especially familiar people, can extend eating occasions and suppress self-monitoring.[51] Alternatively, eating with unfamiliar people can increase self-awareness causing a reduction in intake.[51]

Individuals use social cues to decide what to eat and how much to eat without attracting negative judgment from others.[54,59] Simply viewing the behaviour of others can have an impact.[51] For example, individuals will eat more when eating companions eat more and vice versa.[52] In some cases, something as simple as a sales clerk mentioning what the person before them has ordered is enough to sway an individual to choose the same option.[59]

Research has also shown that obesity can be spread through social ties. Therefore, individual employee behaviour can be influenced by co-worker's health-related norms and values.[58,60]

The social norms in your workplace can be changed by role modelling healthy eating behaviours and by increasing social support for healthy eating. Positive role modelling behaviours include:

- ☑ Eating nutritious meals and snacks while at work
- ☑ Rewarding yourself and others with non-food rewards
- ☑ Portraying a positive self image and treating others with respect

Food For Thought: SOCIAL INFLUENCE

In one study, two different bowls of crackers were provided to participants. Subjects unknowingly copied another person's behaviour by eating whichever type of cracker the other person ate.[12]

The bottom line: eating behaviours are unknowingly influenced by others.

Stress

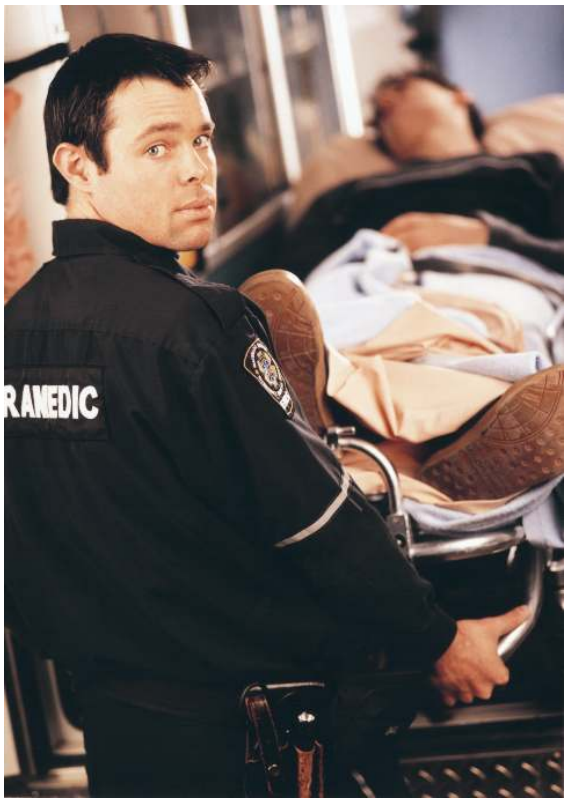
A stressful work environment where workers experience high demand, low job control and low social support can influence eating behaviours, leading to: skipping meals, eating at workstations, snacking and a preference for calorie dense foods.[2,37,49] In this type of work environment, health problems are more likely to occur.[49,60,61]

Body Mass Index (BMI) has been negatively associated with work related psychological factors such as fatigue, tension, anxiety and depression.[61] It is likely that some workers use food as a way to cope with job strain, which contributes to the development of obesity.[61]

"It's like a quick pat on the shoulder or something like that. You've kept up with your day; you've done a great job, here have a cookie".[49]

Manufacturing Worker

It requires substantial mental effort to avoid eating when food is present and tasks requiring mental concentration can diminish the ability of an individual to resist eating.[12] Therefore, a supportive environment can not only improve employee-eating habits but also remove barriers to productivity.



Food For Thought: INDULGENT DISTRACTIONS

The mental energy required to resist eating when tempting food is present significantly reduces the ability to perform.[12] A study showed that a group of participants who had cookies in the room but were told they couldn't eat any, gave up on a challenging task after only 8 minutes. The group that was allowed to eat the cookies lasted 19 minutes, while another group that had no food lasted 21 minutes.[12]

The bottom line: the availability of tempting foods when employees are trying to work can be distracting and counterproductive.

2.7 Healthy Eating Contradictions

Although health education can link healthy eating to healthy aging, it is difficult for individuals to maintain healthy eating habits when they are offered foods high in fat, sugar and salt.[42]

The Token Salad

The majority of consumers report intentions of being health conscious.[45,62] However, the food industry has noticed that consumers say they want more salads, but do not purchase salads when they are added to the menu.[63] In fact, when healthy items are added to the menu, some food providers notice an increase in the sales of the least healthy items such as burgers and fries.[63]

A group of researchers found that by adding one healthy item to a menu of foods that contained unhealthy choices, it caused individuals who normally try to make the best choices to (ironically) choose the worst item on the menu.[62]

Why does this happen?

In this case, individuals may feel that since they have the option of eating healthier, this somehow allows them to feel as though their goal to eat healthier has been fulfilled, thereby permitting them to make the most indulgent choice.[62]

It's possible that the intention to follow a healthy diet is easily controlled, while actual food choices are made impulsively and/or unconsciously.[64] The immediate pleasurable effects of eating likely overshadow a person's intentions to follow a healthy diet.[64] This is especially true when people are hungry, which may make them "forget" about delayed rewards, such as healthy aging.[64]

Justification

Researchers have noticed that people working towards a goal, (e.g. working out at the gym), may cause individuals to feel that they can indulge after meeting that goal.[9,59,62] Once people have completed a task that involved high personal effort, they may feel as though they have earned the right to be indulgent,[59] such as eating a high calorie meal after a hard day at the office.

The "Halo" Effect

People underestimate the caloric content of foods served at restaurants that market themselves as "healthy" and as a result, order higher calorie side dishes when they eat at these "healthier" restaurants,[9,10,62,65] leading to higher overall caloric intakes.

Similarly, marketing snack foods as "healthy" may cause people to assume that these foods can be consumed in limitless amounts.[15,44]

There are no perfect foods, especially when it comes to fast foods and pre-prepared snack foods. For example, depending on the flavour, whole grain microwave popcorn (which is healthy) may contain substantial amounts of saturated and trans fat (which is not healthy).

This underscores the importance of providing actual nutrition information and label reading education to employees in order to counteract the influence of food marketing and inaccurate consumer perceptions.

"What The Hell?"[62]

Another interesting phenomenon has been documented among individuals who are attempting to diet, is known as the "*what the hell*" effect.[62] For some individuals, once a diet has been broken, they feel that the day is lost. This results in giving into temptation and gorging themselves on whatever food is present.[62]

A Supportive Healthy Eating Environment

As illustrated, human eating patterns are influenced by a number of internal and external factors that are not easily controlled by knowledge or willpower. Providing a supportive healthy eating environment in your workplace is an important part of helping employees to overcome healthy eating barriers.

Environmental supports that can help to overcome these healthy eating paradoxes include:

- ☑ Providing employees with product nutrition information
- ☑ Offering healthy options whenever possible
- ☑ Limiting access to unhealthy foods

2.8 Nutrition and Shift Work

Shift work has been associated with an increased risk of developing several chronic diseases including cardiovascular disease, hypertension, diabetes and dyslipidemia (i.e. low HDL cholesterol and high triglycerides).[33,66-68] Shift work is also associated with insomnia, chronic fatigue, anxiety and depression, and impaired fertility in women.[69]

Between 20-75% of shift workers experience gastrointestinal problems such as appetite disturbances, irregular bowel movements, constipation, heart burn, reflux, abdominal pains and flatulence.[69] Obesity rates are higher among males who work shifts compared to non-shift workers[2,25,68,69] and shift work is an independent predictor of increased body mass index, obesity and abdominal obesity.[69]

The majority of studies have not shown any differences between the nutritional intakes of regular day workers compared to shift workers.[68] However, one study showed that shift workers tend to eat fewer meals and snack more than day workers.[69] Another study showed that shift workers who work midnight shifts tend to consume more calories overall, compared to daytime workers.[68]

Experiments have shown that sleep deprivation, which is often a side effect of shift work, can cause a 33% to 45%

increase in calorie consumption,[33] partially due to a reliance on salty snacks and sugary foods to cope with fatigue.[33]

The negative associations between shift work and health could occur because shift work interferes with the metabolic and hormonal changes that occur as part of the circadian rhythm.[33,67] Additionally, shift workers may not participate in health promoting behaviours such as cooking and leisure-time exercise if they feel the need to catch up on sleep.[69]

Individuals working night shifts may have reduced access to meals, time constraints for food preparation and disrupted family mealtime activities which can cause a reliance on unhealthy snacks found in vending machines.[69]

NUTRITION TIPS FOR SHIFT WORK

- ☑ Workers who bring foods from home consume healthier diets.[69] Provide shift workers with refrigerators and microwaves and ensure they have enough time to eat during shifts.
- ☑ If possible, provide workers with competitively priced healthier options in vending machines and cafeterias.
- ☑ Offer smaller portions of foods, as eating large quantities may cause fatigue.
- ☑ Encourage workers to drink tap water throughout their shift. Do not encourage excessive caffeine intakes (i.e. more than 2 to 3 cups of coffee per day) as this can interfere with sleep once the shift is completed.
- ☑ To reduce gastrointestinal discomfort, avoid providing spicy, high-fat, and/or fried foods. Encourage low-fat, high-fibre food choices instead, to counteract gastrointestinal symptoms.

