

Healthful Meals and Breaks for Meetings: A Showcase for the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*

Planning delicious, nutrient-rich meals and breaks can be easy, practical, and successful. This does not mean that every single item served at your training will be fat-free, sugar-free, and sodium-free. It does mean thinking outside the typical meeting menu “box” and following some basic principles from the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. As you develop menus or work with a caterer, keep these important principles in mind.

- **Mix up nutrient-rich choices within each food group.** Variety has always been a pillar of good nutrition. By offering a wide variety of nutrient-rich foods, you will show participants how to get the most nutrition for their daily calories.
- **Make healthful choices appealing and tasty.** People eat with their eyes first. By making meals and snacks visually appealing and flavorful, you will help attendees overcome the common misperception that “if it’s good for you, it doesn’t taste good!”
- **Emphasize the “Food Groups to Encourage.”** Most Americans need more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free/lowfat dairy foods. Including tasty choices from these groups will help participants recognize new ways to add them to their daily diets.
- **Be size-wise about portions of foods and beverages.** The super-sizing of American portions has made overeating the norm for many of us. By using MyPyramid serving sizes, you will help people recognize appropriate portions of foods and beverages.
- **Support local farmers, ranchers, and food processors.** By serving local items, you will show participants how they can support local agriculture and local economies. Label the local-sourced items, so attendees will know how to contact the producers.
- **Play it safe with food handling practices.** Food safety is a major concern anywhere and anytime people eat. Insuring safe food handling, such as hand sanitizing and temperature control, will reinforce the importance of these strategies for attendees.

Healthful Meals and Breaks for Meetings: A Showcase for the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, *continued*

More Resources

If you need more ideas for specific menus or additional tips for providing healthful meeting meals and breaks, check with your local or state health department, university, or extension office. Here are several online examples of what they may have to offer.

<http://www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/HealthyMeetingGuide/HealthyMeetingGuide.html>

http://www.sph.umn.edu/img/assets/9103/Nutrition_Guide.pdf

<http://www.ctahr.hawaii.edu/NEW/HMW/workshopMat.html>

<http://uhs.berkeley.edu/FacStaff/healthmatters/healthymeetings.shtml#physical>

<http://www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/meetingwell.asp>

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