

Healthier Catering: A Guide to Assist Workplaces

Catering can be so much more than a deep fried curry puff or a sandwich smothered in butter. **Small changes** make a **big difference**.



25
PERCENT

Australian food standards stipulate that a meat pie must contain a minimum of 25% of meat flesh. The remaining 75%? Pastry, gravy and vegetable protein.¹



Healthier catering

When rated for health, food and drink for workplace meetings, functions or conferences, often falls a little short of the mark.

More often than not we're presented with a sticky apricot danish, an excessively large muffin and some sort of deep fried curry puff. And if you're lucky, a token fruit platter.

But workplace catering has the potential to contribute much more positively to our health and avoid adding to our waistlines.

Given that many more workplaces are adopting healthy eating policies and implementing wellbeing programs, the sticky danish or greasy samosa sends a mixed and confusing message to workers.

Consistency of messages in the workplace is the key, and the provision of healthy catering at business meetings or events is another way to promote health and wellbeing in your workplace and to support your workers to make healthy choices.

Some workplaces may choose to implement a healthy catering policy as part of a wider workplace health and wellbeing policy. For other workplaces, it may simply be about the provision of healthier alternatives.

This healthier catering guide serves to provide some inspiration as well as lots of ideas on how to cater your next workplace function or event, healthily. These ideas may be provided to your caterer of choice as suggestions, together with our guidelines for external caterers, or you may wish to provide these to workers to encourage healthier options if the catering is provided in-house.

There is also a healthier catering alternatives fact sheet, which suggests healthier options to the usual catering fare.

For all of these suggestions provided, they assume the use of ingredients that are consistent with the Australian Dietary Guidelines (www.eatforhealth.gov.au) which seek to promote health and wellbeing and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

Remember to be mindful of seasonality and only buy fruit and vegetables that are in season. For more information visit www.freshf.com.au/fresh.html

The Australian Dietary Guidelines relevant to workplace catering are:

Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods:

- plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans
- enjoy fruits
- grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain, and/or high cereal fibre varieties such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley
- lean meat and poultry, fish, eggs, nuts and seeds, and alternatives such as legumes/beans
- milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat
- drink plenty of water.

Limit intake of foods and drinks containing saturated, added salt, added sugars and alcohol.

- limit intake of foods high in saturated fat
- limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt
- limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars
- limit intake of alcohol.

Breakfast or brunch

The importance of breakfast cannot be underestimated. After a period of rest, we need to 'break the fast' and provide our bodies with the energy to get through the day. Consider the following options for your next breakfast event.

Baked bread basket, using wholegrain bread

- egg and lean ham.

Breakfast burritos or wraps filled with

- an omelette with mushrooms and tomato relish
- beans in a spicy tomato sauce, reduced fat cheese and a mix of tinned corn and fresh capsicum
- lean ham and spinach
- scrambled eggs, tomato, chives and reduced fat cheese.

Cereal served with reduced fat milk or yoghurt, such as

- bircher muesli
- untoasted muesli
- wheat flakes or wheat breakfast biscuits.

English muffin (wholemeal) topped with

- baked beans and reduced fat cheese
- an egg
- spiced ricotta and stewed apple
- spreads such as diet jam or no added salt nut paste.

Fruit

- fresh fruit salad cups
- stewed spiced fruit cups with reduced fat yoghurt.

Frittata

- baked ricotta
- lean ham and vegetable
- vegetable and a small amount of goat's cheese.

Mini rolls or bagels filled with

- lean ham, spinach and tomato
- smoked salmon, reduced fat cream cheese and cucumber.

Mushrooms

- field mushroom baked with pesto and reduced fat feta cheese
- button mushrooms with chives and polenta toast (made with reduced fat milk or water and reduced fat cheese).

Pikelets served with

- banana and spiced ricotta
- berries and reduced fat yoghurt.

Smoothies, using reduced fat milk and yoghurt

- banana - frozen or very ripe bananas give the best results. Team with reduced fat vanilla yoghurt
- berry - use frozen berries and reduced fat strawberry yoghurt
- breakfast - adding muesli or oats to smoothies helps to thicken them and transforms them into a very substantial breakfast option.

Toast (wholegrain - plain or fruit)

- with spreads such as diet jam or no added salt nut paste
- with pesto and avocado or tomato and basil.



Light bites

If there is a significant amount of time between main meals, snacking will help to maintain your energy levels and overall alertness. The trick is to keep snacks light and healthy.

