
Guidelines for Healthy Food Selection at Meetings and Events

Background:

Every year in Ontario, hundreds of health care related conferences and meetings are held, and attended by thousands of health care employees and decision makers. Healthy food choices are infrequently offered, in part due to a lack of healthy options from vendors, and a low demand from organizers. As part of our commitment to promoting health and preventing disease, there is an opportunity for the Ontario Stroke Network (OSN), the Ontario Stroke System (OSS) Stakeholders (11 regional stroke networks), Cardiac Care Network (CCN) and the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario (HSFO) to play a leadership role in requesting and demanding healthy food choices at every meeting. Other organizations are encouraged to adopt these guidelines to promote health and to help increase the demand for healthier food choices which could drive greater availability of healthy food from vendors.

The purpose of the guideline is:

1. To encourage healthy eating at all OSN/OSS/CCN/HSFO meetings and events.
2. To encourage other health care organizations to adopt these guidelines.
3. To contribute to vascular disease prevention.
4. To support the recommendations from [Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide](#) for all meetings, workshops, educational sessions and sponsored events.

Recommendations:

That the OSN, OSS, CCN, HSFO and other health care agencies follow Health Canada's ["Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide"](#), and use the following to guide food selection at meetings and events:

- *When choosing food, beverages or catering for an event, consider the following:* Choose a variety of foods consistent with the four food groups: vegetables and fruit; grain products; milk and alternatives; and, meat and alternatives with an emphasis on fresh foods prepared with little or no fat. ***Fresh foods should have priority over processed and/or packaged foods.**
- Request catering that:
 - Is trans fat free and low in saturated fats
 - Contains whole grains, fresh fruit and vegetables
 - Is low in sodium/salt and sugar
 - Provides decaffeinated beverage options and avoids high sugar drinks.

Review and Monitoring

The OSN, CCN and HSFO will review policy content annually. The guideline will be made available on the OSN, Regional and District Stroke Centres, CCN and HSFO websites.

References

[Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide. Health Canada.](#) 2007.

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada Position Statement: [Dietary Sodium, Heart Disease and Stroke.](#) April 2009.

Heart and Stroke Foundation of New Brunswick Health Promotion Department. [Healthy Eating Policy.](#)

Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario: [Heart Disease, Stroke and Healthy Living](#)

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: [Indicators of Being Well in Canada](#)

Preventing Noncommunicable Disease in the Workplace Through Diet and Physical Activity. [WHO/World Economic Forum Report of a Joint Event.](#) 2005. 13 August.2008

Sodium Working Group. (2010). [Sodium Reduction Strategy for Canada.](#)

[Solutions for healthier workplace.](#) Peel Region Public Health. 2008. 8 July 2008.

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