

APHA Healthy Meeting Guidelines: Nutrition

The American Public Health Association is one of many organizations that have signed onto the Healthy Meetings Pledge to formalize its commitment to offering healthy options and promoting physical activity and sustainability at our meetings and events. Below are suggestions for you to consider as you're planning for food and beverages at your event(s).

In general

- Evaluate whether food is necessary during the planned meeting. Often times, meetings during mid-morning or mid-afternoon should not require food.
- Whenever food is offered, ensure that meals include a balance of carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats.
- Include fruits or vegetables whenever food is offered.
- Always provide a vegetarian option.
- When feasible, ask about dietary restrictions of attendees in advance.
- Avoid offering pork and red meat options. Many people avoid these foods for health, religious and environmental reasons.

When placing food and beverage orders

- Request labels for food items to indicate item, whether it contains any common allergens (wheat, dairy, nuts, soy) or meets certain dietary restrictions (vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, low-sodium)
 - For served meals, request a menu card(s) on each table.
 - For buffet meals and receptions, request a menu card to be provided on the buffet table.
 - For boxed lunches, request labels on the box.
- Request whole grains whenever possible.
- Request low-sodium options.

For beverages

- Request water pitchers and glasses.
- Do not offer soda. If offering soda, provide a diet option.
- Provide sparkling waters, 100% juice and unsweetened teas as alternatives to sodas and other sugar-sweetened beverages.
- Order low-fat or non-fat milk with coffee and tea service in addition to or in place of half and half.

For breakfast

- Always serve fruit.
- Consider these healthy breakfast items:
 - Oatmeal with cinnamon, nuts, and dried or fresh fruit.
 - Plain yogurt with fresh berries, bananas, or other cut fruit.
 - Hardboiled or scrambled eggs are a great protein source. Eggs are also a good opportunity to add vegetables (bell peppers, spinach, onions, mushrooms, tomatoes)
 - Almond, peanut or sunflower seed butters are healthy fat options for bagels and toast.

For lunch, dinner or receptions

- With boxed lunches:
 - Request fruit instead of cookies or other desserts.
 - Request small salads or vegetable sticks/slices instead of chips.
- *For Sandwiches:*
 - Use whole grain bread or whole grain wraps
 - Request lean meats, poultry, seafood, and non-meat proteins: egg, tofu, hummus, or bean spread.
 - Add vegetables: lettuce, raw spinach, tomatoes, bell peppers (fresh or roasted), cucumbers, avocados, artichoke hearts, onions, mushrooms, radish, shredded carrots, or cabbage
- *Always* offer a salad option or vegetable option.
- For salads, choose darker leafy greens (mixed greens/mesculun, spinach, arugula, kale) instead of iceberg or romaine lettuce.
- Order broiled, baked, grilled, poached, sautéed, or roasted lean meats, poultry, seafood, or tofu in appropriate portion size.
- Avoid fried foods.
- With dessert platters, request fresh fruit as an option.

Snack Suggestions

- Non-microwave popcorn with light salt
- Fruit trays
- Vegetable trays with hummus, bean dip or guacamole
- Cheese and whole grain crackers
- Plain yogurt (2% or full fat) with option for added fruit and nuts
- Mixed nuts and dried fruit

BRAIN FOOD



Provide foods that increase alertness and keep participants focused:

- Oily Fish (salmon, mackerel, sardines, anchovies, tuna, trout)
- Nuts (walnuts, cashews, almonds, etc.)
- Dark chocolate
- Whole grains
- Blueberries
- Oranges
- Leafy green vegetables

Here's a quick reference of healthy alternatives for common menu items

SERVE THIS!	NOT THAT!
Fresh fruit, fruit and nut mixes	Candy, cookies or brownies
Vegetable tray, whole grain crackers with cheese or hummus	Chips
Whole grain bread and wraps	White or Italian bread
Brown rice	White rice
Water, 100% fruit juice, or naturally sweetened/unsweetened teas	Sugar sweetened beverages (e.g, sodas, punch or teas sweetened with high fructose corn syrup)
Thin, small or "mini" whole grain bagels or muffins (whole grain)	Regular bagels, muffins, croissants, doughnuts, sweet pastries
Steamed or sautéed vegetables	Vegetables in cream sauce or gravy