Dips

- carrot and cumin
- tomato salsa
- guacamole
- hummus
- mango salsa
- pesto
- ricotta and mint
- roasted capsicum
- rocket salsa
- tzatziki - reduced fat yoghurt and cucumber (serve with vegetable sticks and plain crackers)

Filo pastry parcels filled with

- chicken and pesto
- spinach & ricotta
- Moroccan-spiced beef, using a spice mix of ground cumin, coriander, cinnamon and ginger
- marinated mushrooms

Meat-based dishes:

- beef or chicken skewers served with a minted reduced fat yoghurt
- beef, lamb or chicken meatballs served with tomato relish

Pita bread

- oven-baked with a sprinkle of lemon pepper or small amount of parmesan cheese served with a variety of dips

Quiche (using ricotta instead of cream)

- baked ricotta
- lean ham and vegetable
- vegetable and a small amount of goat's cheese

Sushi, nigiri or sashimi

- choose raw fish or plain seafood, vegetable and meat varieties
- avoid battered or tempura-style fillings

Vietnamese rice paper rolls with

- chicken and vegetable
- prawn and vegetable
- vegetarian

Wonton cups (pre-baked)

wonton wrappers are available from Asian supermarkets. Spray a muffin tray with a mono or polyunsaturated oil and place a wonton wrapper in each muffin space. Bake in a moderate oven for approx. 10 minutes. When cool fill with:

- tomato and basil salsa
- chicken, avocado and pesto



Sandwich selections

A sandwich can be so much more than soggy tomato and limp lettuce. With the enormous variety of breads, rolls and wraps, there is bound to be a combination to suit even the fussiest of eaters. Try to serve different types of bread such as wholemeal, wholegrain, multigrain, soy and linseed, rye or high-fibre white options. If using spreads, opt for a mono or polyunsaturated margarine, reduced fat mayonnaise, avocado, mustard, pesto or mustard pickle.

Beef with

- roast pumpkin and caramelised onion
- tomato and lettuce
- wasabi mayonnaise, made with reduced fat mayonnaise

Cheese (reduced fat) with

- salad
- marinated vegetables, drained of oil

Chicken with

- avocado
- salad
- roasted capsicum and rocket
- pesto

Egg with

- curry powder and parsley
- lettuce
- lean ham and greens

Ham (lean) with

- salad and tomato relish
- wholegrain mustard and tomato

Smoked salmon with

- dill and reduced fat cream cheese
- with herbed ricotta

Tuna with

- spring onion and reduced fat cheese
- extra light sour cream and chives
- salad

Turkey with

- cranberry sauce and greens
- cranberry sauce and avocado

Vegetarian

- roast vegetables, reduced fat feta and rocket
- hummus and sun-dried tomatoes



Salad Sensations

Salads add so much colour and variety to meals while they also encourage us to keep the vegie count up!

Try the following suggestions:

Beetroot with

- lentil, spinach, reduced fat feta and walnut.

Coleslaw

- cabbage, carrots, shallots, capsicum and reduced fat mayonnaise
- Spanish inspired - purple cabbage, carrot and smoked paprika.

Corn

- tomato, coriander, red onion, avocado and lime.

Couscous

- chickpea, currants, orange and spring onion with lemon juice and vinegar
- roasted vegetable and reduced fat feta.

Fattoush

- cucumber, lettuce, tomato, fresh mint and sumac served with oven baked pita bread and reduced fat yoghurt.

Potato

- with an oil and mustard vinaigrette or a reduced fat yoghurt-based dressing.

Pasta or noodle

- rissoni with pesto and roast vegetables
- hokkein noodles with chicken, vegetables and a hoisin sauce dressing.

Rice (brown)

- with currants, tomatoes, spring onions and a no added salt soy and sesame dressing.

Tabouleh

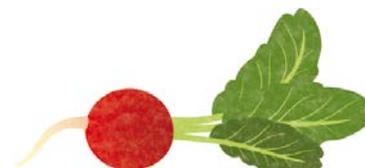
- burghul, parsley and tomato
- quinoa, mint, tomato and cucumber.

Watermelon

- reduced fat feta, red onion and fresh mint.

Zucchini

- roasted with ricotta and lemon.



Sweet Delights

There's always a serious sweet tooth among us but this doesn't have to be at the expense of our waistline.

Date and nut balls

- Use a combination of dates, nuts and coconut to create these snacks
- Any combination of dried fruit and nuts will work
- Ginger adds a zesty edge while cocoa can provide a chocolate hit but without the kilojoules.

Fruit

Fruit is always a fantastic go-to choice. Try these different suggestions:

- strawberry and mint fruit lollipops
- rockmelon, watermelon and honeydew fruit skewers
- frozen grapes
- pineapple pieces rolled in coconut
- whole fruit, which is easy to eat - bananas, mandarins, stone fruit or grapes.