Food for Thought: NIGHT CREEPERS

Research has shown that eating at night, when people normally sleep, causes different metabolic and hormone responses in the body.[69] One study showed that mice who were fed when they would normally be asleep, gained 28% more weight compared to mice that were fed the same diet at night (when mice normally eat).[70]
The bottom line: the act of eating at night may independently cause increased weight gain in humans.[70]

2.9 Men: An Under-Targeted Population for Healthy Eating Promotion Efforts

"I'll Wait to See if it Fixes Itself"[71]

Men have been referred to as poor patients who only seek medical help when their problems become difficult to treat.[34,72-74]

Despite the fact that men are more at risk of developing cardiovascular disease and diabetes from the accumulation of fat around their stomachs and upper abdomen, they can be difficult to engage in health strategies.[71,75,76]

In fact, men tend to avoid seeking out health services as long as they can continue in their regular daily activities.[71] Often men will not ask for help or seek medical services as they do not want to waste medical services, or to appear foolish, fussy or weak to their peers.[34,71,73,74,77] Instead, men tend to "wait and see" to give problems a chance to heal themselves.[71,73,74] Frequently men require family encouragement before they seek help[74,77] and expressed that they would not go to the doctor unless they were "dying".[34,77]

This is in line with the traditional macho stereotype of being tough, independent and self-reliant, which may prevent some men from seeking help, participating in health promoting behaviours and eating healthy food.[34,73,77,78] This is especially true if the majority of workers have a negative view of health promotion efforts.[74]

Men and Eating

Quite often, men describe healthy eating as being bland and insufficient (i.e. "rabbit food"), and feel that eating healthy foods deviates from social norms and conventional patterns of their way of life.[34,75,77-79]

Men are also less likely to consume breakfast, which is an independent risk factor for weight gain.[8]

Large portion sizes, hearty satisfying foods, red meat and alcohol are typically related to masculinity, while vegetables, fruit and yogurts are considered to be feminine.[79,80]

In a world where food companies market products specifically for men that involve "using meat as a condiment for other meats" and produce advertising campaigns where "men march down streets decrying 'chick food'" in search of thick indulgent hamburgers,[63] it is increasingly difficult for health professionals to appeal to men's sensibilities when encouraging them to eat healthier foods.

In at least one study, researchers found that some males will actually change their order when presented with nutrition information to a higher calorie item![45]

It appears that men and women have very different views on health and nutrition. While women tend to be concerned about outward appearance and healthy living,[34,42,50] some men feel that health campaigns are intrusive and resent interference from others in eating choices because they feel that eating is a personal choice.[75,79,80]

When Men Want to Lose Weight

During interview sessions, men indicated that they were only motivated to lose weight if they wanted to:

a) **be perceived as attractive** such as when attempting to attract a new mate (the motivation to maintain a healthy weight decreased once the romantic relationship had stabilized).[75,76]
b) **had been diagnosed with a weight related ailment** such as high blood pressure or cholesterol levels (the motivation to maintain weight loss decreased as the health parameters improved).[75,79,81]
c) **had a strong desire to be effective and valuable in the labour market** (this was the strongest motivator).[75]

Surprisingly, overweight males do not necessarily see themselves as being particularly overweight,[2,75,76,81,82] and positively associate large size to masculinity.[75,76] In one study the men preferred their body size when their BMI was over 25 kg/m^2 (classified as overweight).[82]

Men do not necessarily see weight as a problem unless overt symptoms become evident, such as struggling to breathe or the development of mobility problems.[81,82] In one population study, young obese men (aged 18 to 34) were four times more likely to be absent from work compared to normal weight men, highlighting the fact that obesity does impact work performance, even among young men.[25]

Some studies have shown that health promotion messages are of little interest to men, and although they seem to be aware of nutritional guidelines, they often show skepticism and resistance to nutrition education messaging.[79,80,82]

In fact, some men indicated that health messages are extreme and ineffective.[79] Many interviewees used the evidence that they "felt healthy", to explain why they had no reason to change current dietary practices.[79,81]

In some instances, men did show interest in cooking and participating in healthy behaviours, however, it would appear that increased socio-economic and education status may enhance awareness and motivation.[34,80] This may explain why it is difficult to recruit blue-collar workers into workplace wellness initiatives.[49]

In one study of single men, there was interest in learning how to cook, as it played into the masculine identity of being able to "fend for oneself", but was also viewed as a mechanism to impress prospective dates.[80]

It appears that traditional "awareness raising" strategies will do little to impact men's eating habits. However, well targeted employment based nutrition promotion can make a significant difference to the norms for healthy eating in the workplace, which can improve men's health.[60,72]

HEALTHY EATING PROMOTION FOR MEN

- ☑ Approach health topics with humour and a positive tone, as this is part of the male experience.[75,76] In one study, program participants affectionately referred to themselves as the "fat b****** club", expect this type of jovial nature when working with the male population.[76]
- ☑ Bring health services to men in an informal environment, that men feel comfortable in.[76]
- ☑ Competition can be an important motivator for men to participate in health activities. Pay careful attention to avoid causing lower self-esteem.[75,76,83] Iron Chef® anyone?
- ☑ Create an environment that encourages healthy eating. This is more acceptable than interventions that single out individuals, rely solely on educational strategies or that focus on weight loss.[2,43,49,83]

- ☑ Discuss alcohol as part of healthy eating and weight management education.[76]

- ☑ Female partners and other family members can help male workers seek out health advice and provide encouragement in participating in health initiatives. They may be appropriate to include in the program strategy.[42,74,76]

- ☑ Repeated exposure to healthy foods may increase taste preference for these items.[42] Offer free samples and pair "new" healthy foods with well-liked options.

- ☑ Have a health professional complete assessments during work hours as men may not realize that their weight is a problem.[49,76]

- ☑ Highlight the pleasurable effects of eating healthy foods focus on taste rather than on weight loss or health claims.[79]

- ☑ Involve men in needs assessments and program planning to see what types of programs they would enjoy and participate in.[47,78,84-89]

- ☑ Men are unlikely to discuss stress or mental health issues, which may lead them to participate in unhealthy behaviours.[74] Address stress in the workplace to help moderate weight and other risk factors such as smoking, drinking and substance misuse.[2,37,61,90]

- ☑ Offer health information that is both accessible and meaningful to men as they like to have access to health information prior to seeking help.[71]

- ☑ On-going support and advice is important to help men who would like to achieve a healthy weight.[76]

- ☑ Provide health information from health professionals directly, with an emphasis on reliable information.[75,76] Program examples include: nutrition information sessions, healthy food samples and health assessments (i.e. weight, height, Body Mass Index, waist circumference and blood pressure and blood glucose screening) as well as providing visual examples such as food models.[76,91]

- ☑ Work performance is important to a man's identity and sense of masculinity.[74,75] When working with men, it may be effective to relate healthy eating to the ability to maintain work performance.[74,75]

- ☑ Workplace support is important for men to maintain a healthy weight. Plan activities where they can participate with other male colleagues.[75,76,78]

- ☑ Worksite norms influence what employees eat; improve social support among employees to encourage each other.[60]

- ☑ If all else fails, you can try to substitute some of the beef in your cafeteria recipes with mushrooms, apparently this works too.[92]

3.0 Getting Started

Below are some steps or considerations on how to get a comprehensive health initiative started in your workplace.

3.1 Assemble Key Players

- ☑ Get senior management commitment.
- ☑ Use the background information in this toolkit to build your case to management.
- ☑ Establish a healthy eating committee or a workplace wellness committee (**See Section 3.5**).

3.2 Establish a Baseline/Conduct a Needs Assessment

- ☑ Measure current eating practices and identify areas that need to be addressed.
  - There are a variety of different methods that can be used (e.g. small group discussions, a suggestion box, surveys), alone or in combination to collect information from employees.
- ☑ Use the environmental support checklist to identify opportunities for improvement (**See Section 7.2**).
- ☑ Determine staff support.

3.3 Create an Action Plan (Set Specific Attainable Goals)

- ☑ Using this Healthy Eating Toolkit, choose the areas/tools that you feel will have the most impact in your workplace and are the most realistic.
  - In your action plan remember to consider how you will engage employees when implementing the tools.

Effective work plans include:

- Description of key issues
- Goals and objectives which are specific, measurable, acceptable, realistic and timely (SMART)
- Key strategies of how you will make the work plan happen
- Committee members roles and involvement
- Resources required
- Specifying responsibilities and designating individuals to actions
- Expected timelines
- Indicators of success

BUILDING A WORKPLACE WELLNESS PLAN
For situational assessments and other tips visit: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

3.4 Implement and Evaluate

In nutrition promotion, long-term successes are difficult to measure due to confounding factors (i.e. age, gender, genetics, environmental factors etc.) and the fact that it may take decades for nutrition related problems to appear. Therefore, consider process indicators and short-term outcomes measures that will indicate if your program has been successful.

When evaluating any health promotion activity there are two types of success indicators that are commonly used (process and outcome). Determine what should be measured to tell if your initiative is successful.

Process indicators include successes such as: representation from all stakeholder groups, how the program was implemented (e.g. designated people were able to carry out their assigned activities), participation rates and satisfaction with the program. Try to identify what worked and what did not work in your workplace.

Outcome measures show whether the program met its objectives such as: increased nutrition knowledge, intentions of behaviour change, sales of healthier food items, positive environmental changes, healthy eating policy development and implementation, as well as improvements in absenteeism rates, disability claims, WSIB claims, prescription drug costs and other relevant measures.

Evaluation of your workplace wellness initiatives is a very important step in your wellness programming cycle that should not be overlooked. This information will help you identify your successes, modify your future wellness strategies to best meet the needs of your employees and may help to justify continuing or expanding your activities.

Don't forget to celebrate your successes! Even if things didn't work out as you expected them to, your wellness committee has gained insight into what worked and what didn't which will help you move forward in future programming!

IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING

Contact **Project Health** at **519-883-2287** or at *www.projecthealth.ca* to obtain support in creating a comprehensive approach to workplace health.

3.5 If We Know It's Good for Them, Can't We Just Make the Changes?

Each workplace is unique and therefore, there is no one solution that will work for all workplaces. When making decisions that have an effect on employees, it is important to conduct a needs assessment to ensure that the employees in your workplace have an opportunity to indicate what is important to them. By involving employees and other stakeholders you may be able to reduce barriers and resistance to health initiatives. This is especially true in the case of eating behaviour, as it is often considered to be a personal issue.[78]

A Committee Approach

A committee approach is useful when creating a needs assessment as well as when developing health promotion strategies. A health committee should involve representation from all stakeholders including: management, health promotion staff, employees, food service providers and if applicable, union representation.

