

Healthy Workplace Guide

Healthy Eating

This practical guide provides ideas on implementing a healthy eating promotion programme at a workplace to improve the health and well-being of the employees.



Demonstrate Management Commitment and Support Workplace Health Promotion

- Formulate written “Healthy Workplace Policy” with promoting healthy eating included as an action area
- Have an annual budget for health promotion activities in the workplace
- Have an active committee responsible for organising health promotion activities in the workplace
- The committee is composed of representatives of staff at all levels
- Demonstrate organisational commitment and support of worksite health promotion at all levels of management, e.g. senior/middle management sit on the committee and participate in activities
- State the organisation’s commitment in promoting health in the workplace at orientation of newly recruited staff

Set Health Promotion Plan

- Conduct needs assessment and/or staff interest surveys. Assessment could be health risk surveys (e.g. staff’s habit of eating fruits and vegetables, measurement of blood pressure and body mass index (BMI)) and analysis of working environment related to healthy eating (e.g. what are the strengths of the workplace that could promote healthy eating)
- Prioritise the needs and develop a health promotion year plan, and an action plan that documents what will be done, when and by whom, as well as how it is monitored or evaluated

Raise Awareness and Build Capacity

- Disseminate information (e.g. health tips, recipes) regularly via posters/pamphlets, internal circulation, internal email, notice board/corner, newsletter etc. to increase staff’s knowledge and awareness of healthy eating
- Provide talks/workshops on promoting healthy eating
- Provide weighing scales, measuring tapes and blood pressure monitors at office for staff’s self-measurement
- Provide community resources, e.g. information on nearby EatSmart restaurants, to facilitate healthy eating

Build a Healthy Eating Environment in Workplace

- **Encourage eating at least 400g, or 5 portions, of fruits and vegetables per day**
 - Organise Fruit Day and Green Monday/Veggie Day, and make it a recurring event (e.g. on a monthly basis) to help staff develop healthier eating habits
 - Serve fruits as refreshment, if any, at meetings, events and gatherings
 - Send fruit hampers as gifts in business, instead of giving chocolate and other high-fat/high-sugar foods

- **Enable a healthy beverage environment by limiting sugary drinks in the workplace, and promote water drinking**
 - Encourage staff to drink water by providing potable water throughout the workplace
 - Make healthier drinks (e.g. water or diet/sugar-free/low-sugar/low-fat drinks) available at meetings, events and gatherings; serve coffee and tea with low-fat milk or skimmed milk
 - Do not provide drinks with added sugar or drinks with relatively high sugar content (e.g. concentrated fruit juice, cordial, soft drinks and probiotic drinks); do not serve coffee and tea with condensed milk or evaporated milk

- **Promote healthy snacks**
 - If snacks are available at meetings, events and gatherings, provide healthier ones (e.g. fruits, plain biscuits/crackers, dried fruits without added sugar, plain dry-roasted nuts)
 - If packaged snacks and drinks of various portion sizes are available, choose smaller portion sizes

- **Promote healthy lunch**
 - Provide facilities such as steamers and microwave ovens for low-fat cooking/reheating, as well as washing utensils
 - Provide a refrigerator for storing packed lunches

- **If the workplace provides food, vending machines, etc.**

- Have a written policy or formal communication that makes healthier food and beverage choices available in cafeterias/snack bars/vending machines
- Evaluate menu of canteen (if available) to spot out 3-high (high in fat, salt and sugar) dishes and make suggestions to replace them with healthier dishes
- Educate or communicate with chefs to ensure the use of healthier ingredients and cooking methods, e.g. choose lean meat, healthier oils and low-sodium seasonings (e.g. natural and fresh herbs, spices and ingredients) instead of high-sodium sauces/seasonings for cooking
- Make healthier food and beverage choices available at a reasonable proportion (say no less than 25% of the items sold) in vending machines, cafeterias, snack bars or other purchase points
- Choose an EatSmart Restaurant* and look for “More Fruit and Vegetables” Dishes and “3 Less” Dishes when organising gatherings, celebrations for staff or business lunches/dinners
- Ensure that at least one veggie-based dish is included in these events

* Visit <https://restaurant.eatsmart.gov.hk/> for more information on EatSmart Restaurants

“More Fruit and Vegetables” Dishes means that either fruit or vegetables are the sole ingredients of the dish, or they occupy at least twice as much the amount of meat and its alternatives present in the dish. Meat alternatives include egg, beans, soybean products and nuts

“3 Less” Dishes means that the dish has less fat or oil, salt and sugar

To Get Everyone Involved

- Arrange a recognition scheme/staff nomination scheme with awards/incentives for those having good progress in adopting healthy eating habits via gifts/prizes/recognition/public compliments
- Organise healthy eating promotional activities on a regular basis
- Encourage active participation in health promotion activities through promotion strategies and/or award system, etc.
- Collect activity ideas from staff through surveys/suggestion boxes

Review Health Promotion Plan

- Develop an evaluation plan
- Monitor the change in staff's lifestyle and behaviour, as well as culture and atmosphere within the workplace
- Analyse various records, indicators and statistics, such as staff participation rates in various health promotion activities, staff's feedback and satisfaction, absenteeism, sick leave, as well as changes in staff's habit of eating fruits and vegetables, BMI and blood pressure
- Adjust the health promotion plan according to the evaluation results

Advice to Organisations

- Encourage the use of Snack Check (<https://www.chp.gov.hk/en/static/40563.html>), a mobile application developed by Department of Health, to assist making healthier choices of snack and drinks.
- Encourage staff to select healthier snacks and drinks (Reference may be made to the "Healthy Snack Checker" website https://school.eatsmart.gov.hk/en/content_esas.aspx?id=6131)