Fruit crumble

- Top stewed or canned fruit (apple or apricot) with an oat, margarine, brown sugar and sunflower seed mix
- serve in individual portions with a dollop of reduced fat yoghurt
- these would also be a great breakfast option.

Fruit salad

- strawberries, fresh mint, black pepper and lemon juice
- cut up fresh fruit in season and squeeze lemon juice to keep colours bright and fresh.

Mini fruit muffins, using wholemeal flour

Over time muffins have become enormous in size and as a result, often contribute the energy (kilojoules) of a meal rather than a light snack.

Opt for mini muffins, (eg. 30g) which will provide less energy and be cheaper too!

- banana
- carrot and pineapple
- pear and cinnamon

Scones

These types of products are easily available from most local bakeries. Serve plain or with a thin spread of mono or polyunsaturated margarine. Alternatively, fresh scones are always a hit! Pass on the jam and cream though.

- date
- fruit or sultana
- plain
- pumpkin and cinnamon

Sweet popcorn

- plain, unflavoured popcorn teamed with sultanas, dried apricots, apples and dates. Serve in individual containers or paper bags.

Un-iced fruit buns, scrolls, logs or loafs

These types of products are often available from the local bakery. Choose the 'mini' options or slice up the scrolls and logs to share.

- apple scroll or log
- apricot
- coffee and date
- fruit bun
- mini scroll



Drinks

Drinks can easily lead to the introduction of unnecessary energy (kilojoules). Try the following options:

Water

- plain water, including plain mineral and soda water
- if plain water doesn't fit the bill, add lemon or orange slices

Tea and coffee

- offer a variety of coffee and tea options, including decaffeinated and herbal teas
- serve with reduced fat or skim milk

Small servings of 99% fruit juice

- fruit juice has the potential to add unnecessary sugar to the diet, so going for small servings (<250mL) of 99% varieties is the best option

Diet soft drink varieties

- like fruit juice, soft drink adds significant sugar to the diet. Opting for diet, low-joule or sugar-free options is your best bet

If alcohol is available, always ensure the responsible serving of alcohol. The Australian National Guidelines recommend:

- drinking no more than four standard drinks on a single occasion reduces the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion
- drinking no more than two standard drinks on any day reduces the lifetime risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury
- For more information see: www.alcohol.gov.au

More information

The provision of food and drink involves the consideration of a number of factors, including budget, time and specific requests for health and dietary requirements. A number of fact sheets have been developed to assist in better understanding the area of health and dietary requirements.



Allergens

With the incidence of food allergies on the rise, food service and catering staff need to be familiar with the foods and ingredients that may cause an allergic reaction.



Food Safety

Other than the information provided in this fact sheet, the Catering Guide does not specifically address food safety issues. However all food service and catering facilities are still required to fulfil their regulatory responsibilities for food supply under the Health Act 1911 and the Food Act 2008.



Better barbequing

The 'ole barbeque is an essential part of the Aussie lifestyle. Whether it's a Friday lunch get together or a celebratory sausage sizzle, the barbeque is readily used in both the home and the workplace.

As a cooking method, barbequing is a healthy choice. Where it falls down is the inclusion of high fat sausages and greasy burgers; not to mention the high salt sauces. So there are a couple of key things to remember next time you organise a workplace barbeque get together:

Cut the fat

- choose leaner cut of meats and trim any visible fat
- avoid high fat options such as chops and sausages
- opt for lean, skinless poultry (chicken, turkey)
- select reduced fat and salt sausages and burgers
 - try chicken or kangaroo alternatives
- kebabs are also a good option – skewered lean meat with vegetables and fruit add colour and variety.

Vegies

- Always include vegetarian options
 - veggie alternatives such as zucchini burgers or lentil patties
 - vegetarian soy-based sausages
 - barbeque corn cobs and serve with mustard
 - grill vegetables such as eggplant, mushrooms, zucchini or sweet potato
 - tinned pineapple rings, in natural juice, grilled on the barbeque are an easy and cheap option
 - a vegetable slice is also a tasty vegetarian alternative.

Go wholegrain

- swap white bread for wholegrain, wholemeal or multigrain options
- avoid serving with margarine or butter – there's already enough energy (kilojoules) in the meat and accompaniments.

Swap the sauce

- use only a small amount of mono or polyunsaturated spray oil, such as canola, olive or sunflower oil to cook the meat
- serve with no added salt sauces.