Studies have shown that employees appreciate workplace health promotion programs, including healthy eating strategies. Successful initiatives often indicate program acceptance was achieved using a health committee approach.[47,78,84-89]

Ideas for Engaging Employees

- ☑ Choose a program that addresses topics which people are interested in
- ☑ Identify and invite employee 'health champions' to be a part of your initiative
- ☑ Involve employees in the decision making process
- ☑ Consider what will make it easiest for employees to participate
- ☑ Effective marketing
- ☑ Use incentives, competitions and social support

WELLNESS COMMITTEES & EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

For information on creating a wellness committee visit: *www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/NCHealthSmartTlkt/CommitteeWrkBk.html.* For more information on engaging employees visit *www.healthaction.ca* and click on "**getting started**".

4.0 Take a Comprehensive Approach to Healthy Eating Wellness Programming

Research has shown that a comprehensive workplace health strategy is most effective in changing employee behaviours. A comprehensive approach to workplace wellness programming includes the inclusion of all four key health promotion approaches:

Awareness Raising	Providing information to employees about the benefits of making healthy choices.
Skill Building	Educating employees about a health issue and assisting them in developing the necessary skills to support a healthy choice.
Supportive Environment	A supportive environment includes ongoing, sustainable activities, which make it easier for employees to make healthier choices and participate in healthy behaviours.
Policy Development	Workplace policies demonstrate an organization's commitment to employee well-being. Policies clarify roles and responsibilities and introduce supports that help employees make healthy choices.

4.1 Awareness Raising

Raising employee awareness about the positive effects of healthy eating is the first step in supporting your employees to improve their eating habits. Help your employees learn about healthy eating using these resources:

Project Health Pamphlets

A full listing of adult oriented nutrition pamphlets can be found at:
www.projecthealth.ca/menu-services/pamphlets

Additional nutrition pamphlets on a broad range of topics can also be found at:
www.region.waterloo.on.ca/nutrition

Displays and Health Fairs

Healthy eating displays are available for loan or to be accompanied by Project Health staff during health fairs. To view the displays, visit:
www.projecthealth.ca/menu-services/displays/healthy-eating-displays.

For more information on planning a health fair visit the Healthy Workplace Month website at: *www.healthyworkplacemonth.ca/2003/HealthFair.php*

Posters

For a listing of healthy eating posters available for loan, visit:
www.projecthealth.ca/menu-services/posters

Teaching Kits

For a listing of healthy eating teaching kits available for loan, visit:
www.projecthealth.ca/menu-services/menu-services/educational-kits

Other Awareness Raising Activities

- ☑ Promote **Nutrition Month®** using materials such as fact sheets and quizzes from **Dietitians of Canada.**
- ☑ Offer healthy eating information and recipes through e-mail, internal webpages or pay-cheque inserts.
- ☑ Conduct on-site blood glucose, blood pressure, waist circumference and/or cholesterol screening.

NUTRITION MONTH®

March is Nutrition Month®! Plan ahead to promote healthy eating during Nutrition Month®. Visit *www.dietitians.ca* in January to see the Nutrition Month® theme for the upcoming year. Include posters, handouts, promotional cafeteria specials, quizzes, contests and lunch and learns.

4.1.1 EatRight Ontario

EatRight Ontario provides a free Registered Dietetian consultation service to all Ontario residents.

EatRight Ontario can be accessed by visiting *www.eatrightontario.ca* or by calling *1-877-510-5102.*

Telephone services are available Monday through Friday between 9 – 5 pm in over 100 languages.

The Registered Dietitians at EatRight Ontario can provide nutrition information to you and your employees on several different topics including:

- ☑ Family Nutrition
- ☑ Fibre
- ☑ Healthy Eating
- ☑ Healthy Weights
- ☑ Label Reading
- ☑ Menu Planning
- ☑ Protein
- ☑ Recipes
- ☑ Shift Work
- ☑ Vitamins and Minerals
- ☑ Whole Grains
- ☑ Workplace Health
- ☑ …and more!

EATRIGHT ONTARIO PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS

Order promotional materials from the **Service Ontario** website *www.serviceontario.ca*, select "**Publications**" and type ***EatRight*** into the "**Quick Publications Search**" box at the top.

4.2 Skill Building

Skill building activites provide employees with the skills needed in order to change and support positive behaviour.

Lunch and Learns (offered by Project Health)

Educate your employees about healthy eating over the lunch hour (minimum 10 employees in attendance, call 519-883-2287 for booking): Two topics are currently available:

"***Healthy Eating***" – 1 hour
Overview of Canada's Food Guide, label reading and portion sizes followed by a 20 minute Question & Answer period.

"***Calorie Confidential***" – 1 hour
View the DVD "Calorie Confidential" (~20 min), followed by an overview of Canada's Food Guide and a Question & Answer period.

See the Project Health website for Lunch and Learn updates: *www.projecthealth.ca.*

Interactive Learning Websites for Employees

EATracker a tool for tracking personal food intake, daily activity and nutrition recommendations: *www.dietitians.ca/public/content/eat_well_live_well/english/eatracker*

EatRight Ontario a free service providing nutrition education including recipes, menu planner and a free Registered Dietetian consultation service *www.eatrightontario.ca*

Healthy Eating is in Store a nutrition labeling education resource from Dietitians of Canada *www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca*

My Food Guide an interactive tool that allows employees to create their own Food Guide. *www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/myguide-monguide/index-eng.php*

Recipe Analyzer a tool to evaluate the nutritional content of recipes: *www.dietitians.ca/public/content/eat_well_live_well/english/recipeanalyzer/recipeanalyzer.asp*

Virtual Grocery Store Tour teaches employees how to use nutrition information to understand package labels and make healthy choices: *www.dietitians.ca/public/content/eat_well_live_well/english/vgs/index.asp*

Other Skill Building Activities

- ☑ Provide workers with healthy recipes; offer cooking classes or put together a workplace cookbook.
- ☑ Create a challenge such as a passport to health event or a cookoff.
- ☑ Bring a reputable weight loss program on-site such as a program run by a Registered Dietitian or a commercial program like Weight Watchers®.
- ☑ Introduce short interventions held at workstations that teach employees one basic healthy eating skill, such as learning how to find sodium or sugar on nutrition labels.

4.2.1 Healthy Eating Challenges

The popularity of television shows such as "The Biggest Loser®" have inspired similar weight loss challenges in workplaces. Here are some considerations to make before implementing a contest in your workplace:

- ☑ The television show contestants have medical supervision, personal trainers and nutrition consultants and are able to focus on weight loss without the distractions and stresses of daily life. Keep in mind that employees will not have these supports if you pursue a healthy weight challenge.
- ☑ It is important in the quest to lose weight that employees do not use unhealthy and dangerous weight loss practices such as fasting, skipping meals, weight loss supplements, dehydration or following diet plans that are nutritionally unbalanced.
- ☑ Educate employees about healthy lifestyle approaches to losing and maintaining a healthy weight.
- ☑ Decide what the goal will be (e.g. weight loss, % fat loss, decreased waist circumference or participation in activities). Allow enough time for appropriate weight loss (i.e. 1-2 pounds per week to meet total weight loss goals 5-10% of original weight). Consider having a reverse weight challenge where employees are eligible for prizes if they don't gain weight during the holidays. *Be aware that by promoting weight loss as the goal, employees may be tempted to engage in unhealthy and dangerous practices, which should be avoided.*
- ☑ If you choose to make weight loss a component of a healthy eating challenge, appoint a qualified, impartial person (ideally a health professional) to conduct measurements. Consider employee privacy issues.
- ☑ Prevent employees from interfering with each other's efforts (i.e. do not allow employees to tempt competitors with unhealthy food or beverage choices).
- ☑ Incorporate a physical activity component e.g. pedometer challenge, Walk This Way, Stairway to Health, walking groups, sport activities or access to gym memberships and personal trainers.
- ☑ Incentives can be given as one grand prize (i.e. to an individual or team), or can be given in increments (i.e. passport system that includes attending education sessions and challenges). An incremental award system may help to motivate people who are participating in healthy behaviours, but not necessarily losing the most weight.
- ☑ Launch the challenge. Provide healthy living "give-aways" (e.g. pedometers, frisbees, gardening kits, sunscreen, hats, reusable water bottles, reusable shopping bags, grocery lists, healthy cookbooks, etc.)
- ☑ Have FUN!

HEALTHY EATING CHALLENGES

Visit *www.projecthealth.ca* for resources to help you plan educational sessions on healthy eating and physical activity.

4.3 Supportive Environments

A supportive environment means "surroundings and conditions that foster and support healthy eating".[93]

Although individual choices in diet and exercise are key determinants of weight, environmental factors that are beyond individual control contribute to an increased risk of becoming overweight or obese. For example, if healthy foods are not available in the workplace, then it is unlikely that they will be consumed.[57]

Additionally the culture or social norms of a workplace can have an effect on an employee's eating behaviour.[52] "*A workplace culture that supports healthy lifestyles, where healthier choices have been made more accessible can help change a person's overall health*".[5]

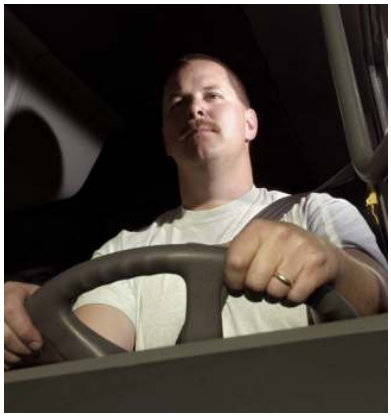
Be aware that changing social norms in a workplace is a process that occurs over a long period of time.

Typical education based interventions require individuals to actively choose to make healthy choices. This is tricky because most people are unaware of the influence of external cues on their food consumption which prevent nutrition knowledge from determining food choices.[12,51,52]

By providing a supportive environment in your workplace, you can help make healthy choices the easy choices, leading to positive impacts on the health of employees in your workplace.[5,50]

Remember – it is always important to involve employees in deciding what supports they need to follow a healthy diet!

See Section 7.2 for a Healthy Eating Environmental Assessment Checklist.



