

## Food for Thought: Planning Healthful Meals and Breaks for Meetings

### Food for Breaks

While it is usual to serve food at mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks, it is rarely necessary in terms of hunger or nutrition. We live and work in food-saturated environments and often eat just because it is there. Consider the flow of a training day and decide whether breaks with food are something that attendees need to have. If you feel that food is necessary, choose fruits and vegetables since most of us need more in our diets.

A healthful alternative is a **beverage and activity break**. Offer water or hot drinks with time to visit the restroom. Then lead an energizing physical activity appropriate to the room.

### Breakfast Meals

Morning is the perfect time to serve several of the Food Groups to Encourage, especially whole grains, fruits, and dairy foods. Here are some delicious ways to do that:

- **Yogurt parfait bar:** lowfat vanilla yogurt, whole-grain granola, fruit (fresh, dried, or canned in juice), and nuts.
- **Whole-grain bagels/toast with spreads:** Cut bagels into quarters or halves and provide toppings such as margarine, lowfat cream cheese, and peanut butter.
- **Whole-grain muffins with yogurt and fruit:** Serve mini-muffins or cut regular muffins into quarters or halves. Offer 4-6 oz. cups of lowfat yogurt and fruit plates.
- **Whole grain cereal and fruit:** Serve hot or cold cereal with lowfat milk and fruit.

### Beverages Throughout the Day

Helping participants stay hydrated will help them stay focused and attentive during training activities. You can help them get enough to drink by having water available throughout the day and by encouraging them to drink often.

In terms of hydration, these calorie-free or nutrient-rich beverages are the best choices:

- **Ice water**, preferably in pitchers. If water or other drinks are served in bottles or cans, provide recycling containers in the room.

## Food for Thought: Planning Healthful Meals and Breaks for Meetings, *continued*

- **Fat-free or lowfat milk**
- **Tea**, hot or iced in regular, green, and herbal varieties. If iced tea is served, make sure to offer unsweetened.
- **Coffee**, regular and decaf
- **Diet drinks**

### Lunch or Dinner

Fortunately, there are many ways to feature the great flavors of nutrition at midday or evening meals. Think visually appealing, variety, and creative menu planning:

- **Soup and salad:** Make vegetables and fruit the focus of this favorite combo. Serve with whole-grain rolls and fat-free milk.
- **Baked potato bar with seasonal fruit:** Offer white and sweet potatoes with toppings such as bean chili, cottage cheese, and broccoli; a fruit tray; and milk to drink.
- **Pasta bar:** Choose whole-grain pastas with vegetable and meat toppings, along with flavorful shredded cheeses, whole wheat garlic bread, and fruit cup for dessert.
- **Baked fish/meat/chicken with vegetables and brown rice:** Just keep it lean and easy!



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