Serve with sides

- salads are a good way to bulk up what's on offer while also encouraging veggie consumption
- choose meat free salads if you already have meat on the barbeque
- the best option is homemade as supermarket potato, pasta salads and coleslaws tend to be high in fat
- Try the following suggestions:
 - Bean salad
 - four bean mix, red onion, celery and parsley with a vinegar
 - chickpeas, tomatoes, cucumber, reduced fat feta with lemon and oregano
 - Coleslaw
 - cabbage, carrots, shallots, capsicum and reduced fat mayonnaise
 - Spanish inspired – purple cabbage, carrot and smoked paprika
 - Couscous salad
 - chickpea, currants, orange and spring onion with a low or no-oil dressing
 - roasted vegetable and reduced fat feta

- Garden salad
- Potato salad
 - with a low or no oil and mustard dressing
 - with a reduced fat yoghurt-based dressing
- Rice salad
 - Using pre-cooked rice, which is widely available from supermarkets can cut down on preparation time
 - brown rice with currants, tomatoes, spring onions and a no added salt soy sauce and sesame oil dressing
 - Hawaiian: brown rice with corn kernels, celery, carrots, capsicum and pineapple pieces.

Something sweet?

Finish a barbeque with something sweet and fresh by offering fruit:

- Frozen fruit:
 - grapes
 - pineapple pieces
 - rolled in coconut
- Fruit salad
 - strawberries, fresh mint, black pepper and lemon juice
 - cut up fresh fruit in season and squeeze lemon juice to keep colours bright and fresh.



Healthier catering alternatives

More often than not we're presented with a sticky apricot danish, an abnormally large muffin and some sort of deep fried curry puff. And if you're lucky, a token fruit platter.

But workplace catering has the potential to contribute much more positively to our health and avoid adding to our waistlines.

Consider the usual catering suspects versus their more waistline-friendly counterparts.

The usual suspects	The healthier options	
Breakfast items		
Breakfast cereals e.g. corn flakes, rice puffs, sugar coated cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High fibre, wholegrain breakfast cereals eg wheat biscuits, bran flakes Porridge Bircher muesli cups Muesli 'trifles' (untoasted muesli with fruit with reduced fat yoghurt) Fruit crumble cups 	
Eggs - fried in or scrambled with fat or oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eggs fried on a non-stick surface without fat or oil Scrambled eggs made with reduced-fat milk Poached or boiled eggs 	
Fried sides - bacon, sausages, hash browns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean bacon, grilled or cooked on a non-stick surface without fat or oil Reduced fat/lean sausages eg turkey or chicken Oven baked hash browns Baked beans (no added salt) Grilled tomatoes 	
Pancakes with butter and maple syrup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pikelets topped with whipped ricotta and stewed fruit 	
Pastries (sweet or savoury)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini sweet or savoury muffins Banana bread Bacon and egg tarts made using bread as the base Breakfast wraps with reduced fat fillings eg lean ham or bacon, spinach, tomato or mushrooms, beans, eggs and reduced fat cheese Toasted sandwiches with reduced fat fillings 	

The usual suspects

The healthier options

<p>White bread served with butter and condiments</p>	<p>Wholegrain, wholemeal, multigrain, high-fibre white, rye, sourdough, lavash and other flat breads, bagels, wholemeal crumpets, and plain foccacias served with margarine and / or condiments</p> <p>Fruit bread served with margarine</p>
<p>White crumpets, English muffins</p>	<p>Wholegrain crumpets, English muffins</p>
<p>Snack items</p>	
<p>Biscuits, cakes, muffins, pastries, slices</p>	<p>Plain or fruit-based biscuits</p> <p>Un-iced fruit-based cakes</p> <p>Date or nut balls</p> <p>Fruit scones with margarine</p> <p>Mini fruit muffins</p> <p>Fruit (kebabs, platter, salad, whole)</p>
<p>Curry puffs, samosas</p>	<p>Oven baked varieties</p> <p>Grilled marinated skewers (skinless chicken, lean beef, prawns, vegetables, tofu, haloumi)</p>
<p>Dim sims</p>	<p>Steamed dim sims</p> <p>Steamed wontons</p>
<p>Pies, sausage rolls and pasties</p>	<p>Reduced fat and salt varieties</p> <p>Small size pastries</p> <p>Sandwiches with lean meat/cheese and salad</p>
<p>Potato chips and wedges</p>	<p>Oven baked varieties</p> <p>Toasted pita bread with salsa, guacamole, pesto or bean-based dips</p> <p>Mini toasts with bruschetta topping</p> <p>Mini pizzas with reduced fat toppings</p>
<p>Spring rolls</p>	<p>Sushi with lean, uncoated fillings</p> <p>Vietnamese rice paper rolls</p>
<p>Quiche</p>	<p>Frittata</p>



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