Workplace Example: GREAT LITTLE BOX COMPANY

The Great Little Box Company includes wellness as part of their workplace culture. "People who are healthier are more productive, happier. When they start gaining weight, they don't feel good about themselves".

To encourage healthy eating, employees are provided with free fruit each day. The company also subscribes to a wellness newsletter, which is distributed to employees.[94]

Creating a Supportive Work Environment

- ☑ Become an Eat Smart! Workplace Cafeteria (See section 7.3).
- ☑ Increase vegetable and fruit consumption by increasing availability (i.e. include in cafeteria specials, ensure fruit and vegetable trays are available at meetings and corporate functions).
- ☑ Make healthy options less expensive than other options.
- ☑ Post nutrition information to allow employees to make educated decisions.
- ☑ Prohibit the promotion of unhealthy foods (e.g. remove posters, floor clings, stickers and specials or other incentives which encourage the purchase of unhealthy foods).
- ☑ Reduce portion sizes, modify cafeteria recipes and ensure that healthy choices are in the typical flow of cafeteria traffic.
- ☑ Develop nutritional guidelines or policies that can be used for cafeteria meals, vending machines, meetings and corporate events.
- ☑ Implement a company wide policy that promotes healthy eating.
- ☑ People who eat when distracted are prone to eating more and making less healthy choices.[54] Ensure employees have enough time for lunch and that they have a suitable clean eating area that is away from their workspaces.
- ☑ Provide microwaves and refrigerators so that employees can bring healthy foods from home.
- ☑ Avoid using food as a reward, including gift cards to restaurants or other venues that do not offer healthy choices.
- ☑ Limit fundraising to non-food related activities. Avoid bake sales and company, school or sports team fundraisers that rely on the sale of food.
- ☑ Include nutrition counseling with a Registered Dietitian as part of a health benefits package.
- ☑ Offer educational sessions and/or cooking classes on healthy eating and provide time for employees to attend.
- ☑ Have healthy prepared meals available for workers to purchase and/or take home after their shift.
- ☑ Allow employees to create an onsite vegetable and fruit garden.
- ☑ Hold an onsite farmer's market.
- ☑ Supply foods from local producers whenever possible.

4.4 Healthy Eating Policy Development

A policy is a statement that helps to clarify roles and expectations between employers and employees. Workplace policies demonstrate an organization's commitment to employee well being and to the corporate values of health, offer consistent and accurate nutrition messages, increase the availability of healthy food, provide positive role modelling and support employees in making healthy choices.

Before commencing with a policy, conduct a needs assessment. The results will help you determine if your workplace is ready for change, what changes employees are willing to accept and will help to increase employee and management support for the policy.

Recruit the assistance of workplace stakeholders (i.e. everyone who will be influenced by the policy) to form a committee including management, employees, health promotion staff, food services and if applicable, union representatives. Your policy should represent the needs of both the employers and employees.

Consider the goal of your food policy and the logistics of enforcing and evaluating the policy during the development phase.

Consider adding provisions about safe food handling, waste reduction and the promotion of local products.

***Sample policy ideas*:**

- ☑ Employees have access to an eating area that is away from their workspace and is clean and attractive.
- ☑ Employees have adequate time to eat on their lunch break.
- ☑ Food from local sources will be provided whenever possible.
- ☑ Fundraising does not include the sale of non-nutritious foods (i.e. bake sales, cookies, chocolate bars, muffins etc).
- ☑ Healthy choices will be available at a price comparable to or lower than other choices in the workplace.
- ☑ Healthy food options will be provided at all company functions including meetings, events and celebrations as well as in vending machines and cafeterias.
- ☑ High standards of food preparation and food handling will be followed. (Call 519-883-2008 for information on food handler training).
- ☑ Tap water is available to all staff.
- ☑ The promotion of less healthy foods is prohibited, (e.g. advertisements, specials, posters etc.).
- ☑ Waste will be minimized by reducing the amount of packaging and disposable dishes used, by recycling and by diverting food waste to an organics program.

HEALTHY EATING POLICY GUIDE

See section 7.1 for the healthy eating policy guide.

5.0 Special Workplace Considerations

5.1 Common Areas

"Corporate break rooms need not become repositories for unused Halloween candy and holiday leftovers".[95]

The Situation

Access

Food must be present before it can be eaten. In many workplaces, common areas are "treat zones" with access to free food such as leftover Halloween candy, boxes of chocolates, home baking, bagels, donuts, cookies, muffins and food left over from meetings and celebrations. Some workplaces also have pantries where tempting foods are stocked.

Having an occasional less-than-healthy snack is not going to make or break the health of an employee. However, it has been estimated that it takes an average of 50 to 150 extra calories per day to cause an individual to become obese.[12,13] That is roughly the equivalent to one cookie, 250 ml of soda, 10 jellybeans or 5 chocolate covered almonds.[17] Therefore, chronic daily over consumption of calories can contribute to weight gain and poor health over time.

Employees may enjoy having access to food in common areas or dread the thought of having to avoid eating when tempting foods are available. This scenario can also create barriers for employees who are trying to maintain their weight or manage a nutrition related medical condition. For others, having access to free food on a regular basis can create a habit of rewarding oneself to cope with boredom or stress.[49,96] Either way, exposure to food in work areas can be a mental distraction for employees and can lead to lower levels of productivity.[12]

The Ideal:

- ☑ Divide the workplace into working spaces and eating spaces.
- ☑ Provide only healthy snacks in common areas as well as during workplace functions and celebrations.
- ☑ Talk with the employees at your organization to gauge their readiness to make changes. Decide on a solution as a group.

Food For Thought: OUT OF SIGHT

In one experiment, office workers ate 3.1 more chocolates when they were placed in transparent jars on their desks compared to when the candy was in opaque jars.[12]
The bottom line: seeing food causes eating.

5.2 The Beverage Vending Machine

The Situation:

Calories and Weight Gain

Drinking sweetened beverages has been associated with an increased risk of developing obesity, type II diabetes and cardiovascular disease.[43] People who drink sweetened beverages tend to consume more calories overall,[97] and sugar-sweetened beverages do not quench thirst as well as non-sweetened drinks, leading to an increased consumption of beverages overall.[36] (**See Section 6.2** for more information on the health effects of consuming sweetened beverages).

Dental Health

Drinking beverages that contain sugar (including 100% juice) raise the risk of developing cavities.[98] By using machines that dispense bottles instead of cans, employees may sip sweet beverages throughout the day and in-between meals, increasing dental health risks.[98,99]

Vegetable and Fruit Juice

Although 100% fruit and vegetable juice is recommended in Canada's Food Guide, 100% juice should be limited to 125 – 250 ml per day. Avoid beverages that contain a small amount of fruit juice and a large amount of added sugar. These drinks are often labeled fruit drinks, beverages, punches, cocktails and "ades". Vegetables and fruit contain more fibre, phytochemicals and antioxidants and are lower in calories compared to juice. Additionally, some vegetable juices contain high amounts of sodium; look for low sodium vegetables juices instead.

Sports Drinks and Vitamin Water

Fluid needs can be met by drinking tap water, which is calorie-free, inexpensive, thoroughly tested and does not produce waste when consumed in a refillable container. Sports drinks are not necessary unless an individual has been doing intense exercise for over 90 minutes or has excessive sweat losses. Vitamin water may contain sugar and is unlikely to have benefits that cannot be met by following a well balanced diet.

Dairy Vending Machines

Canada's Food Guide recommends drinking two cups (500 ml) of skim, 1%, 2% milk or fortified soy beverage each day. Dairy vending machines can increase access to low fat dairy products. Avoid stocking milkshakes that are high in fat, sugar and calories.

Caffeine

Coffee, tea, soft drinks, energy drinks and some vitamin water products contain caffeine, a stimulant that can cause dehydration, anxiety, irritability, difficulty sleeping, high blood pressure and a rapid heart beat. Coffee and tea should be limited to 500 ml (2 cups) per day for women and 750 ml (3 cups) per day for men. Energy drinks should be avoided or limited to 500 ml per day.[100]

Beverage Vending Machine Improvements:

- ☑ Replace soda machines that dispense bottles with machines that dispense cans.
- ☑ Replace 25% – 100% of the options with healthier choices.
- ☑ Make the less healthy choices more expensive than healthier choices.
- ☑ If vending machines have advertising on them, change the advertisements to show healthy options.
- ☑ Put the healthier options at the start of the selections and at eye level, if applicable.
- ☑ If 100% vegetable or fruit juice is offered, serve sizes smaller than 360 ml.
- ☑ If vegetable juice is offered, serve low sodium juice.
- ☑ Ensure tap water or water fountains are easily accessible for employees to encourage consumption.

The Ideal Situation:

- ☑ Beverage vending machines are stocked with 100% healthier choices or are removed from the workplace.
- ☑ 100% juice is limited to 125 – 250 ml servings.
- ☑ Tap water is available in a convenient location (i.e. cold water machines or water fountains).

BEVERAGE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Have an awareness raising campaign to promote healthy beverages using beverage basics resources, available at: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

5.3 The Snack Vending Machine

The Situation:

Calories and Weight Gain

Simply seeing food can stimulate unplanned consumption.[51] Therefore, the visual appeal and convenience of vending machines, (especially in areas that are easily accessible), may cause an increase in consumption, leading to weight gain.[51]

Taste, Price and Convenience

The most important factors in choosing foods are taste and price.[39,42,43,46,47] Vended products are the least nutritious foods and beverages sold and are the most convenient to purchase.[101] By offering unhealthy food choices at a lower price than the cost of meals, you may be inadvertently encouraging employees to consume these foods in place of meals. Similarly, if healthier food choices in the vending machine are more expensive than the less healthy items, employees are not as likely to make healthier choices.[46]

Revenue

There are often concerns that healthier items will expire before sale or will not provide revenue. However, there are several studies that indicate that revenue was not disrupted when healthier choices were added to vending machines.[102] In general, if tasty and popular healthy items are used, in conjunction with promotional signage and comparable pricing to unhealthy items, then the sale of healthier vending items should not hinder revenue.[102] In some cases, changing all items to healthier options has prevented food spoilage.

