

Healthier Food and Beverages at Meetings and Events

Meetings whether at work, church or organizations can always be places where we are tempted to provide snacks and food that are not always healthy. Many times these food choices can be high in sugar, fat and sodium. These are tips from the Center for Disease Control that you can do to encourage healthier foods and beverage choices:

Offer a variety of colorful fruit and vegetables. Make sure that half of all food served is fruits and vegetables and are prepared and served without adding high amounts of fats, sugar or sodium. Offer beans and legumes such as black beans and chick peas in hummus or dips.

Offer 100 percent whole grain produces in a variety of forms. Offer whole-grain breads, rolls, crackers and tortillas. Offer brown rice, quinoa and other whole grains in salads and side dishes. Offer whole-grain breakfast options such as oatmeal.

Offer smaller portion sizes and prepare food in ways that reduce added calories. If offering meat, serve 3 ounces or smaller. Offer meat, fish or poultry prepared in healthy ways such as baked, broiled steamed or grilled. Offer cheeses in smaller portions ½ inch squares or smaller.

Do not offer foods that contain trans-fatty acids. Check labels to ensure produces have 0 grams of trans fats. Offer foods labeled as having 0 grams of trans fat and avoid offering foods with partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list. Limit foods that contain solid fats such as butter, which contains saturated fat and partially hydrogenated oils, which contain synthetic trans fats.

Offer foods that are reduced or low in salt and sodium. Offer foods flavored with herbs and spices rather than salt. Choose packaged items that are labeled “low or reduced sodium.” Offer meal items with less than 450 mg. of sodium per serving.

Offer snacks that are low in calorie and high in nutrients. Focus on nutrient-dense foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and seed with low or not salt or sugar. Offer 100% whole grain chips and healthy dips such as salsa, guacamole or bean dips. Offer snack items with less than 230 mg. of sodium per serving.

Limit sweet treats. Offer a selection of apples, pears, grapes and other fruit, as a fruit salad or added in desserts to reduce or replace sugar. Offer frozen 100% juice bars or sorbets instead of high-calorie desserts. Offer only whole grain and low-sugar baked produces. Offer low or non-fat yogurt either plain or with fruit with minimized added sugar. Offer smaller size or mini desserts to limit calories.

Discourage the practice or “dumping” or leaving left overs of less healthy foods such as donuts, cakes and candy in common areas.

Offer water, tea and low-calorie beverages. Always offer water as a beverage. Offer drinks with no more than 40 calories per 12 ounce serving. Include water with lemon, coffee, tea, plain seltzer with a splash of 100% juic. Provide 12 ounce or smaller beverage cups.