The Ideal Situation

- ☑ Change 25% - 100% of your vending machine options to healthier choices.
- ☑ Use the **"Nutrition Standards for Vending Machines"** tool to assess the snacks in your vending machine. This tool can help you to determine which snacks are "healthier" choices: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

Food For Thought: THE LAW OF LEAST EFFORT

In one study, secretaries who were given chocolates on their desk ate twice as many as secretaries that had the candy placed only six feet away.[15]
The bottom line: as effort goes up, food consumption goes down.

5.4 The Cafeteria

The Situation:

Items served in workplace cafeterias often reflect human preferences for fat, sugar and salt rather than nutritional guidelines. Food service companies are often concerned that revenues will decline if healthy foods are served in place of unhealthy items and some workplaces have had negative experiences when trying to promote healthy eating by adding healthy items to menus. However, there are several factors that drive food choices, the most important being availability, taste, price, convenience and nutrition knowledge.[15] These factors must be addressed to ensure successful healthy eating promotional efforts.

Cafeteria Improvements:

Availability & Convenience

Healthy foods can only be consumed if they are available. Additionally, healthy foods must be as convenient as other choices to encourage consumption.[15,45,46,103] Examine the traffic flow of the cafeteria, to ensure that healthy items are conveniently placed in areas of regular traffic flow, that they are placed at eye level (when applicable) and ensure that healthy items do not take more time and effort to obtain compared to less healthy items.

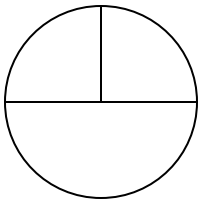
Exposure

Repeated exposure to a food item can independently increase preference for that item. The more often a food is tasted the more it is liked.[42] If at first the employees do not like the new food items, keep trying, as they may eventually be accepted, especially if they are coupled with well-liked food items.

Food Guide Recommendations

Serve at least one daily special that includes three of the four Food Groups as outlined in Canada's Food Guide, which is prepared in a healthier way (i.e. little or no added fat, salt or sugar). Allow sauces, dressings and gravies to be served on the side. The special should also contain at least one serving from the Vegetables and Fruit Food Group and should be priced competitively with other daily specials.

To help employees get nutrients in appropriate amounts, plan meals so that half of the plate is from the Vegetables and Fruit Food Group, one quarter of the plate is from the Grain Products Food Group and one quarter of the plate is from the Meat and Meat Alternatives Food Group.



Some employees will welcome the addition of healthier items, while others may perceive healthy foods to be less tasty.[15] However, by reformulating existing products (i.e. reducing the amount of added fat, salt or sugar used or by adding more vegetables to a recipe) effective changes in nutritional intake can be achieved without raising awareness that employees are eating a healthier diet.[15,50,92]

Food Placement

Food sales can be influenced by increasing the amount of shelf space for a single item.[12] Sales can also be increased by placing items at eye level.[12] Typically convenience foods such as chips, crackers, chocolate bars and candy are placed at the register, which is considered to be an influential location. Replace 25% - 100% of these items with "healthier choices".

Nutrition Information

Nutrition information must be made available at the point of purchase, rather than in pamphlets or on website in order to be effective.[11] Consumers report using nutrition information when making food decisions[11,46,56,103] and studies show that consumers who use nutritional labeling, tend to reduce their calorie intake.[11,104]

However, some education may be required to help individuals read and understand nutritional information, as labeling caloric content is only useful if employees understand how many calories they need to eat each day.[45,50] Nutrition labeling is not fool proof, as research suggests that those who eat less nutritious diets are also less likely to use labeling information.[44,50] Not surprisingly, females are more likely than men to use nutrition information.[45]

Some studies have found minimal or no effect of providing food labels to consumers.[15,45] Food labeling may also produce a negative effect in young males who may equate higher calories and fat with better taste, resulting in a higher calorie selection.[45] Therefore, nutrition labeling should be utilized as a component of a comprehensive program format involving education and environmental changes, rather than as a stand-alone intervention.

Portion Size

Food is being consumed away from home more often, which is associated with increased portion sizes, leading to an increase in total energy intake.[42,46,47,50,56,57,105] Food portions appear to be a very important influence on consumption patterns. People served larger portions eat more food, as the amount served is an indicator that it is an appropriate portion to consume.[10,12,15]

Portion control at each meal is critical to maintain a healthy weight.[36] Even small, undetectable reductions in serving sizes can have a big impact on the health of employees.[14] Assess the size of serving dishes, glasses and take out containers used in the cafeteria, as people tend to use these items as consumption guidelines. Use smaller dishes to reduce portion sizes, especially for items that are categorized as "Foods to Limit" by Canada's Food Guide (i.e. french fries, soft drinks, etc.).

NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR CONVENIENCE FOODS

Use the **"Nutrition Standards for Vending Machines"** tool to assess the convenience in your cafeteria. This tool can help you to determine which snacks are "healthier" choices: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

Taste & Price

In general, taste and price are the most important drivers for food purchasing. Consumers will only purchase foods deemed, tasty and reasonably priced. Therefore, healthy foods must be priced competitively compared to less healthy options.[15,39,42,46,47,49,103]

Taste can be highly subjective and in some cases, labeling a food as "healthy" causes assumptions of poor taste, which in turn, decreases consumption.[9,15,39,42] When working with populations that are less health oriented, focus on other positive and enjoyable features of healthy foods such as: fresh, local, rich, spicy etc.

Local Foods

Purchasing local foods has many benefits including supporting local farmers, strengthening the local economy and helping to protect the environment by reducing carbon emissions that result from packaging and transporting food from distant locations.[106] Ask your food service provider to supply a percentage of the food served in caterings and cafeterias from local sources. Consider adding a provision for local foods in your workplace food policy. For more information on accessing local foods in Waterloo Region see *www.foodlink.ca* or *www.foodland.gov.on.ca*.

EAT SMART! WORKPLACE PROGRAM

Eat Smart! is a provincial program promoting workplace cafeterias that meet exceptional standards in nutrition, food safety and smoke-free dining. See page 56 for details about the **Eat Smart! Workplace Cafeteria standards**. For more information see *www.eatsmartontario.ca* or call Project Health *519-883-2287.*

5.5 Meetings and Workplace Functions

Consider whether ordering food for your meeting is necessary, (i.e. for short duration events food should not be ordered). If food is required, making a few adjustments when placing orders can improve the nutritional content of meals.

- ☑ Choose lower fat options such as green salads, raw or steamed vegetables, steamed rice, dumplings, lower fat meat options on pizza (e.g. ham or chicken) and fruit for dessert.
- ☑ Ensure there are pitchers of water available throughout the meeting.
- ☑ Increase the amount of vegetables offered: raw, steamed or stir fried vegetables, pizza toppings, tomato sauce based pasta dishes, sandwich toppings.
- ☑ Adjust portion sizes for lower fat grain products such as low-fat whole grain muffins and whole grain bagels by cutting them in half. Limit meat portions to 4 oz.
- ☑ Offer milk and small portions of 100% juice instead of soda.
- ☑ Order items cooked in a healthier way such as: steamed, baked, grilled or stir fried rather than breaded or deep fried.
- ☑ Request whole grain options: breads, tortillas, pasta, pizza crust and crackers.
- ☑ Serve higher calorie items on the side such as mayonnaise, cheese, sauces, dressings, croutons or gravy and offer lower fat options when available.
- ☑ Limit trans fats by using non-hydrogenated margarines, and avoiding foods made with shortening or partially hydrogenated vegetable oils such as: deep fried foods, tortillas, donuts, cookies, pies, and tarts.

*Ask participants ahead of time if they have any food allergies, intolerances or restrictions. For more information on common food allergies visit: *www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/allerg/fa-aa/index-eng.php.*

HEALTHY FOOD GUIDELINES FOR WORKPLACES

For a copy of the Project Health pamphlet “Healthy Food Guidelines for Workplaces” visit *www.projecthealth.ca.*

5.6 Fundraising and Rewards

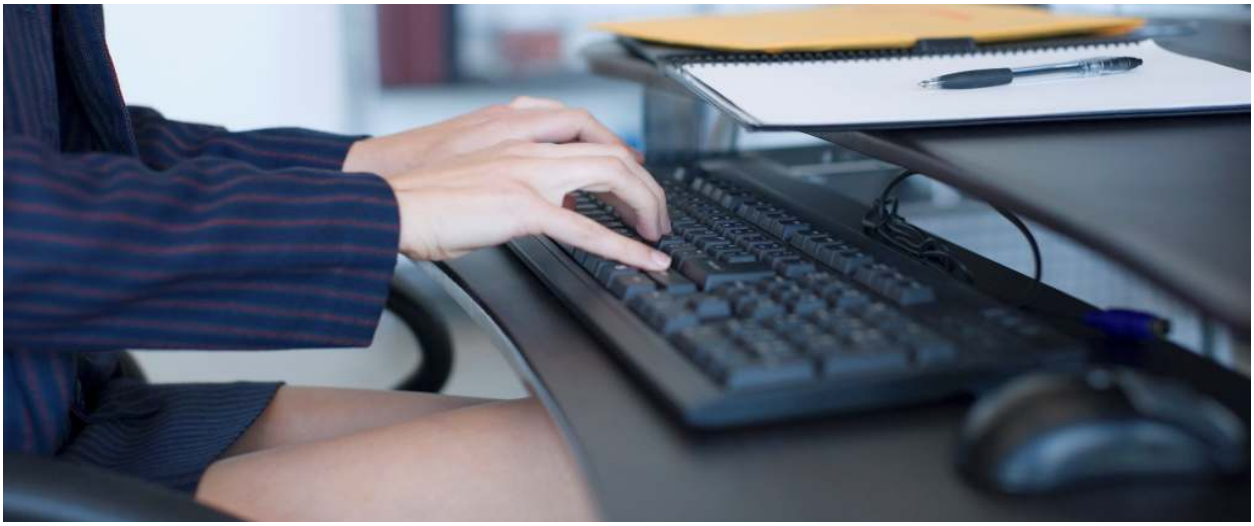
Workplace fundraisers can be an opportunity to support healthy eating and active living. Fundraising and employee recognition events often involve foods that are high in calories, fat and sugar. These can undermine employee efforts to eat healthier diets and can contribute to poor health in employees.

Healthy Living Fundraising Ideas

- ☑ Hold a run, walk, stair climbing or bike event
- ☑ Sell raffle tickets for a desirable item or trip
- ☑ Have a 50/50 draw
- ☑ Sell:
  - Plants, bulbs or seedlings
  - Healthy cookbooks
  - Environmentally friendly grocery bags
  - Insulated lunch bags and thermoses
  - Fruit and vegetable boxes from local producers

Non-Food Rewards for Employees

- ☑ A verbal or written expression of gratitude for a job well done
- ☑ Paid time off e.g. Friday afternoon
- ☑ Gift certificates for local stores (e.g. books, home repair, home décor, malls, movies, music store, downloadable music, travel, drugstores etc.)
- ☑ A draw at the end of the year for one big item, while employees earn tickets for a job well done
- ☑ Useful household items such as magazine subscriptions, beach towels, cooler bags or backpacks, etc.
- ☑ Eco friendly items (e.g. solar-powered cell chargers, crank flashlights, rain barrels, biodegradable garbage bags etc.)
- ☑ Event tickets for music or theatrical events
- ☑ Talk with your employees to see what other types of rewards motivate them



6.0 Nutrition Topics

6.1 Salt and Sodium

Currently, it is recommended that Canadian adults limit sodium intake to 2300 mg/day[107]. The average daily sodium intake in Canada is more than double the recommended level.[108]

Salt can induce hypertension in sensitive individuals.[107,109] High blood pressure is the single most important cause of cardiovascular disease, accounting for 62% of strokes and 49% of coronary heart disease.[110] High sodium intakes have also been associated with an increase in obesity, stomach cancer, osteoporosis, kidney stones and severity of asthma symptoms.[108,110] Highly salted foods can also cause thirst, which then results in a greater consumption of sweetened beverages or alcoholic beverages.[36,109,110]

Although individuals can reduce their sodium consumption by limiting the amount of salt they add to foods, approximately 77% of sodium Canadians eat is found in processed foods.[107,108,110] For example, pizza, sandwiches, submarines, hamburgers and hotdogs account for almost 20% of the sodium that Canadians consume.[107] Therefore, most individuals have little control over the sodium content of their food.

Previous sodium reduction interventions have found that the sodium in prepared foods can be reduced by up to 30% without affecting taste.[108] However, any changes to the sodium content of foods should be completed in small increments, to allow for adjustments in taste preferences.

Health Canada has developed a Sodium Working Group, which recommends voluntary sodium reductions in the food industry. For more information, go to the Health Canada website: *www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/nutrition/sodium/index-eng.php*.

Awareness Raising Ideas:

- ☑ Download and distribute the "Cutting Back on Salt" pamphlet from: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

Environmental Support Ideas:

- ☑ Reduce the amount of sodium that is used in cafeteria food preparation.
- ☑ Reduce portion sizes of high sodium foods.
- ☑ Serve vegetables, fruit and whole grains to counteract the effects of sodium.[107,108,110]
- ☑ Stock vending machines with products that contain less than 480 mg of sodium per vended package.

6.2 Sugar

The consumption of sugar has been implicated in the development of obesity and dental caries.[99,111] Therefore, the World Health Organization has recommended limiting refined sugar to less than 10% of energy in the average 2000-calorie diet. This equates to 50 g of sugar per day or (12 teaspoons of sugar) for adults.[111]

Sugars that are naturally found in dairy, vegetables and fruit are not considered to have adverse health outcomes.[99] The one exception to this is sugars from fruit juice, which should be limited to 125-250 ml per day for adults, due to the extra calories they provide. Sugars that should be limited in the diet are listed as sucrose, honey, syrups (e.g. corn syrup – identified as glucose-fructose), dextrose, maltose and molasses.

It can be difficult to tell how much sugar has been added to a product as all forms of sugars (both natural and added) appear under "sugars" on the nutrition facts panel. However, the closer "sugar ingredients" are to the front of the ingredient list, the more added sugar that product contains.

In the United States, the average individual's sugar intake is 15.8% of their total energy intake[112] (the recommendation is less than 10%). Almost half of the amount of sugar that people consume comes from sweetened beverages (i.e. soda, fruit "drinks", lemonade, iced tea, etc.).[112] Sweetened beverages contribute a significant amount of sugar to the average diet, estimated to be between 175 to 278 calories per day.[36,113]

Several studies have demonstrated that the regular consumption of sweetened beverages contributes to weight gain.[99,112,113] It appears that calories consumed as sweetened beverages do not register in the brain the same way as solid foods. Therefore, people do not reduce their intake after drinking a sweetened beverage leading to higher overall caloric intakes.[97,99,112,113] Studies estimate that if sweetened beverage calories are added to the diet without reducing calories from other sources, it could lead to a weight gain of 15 to 30 pounds in one year.[36,112,113]

Awareness Raising Ideas

- ☑ Download and distribute the "Beverage Basics for Adults" pamphlet from: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

Environmental Support Ideas

- ☑ Limit the availability of high sugar foods in the workplace.
- ☑ Encourage the consumption of tap water.
- ☑ Implement beverage vending machines recommendations.

ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS

For information on artificial sweeteners, please visit Health Canada's website at: *www.hc-sc.gc.ca* or visit the Diabetes association Website: *www.diabetes.ca*.

6.3 Trans Fat

Trans fats in the diet have an unfavourable effect on blood cholesterol profiles.[114] Eating trans fats increases the concentration of LDL cholesterol (bad cholesterol) while at the same time decreasing HDL cholesterol (good cholesterol) in the blood.[114] This mechanism increases cardiovascular risk.[114] For each 2% increase in energy intake from trans-fat, there is a 23% increase in the incidence of cardiovascular disease i.e. heart attacks.[104,115] Trans fats have also been implicated to independently play a role in increasing abdominal obesity, weight and insulin resistance.[115] The maximum recommended intake of trans fats is **2 grams** per day.[115]

Trans fats are found in hydrogenated oils commonly used in baked goods (e.g. cakes, cookies, pies), packaged snacks (e.g. crackers and popcorn) and deep-fried foods, but can also be found in fat from ruminant animals i.e. milk and meat from cattle, sheep, goats and deer.[114] Approximately 80% of the trans fats in our diet (approximately 0.5% of total energy intake) are provided by hydrogenated oils, while 20% is provided by dairy and meat products.[104,115] However, at high intakes, all forms of trans fats may have a negative effect on blood cholesterol profiles.[114]

There are many alternatives to using trans fats available to food businesses with comparable prices and tastes.[104] For example, frying applications can use cottonseed, soybean, canola or sunflower oil. In baking, the greatest improvements can be made by using non-hydrogenated vegetable oils, (including non-hydrogenated margarine).

Although it is not recommended, small improvements in risk have been seen by replacing hydrogenated vegetable oils with tropical oils and butter.[115] American cities that have implemented policies banning the use of trans fats, have reported minimal financial impacts for food producers who removed trans fats from their products.[104]

Awareness Raising Ideas:

- ☑ Download and distribute the "Top 5 Things You Need to know About Trans Fat" pamphlet from: *www.projecthealth.ca.*

Environmental Support Ideas:

- ☑ Avoid using partially hydrogenated vegetable oils.
- ☑ Stock snacks that contain 0 g of trans fats on the nutrition facts label.

6.4 Whole Grains and Fibre

Diets containing 25 to 30 g of fibre per day may increase feelings of fullness, reduce hunger and improve weight loss.[16,36] Dietary fibre has been shown to be associated with a lower risk of obesity among Canadian men.[16] Although results for women were not significant, the same trends were noted.[16]

Excessively high intakes of refined grain products has been linked to obesity,[116,117] while individuals who consume more whole grains tend to have a lower body mass index, less abdominal obesity (i.e. lower waist circumference) and gain less weight over time.[117]

Dietary fibre from cereals rather than vegetables and fruit seem to be more protective for chronic diseases such as metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.[117,118]

Whole grain products contain many nutrients and non-nutrient components that are lost during the refining process.[118] In order to identify a whole grain product, the first ingredient listed on the package should be whole grain (e.g. whole grain whole wheat flour).[118]

Awareness Raising Ideas:

- ☑ Download and distribute the "Fantastic Fibre" pamphlet from: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

Environmental Support Ideas:

- ☑ Substitute at least 50% of refined grain products with whole grain products (i.e. breads, cereals, rice and pasta).
- ☑ Stock vending machines with snack products that contain at least 2 g of fibre per serving.
- ☑ Look for products that list whole grain as the first ingredient.

6.5 Vitamin D

Vitamin D plays a role in regulating bones and muscle tissue and has been identified to decrease the risk of falls, cancer, heart disease and many other conditions.[119] Recent studies have shown many Canadians have vitamin D insufficiency, especially during the winter months (between October and March) when sunlight is inadequate to produce vitamin D. In addition, individuals are at a higher risk for vitamin D deficiency if they are over 70 years of age, have darker skin pigmentation, wear clothing that covers most of their skin or stay indoors.[119]

Vitamin D is made in the skin after exposure to sunlight and is also available from certain foods that either contain vitamin D naturally (i.e. egg yolks, cod liver oil, salmon, mackerel and herring) or are fortified (i.e. milk, fortified soy beverage, margarine and some yogurts).[119]

Most foods that contain vitamin D are not sufficient to meet current recommendations.[119] For example, one cup of milk contains approximately 100 IU and therefore a person over 50 would need to consume at least two cups of milk plus a 400 IU vitamin D supplement each day to meet the recommendations.[120] Because vitamin D is a fat-soluble vitamin, there are health risks associated with vitamin D toxicity. At present, Canadians should not exceed 2000 IU per day from all sources of vitamin D including milk and over the counter supplementation.[121]

The Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) recommendations for vitamin D are 200 IU/day for adults 50 years or younger; 400 IU/day for adults 51 to 70 years; and 600 IU/day for seniors over 70.[121] Currently Health Canada is performing a review of vitamin D needs which should be available in 2010.[121]

Awareness Raising Ideas:

- ☑ Download and distribute the "Vitamin D: What you Need to Know" pamphlet from: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

BONE HEALTH FOR OLDER ADULTS

The "Bone Health for Adults Over 50" pamphlet can be downloaded and distributed from: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

6.6 Omega-3 Fatty Acids

Eating a diet high in fish has been shown to reduce mortality, ischemic heart disease and risk of stroke as well as improving blood triglyceride levels (a type of cholesterol).[122] Long chain Omega-3 fatty acids such as EPA and DHA from marine sources (i.e. fatty fish) are thought to be cardioprotective.[122]

Other sources of Omega-3 fatty acids such as soybean and canola oil contain short chain omega-3 fatty acids (ALA). These short chain Omega-3 fatty acids are thought to be poorly converted in the human body and therefore most of the required long-chain Omega-3 fatty acids must come from marine sources.[122]

The research to date suggests eating whole fish is preferred compared to taking fish supplements. Fish is a source of high quality protein and many essential vitamins and minerals making it a healthy choice.[122] Boiled and baked fish are the best options, while deep fried fish may contain trans fats, which may negate the benefits of eating fish.[122] For individuals who are concerned about contaminants, the benefits of eating fish outweigh the risks of contaminants.[122] It should also be noted that most meats contain similar contaminants and therefore, this should not prevent people from eating fish.[122]

Awareness Raising Ideas:

- ☑ Download and distribute the pamphlet "A Guide to Eating Fish for Women, Children and Families" from: *www.projecthealth.ca*. This pamphlet helps people decide what types of fish to eat based on nutrition, contaminants and ecological considerations.

Environmental Support Ideas:

- ☑ Serve fatty fish in the cafeteria (see the pamphlet "A Guide to Eating Fish for Women, Children and Families" for the most appropriate type of fish.
- ☑ Cook fish in a healthier way i.e. broiled or baked instead of fried to ensure nutritional benefits.

6.7 Alcohol

The consumption of alcoholic beverages can be a significant source of calories,[17,123] especially when consumed with sweetened beverages or juice as mix.

Beer	Serving	Calories
De-alcoholized Beer	1 can	210
High Alcohol Beer (7%)	1 bottle	183
Light Beer (4%)	1 bottle	99
Regular Beer (5%)	1 bottle	140
Spirits		
Spirits	50 ml	109
Regular Cooler	360 ml	310
Wine		
Dessert Wine	125 ml	203
Red Wine	125 ml	90
White Wine	125 ml	85

Alcohol has been implicated in the development of several health conditions such as stroke, high blood pressure, cancer[124] and osteoporosis.[125]

Alcoholic beverages should be limited to no more than 1-2 standard drinks per day. Alternatively, the recommendation is 9 standard drinks for women and 14 for men per week.[124]

A standard drink is 5 oz (142 ml) wine, 1.5 oz (43 ml) spirits and 12 oz (341 ml) of regular beer.[124] High alcohol beers, coolers and fortified wines may contain more alcohol than one standard drink.[124]

ALCOHOL AND THE WORKPLACE

For more information on alcohol and the workplace visit the "Substance Misuse" section of the project health website *www.projecthealth.ca* or call *519-883-2287*.

Resources for Employers

7.1 Healthy Eating Policy Guide

Introductory Statement/Commitment Statement

A statement that introduces the concept of the policy.

Example:

(Employer name) is committed to promoting a healthy lifestyle by utilizing safe food handling practices and supporting accessibility of healthy food and beverage choices in the workplace.

Rationale/Objective/Purpose

Concrete examples about why your workplace is implementing the policy i.e. what is the goal of the policy.

Example:

- To ensure that healthy food choices are offered and safe food handling procedures are followed at all workplace functions where food and beverages are served.
- To provide education to employees on the benefits of healthy eating.

Scope

The definition of where your policy is applicable.

Example:

The policy applies to all workplace departments and events

Definition

Define what is meant by "healthy" foods/eating, so that people know what types of foods they can offer to staff.

Example:

According to Canada's Food Guide, healthy eating includes:

- Eating a wide variety of foods from each of the four Food Groups with an emphasis on vegetables, fruit and whole grains.
- Choosing foods that are low in added fat sugar and salt.
- Minimizing the frequency of consumption and portion sizes of foods listed as "Foods to Limit" by Canada's Food Guide.

Principles/Procedure/Requirements

How the policy will be accomplished. Select appropriate policies for your workplace that addresses your workplace needs assessment. Be sure to define any terms and specify the nutrition guidelines the workplace is expected to follow:

Example:

(Employer name) will meet the following:

1. At least 25% of the selections in vending machines will meet the nutritional criteria for healthier snacks. (See page for nutrition criteria for vending machines)

See section 4.4 for other ideas that you may want to incorporate into your policy.

Guidelines/Nutrition Criteria

If appropriate, list food items that the policy is intended to promote.

Example:

See the pamphlet "Food Guidelines for Workplaces" for ideas on suitable food items to serve at workplace functions at *www.projecthealth.ca*.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

For more information on developing a Healthy Eating policy for your workplace call Project Health 519-883-2287.

7.2 Workplace Healthy Eating Environmental Assessment Audit

Use this form to help you assess your current healthy eating environment. Make notes about where your workplace is doing well and where improvements are required.

Healthy Eating Area of Focus	Criteria	Comments
Workplace Health Committee	A workplace health committee has been established, including representation from employees, health promotion staff, management, union representation (if applicable) and food service representation (if applicable).	
Management Support	Management is supportive of workplace changes to encourage healthy eating.	
Eating Areas	Employees have access to a clean eating area away from their workstation.	
	Employees have access to a refrigerator and microwave.	
Time	Employees are given enough time to eat.	
Common Areas	Foods are prohibited from common areas or only contain healthy options.	
Meetings	Emphasize foods listed on the "Healthy Food Guidelines for Workplaces" pamphlet.	
	Limit or exclude items listed as "Foods to Limit" on Canada's Food Guide (i.e. foods that are high in added fat sugar and salt such as cakes, pastries, chocolate, candies, cookies, granola bars, doughnuts, muffins, ice cream and frozen desserts, french fries, potato chips, nachos, salty snacks, fruit flavoured drinks, soft drinks, sports and energy drinks and sweetened hot or cold drinks).	
	Waste from food packaging, dishes and cutlery is minimized. (i.e. use reusable dishware or dishware than can be diverted to the organics bin).	

Healthy Eating Area of Focus	Criteria	Comments
Availability of Healthy Choices in Vending Machines	At least 50% of the choices available in the vending machines meet the criteria for 'healthier' snacks according to the Nutrition Standards for Vending Machines	
	Healthy food options are available to all shifts.	
Advertising and Promotion of Foods and Beverages	Only advertisements or posters that portray nutritious foods items are displayed.	
	Vending machine decals portray healthy choices (i.e. water or 100% juice on beverage vending machines).	
Workplace Celebrations	Emphasize foods and beverages that are prepared in a healthier way.	
Fundraisers	Fundraising does not rely on the sale of foods categorized as "Foods to Limit" by Canada's Food Guide or foods that are high in added fat, sugar and salt.	
Workplace Stores	Tuck shops/stores offer alternatives to the sale of foods categorized as "Foods to Limit" by Canada's Food Guide	
Nutrition Policy	A written food and nutrition policy has been adopted by your workplace.	
	The policy is accessible to employees.	
	Adherence to the policy is monitored.	

For Workplaces with Cafeteria Services		
Healthy Eating Area of Focus	**Criteria**	**Comments**
Availability of Healthy Food Options in Cafeterias	At least one daily special contains three of the four Food Groups outlined in Canada's Food Guide prepared in a healthier way. This daily special is priced competitively to other specials.	
	Low fat versions of condiments are available and can be served on the side.	
Advertising and Promotion of Foods and Beverages	Daily nutritious specials are advertised.	
	Healthy side options are advertised with the daily special (i.e. daily special includes salad or vegetables vs. french fries)	
Food Sourcing	Locally grown products (Ontario) are used whenever possible.	
Food Safety	A minimum of one full-time employee is certified in safe food handling.	
Portion Sizes of Food and Beverage Choices	If french fries and poutine are offered, they are available in an 112g/4oz size or smaller.	
	If sweetened beverages are offered they are offered in the smallest serving size available (i.e. 355 ml cans).	
	Less healthy items are offered in the smallest available serving size.	
Pricing of Foods and Beverages	Healthier foods items are competitively priced with less healthy items.	
Placement of Foods and Beverages	Healthier items are prominently displayed and are found in easily accessible areas.	

7.3 The Eat Smart! Workplace Program

The Eat Smart! Workplace Program is a provincial program that promotes workplace cafeterias that meet exceptional standards in nutrition, food safety and smoke-free dining. By becoming an Eat Smart! Workplace Cafeteria you create a supportive healthy living environment by providing your employees with healthier choices.

Here are more reasons to join the Eat Smart! Workplace Program:

- Good nutrition is especially important for the health of shift workers.
- This program can benefit employees and their families, cafeteria staff, and visitors to the workplace.
- Research shows that health promotion programs are cost effective.
- Disease prevention is less costly than treatment.
- Safe food handling reduces the incidence of food-borne illness.

APPLYING FOR THE EAT SMART! WORKPLACE AWARD

1. Complete the checklist to see if your workplace cafeteria meets all of the criteria to be eligible to receive an Eat Smart! Workplace award.
2. To apply, visit: *www.eatsmartontario.ca* and click on "**Apply Now**", then "**For Workplaces**" and select "**Waterloo**" in the drop down menu to enter your information or call Project Health *519-883-2287*

****Applications are accepted from January 1 to March 31.***

The Eat Smart! Workplace Checklist

Workplaces with a cafeteria are invited to apply for the Eat Smart! Workplace award if they meet all of the following criteria:

Eat Smart! Workplace Criteria	
100% Smoke Free Dining	☐ The Facility must be in compliance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act (2005) and must not sell tobacco products or accessories.
Food Safety Standards	☐ The Facility must have an excellent track record in food safety based on the requirements of Ontario's Food Premises Regulation. ☐ At least one fulltime kitchen employee certified in safe food handling. For more information on food handler certification search "food safety" at: *www.region.waterloo.on.ca or call 519-883-2008.*
Healthy Food Choices	**Grain Products:** ☐ At least 50% of all sandwiches choices are whole grain, including bread, bagels, pitas, rolls, tortillas, English muffins, buns and pizza crust. ☐ At least 50% of breakfast cereals offered are whole grain and provide at least 4g of fibre per serving. ☐ If available, at least one snack is prepared in a healthier way†. If the snack is prepackaged it must meet the Grain Product – Nutritional Standards for Vending Machines found at *www.projecthealth.ca.*
	Vegetables and Fruit: At least 6 of the following choices are offered daily: ☐ Whole fruit (count only once) ☐ Fruit salad (125 ml serving) ☐ 100% vegetable or fruit juice (count only once) ☐ Broth based soup with vegetables (count only once) ☐ Potatoes served in a healthier way† (125 ml) (count only once) ☐ Tomato sauce (125 ml) (count only once) ☐ Up to three vegetable sandwich toppings ☐ Up to three vegetable or fruit pizza toppings ☐ Raw vegetables, or side order or a-la-carte cooked choices ☐ Up to two distinctly different leafy green salad items (250 ml)

Eat Smart! Workplace Criteria Continued

Healthy Food Choices Continued

Milk and Alternatives:

☐ At least two choices of fluid milk or fortified soy beverage are available on a daily basis.

- ☐ Choices must be 2% MF*, 1% MF* or skim – plain or flavoured milk
- ☐ Choices must contain at least 25% DV** for calcium

At least one distinctly different non-fluid milk choice is available on a daily basis including one of:

- ☐ Yogurt or yogurt drinks containing ≤2% MF* and at least 10% DV** of calcium per 100g
- ☐ Puddings made with ≤2% milk containing at least 10% DV** of calcium per 99g
- ☐ Cottage cheese containing at least 10% DV** of calcium per 113g
- ☐ Hard cheese with <20% MF*

* MF = Milk Fat, **DV = Daily Value

Meat and Meat Alternatives:

☐ At least two meat, fish, poultry or meat alternative choices are offered on a daily basis. These must be prepared and served in a healthier way†.

Daily Specials:

If a daily special is offered at least one must:

- ☐ Include three of the four food groups in Canada's Food Guide (2007) and one of these choices must be a vegetable or fruit; and
- ☐ All items in the daily special must be prepared and served in a healthier way†.

Fats:

Healthier fats and oils must be used:

- ☐ In all margarines and spreads
- ☐ In at least one type of salad dressing, offered on a daily basis
- ☐ In other fat based condiments like dips, sauces and gravies, if available

Eat Smart! Workplace Criteria Continued

Healthy Food Choices Continued

Condiments:

Fat and oil-based condiments, dips, spreads, sauces and gravies must have the option to be:

- ☐ Served on the side
- ☐ Not used on all hot or cold meals
- ☐ Not used on all side dishes
- ☐ Not used on all vegetables

French Fries:

- ☐ If french fries or poutine are offered there must be an option of having a 112-g/4 oz serving size or smaller.
- ☐ If french fries or poutine are offered as part of a meal, a substitute must be offered at no additional cost. Possible substitutes include:
  - ☐ Baked, boiled or mashed potato
  - ☐ Vegetables
  - ☐ Salad
  - ☐ Rice
  - ☐ Other grain products

(Note: All substitutes must be prepared in a healthier way†).

Nutritional Information:

- ☐ The cafeteria is willing to provide the available ingredient/nutritional information and be open to finding out more information if required.

Water:

- ☐ Water is available at all times.

Eat Smart! Definitions

The definition of 'a healthier way†'

- Use lower fat cooking methods like baked, boiled, broiled, barbequed, grilled, microwaved, steamed, roasted, sautéed or toasted.
- Reduce or eliminate oils used for stir-frying and mayonnaise/dressings used in sandwiches and on salads; or leave raw (vegetables and fruit).

Type of fat for food preparation:

- Healthier fats should be used in and on all food products, and include those that are unsaturated and non-hydrogenated such as liquid vegetable oils (e.g. canola, olive, safflower, sunflower, soybean, or peanut oils) and soft tub-type margarines.
- Total trans fat content of a vegetable oil or soft spreadable margarine offered for sale or used as an ingredient in the preparation of a food or beverage offered for sale, cannot exceed two per cent (2%) of the total fat content.
- The trans fat content of any food, beverage or ingredient, other than vegetable oil or soft spreadable margarine, offered for sale or used as an ingredient in the preparation of a food or beverage offered for sale cannot exceed five per cent (5%) of the total fat content.

7.4 Canada's Food Guide

Healthy Eating means following the recommendations in Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. Canada's Food Guide, describes the type and amount of food people need to eat in order to follow a healthy eating pattern.[1]

Number of Servings

Canada's Food Guide recommends the average number of servings that people should try to eat each day from each food group, based on age and gender.[1] See **Table 3** for Canada's Food Guide, food serving recommendations.

Table 3: Canada's Food Guide Recommendations for Number of Servings per Day

	Teens		Adults			
	14-18 years		19-50 years		51 + years	
	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males
Vegetables and Fruit	7	8	7-8	8-10	7	7
Grain Products	6	7	6-7	8	6	7
Milk and Alternatives	3-4	3-4	2	2	3	3
Meat and Alternatives	2	3	2	3	2	3

Serving Sizes

The serving sizes in Canada's Food Guide are can be larger or smaller than the servings we typically eat. [1] See below for Food Guide Serving examples:

Food Guide Serving Examples

Vegetables and Fruit

- 125 mL (½ cup) fresh, frozen or canned vegetable or fruit or 100% juice
- 250 mL (1 cup) leafy raw vegetables or salad
- 1 piece of fruit

Grain Products

- 1 slice (35 g) bread or ½ bagel (45 g)
- ½ pita (35 g) or ½ tortilla (35 g)
- 125 mL (½ cup) cooked rice, pasta, or couscous
- 30 g cold cereal or 175 mL (¾ cup) hot cereal

Milk and Alternatives

- 250 mL (1 cup) milk or fortified soy beverage
- 175 g (¾ cup) yogurt
- 50 g (1 ½ oz.) cheese

Meat and Alternatives

- 75 g (2 ½ oz.)/125 mL (½ cup) cooked fish, shellfish, poultry or lean meat
- 175 mL (¾ cup) cooked beans
- 2 eggs
- 30 mL (2 Tbsp) peanut butter

Making Every Serving Count

Canada's Food Guide also makes recommendations on the types of foods that are part of a healthy diet.[1]

Eat at least one dark green and one orange vegetable each day.

- Go for dark green vegetables such as broccoli, romaine lettuce and spinach.
- Go for orange vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes and winter squash.

Choose vegetables and fruit prepared with little or no added fat, sugar or salt.

- Enjoy vegetables steamed, baked or stir-fried instead of deep-fried.

Have vegetables and fruit more often than juice.

Make at least half of your grain products whole grain each day.

- Eat a variety of whole grains such as barley, brown rice, oats, quinoa and wild rice.
- Enjoy whole grain breads, oatmeal or whole wheat pasta.

Choose grain products that are lower in fat, sugar or salt.

- Compare the Nutrition Facts table on labels to make wise choices.
- Enjoy the true taste of grain products. When adding sauces or spreads, use small amounts.

Drink skim, 1%, or 2% milk each day.

- Have 500 mL (2 cups) of milk every day for adequate vitamin D.
- Drink fortified soy beverages if you do not drink milk.

Select lower fat milk alternatives.

- Compare the Nutrition Facts table on yogurts or cheeses to make wise choices.

Have meat alternatives such as beans, lentils and tofu often.

Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.

- Choose fish such as char, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout.

Select lean meat and alternatives prepared with little or no added fat or salt.

- Trim the visible fat from meats. Remove the skin on poultry.
- Use cooking methods such as roasting, baking or poaching that require little or no added fat.
- If you eat luncheon meats, sausages or packaged meats, choose those lower in salt (sodium) and fat.

CANADA'S FOOD GUIDE

Visit Health Canada's website to get a copy of Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide at: *healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide* or visit: *www.projecthealth.ca*.

8.0 Healthy Eating Internet Resources

Canadian Cancer Society
http://www.cancer.ca

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety
http://www.ccohs.ca – (look for the section on healthy eating at work)

Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition
http://www.ccfn.ca

Canadian Diabetes Association
http://www.diabetes.ca

Centre for Disease Control LEANworks!
http://www.cdc.gov/leanworks – (Be aware that American resources may be used such as the Food Pyramid. Please use Canada's Food Guide in place of the Food Pyramid).

Dietitians of Canada
http://www.dietitians.ca

EatRight Ontario (1-877-510-5102)
http://www.eatrightontario.ca

Ellyn Satter
http://www.ellynsatter.com – (promoting healthy eating habits for families)

Foodlink Waterloo Region
http://www.foodlink-waterlooregion.ca

Health Canada
http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/index-eng.php – Food and Nutrition Section

http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide – Canada's Food Guide.

Healthy Measures
http://www.healthymeasures.ca

Healthy Waterloo Region – Healthy Weight Strategy
http://www.healthywaterlooregion.ca

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada
http://www.heartandstroke.ca

Leslie Beck RD
http://www.lesliebeck.com

Leslie Beck's RD – Globe and Mail Column
http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/opinions/columnists/leslie-beck

Nutrition Resource Centre
http://www.nutritionrc.ca – (Look for the Guide to Nutrition Promotion in the Workplace under the resources section).

Project Health
http://www.projecthealth.ca

Public Health Agency of Canada
http://www.publichealth.gc.ca

Sodium 101
http://www.sodium101.ca

Region of Waterloo Public Health Nutrition Resources
http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/nutrition

5 to 10 a Day
http://www.5to10aday.com

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