

HEALTHY MENUS

As an organization focused on improving the quality of America's health and healthcare, the National Quality Forum's policy is to provide healthy food and beverages at all of its meetings to encourage healthy eating.

NQF encourages other organizations to adopt and implement similar policies.

Why healthy menus? A healthy population is central to America's social and economic well-being. However, poor lifestyle choices and inconsistent preventive services have led to a decline in the health of many Americans.

National Priorities Partnership has made population health one of its six national priorities, targeting this goal: All Americans will adopt the most important healthy lifestyle behaviors known to promote health. NQF's healthy menu policy supports this goal.

Sixty percent of American deaths are attributable to behavioral factors, social circumstances, and physical environmental exposures¹. A population with a greater awareness of personal health and smarter lifestyle choices will drastically reduce chronic disease and allow for a more efficient and affordable healthcare system.

Food at NQF meetings. It is NQF's policy to only hold meetings or events at facilities that agree to abide by our healthy foods policy.

General guidelines for NQF-hosted events:

- serve lower-calorie and lower-fat foods
- serve low sodium foods
- serve fruits and vegetables whenever possible
- serve small portions (e.g. cut bagels in halves or quarters, etc.)
- include a vegetarian option at all meals
- eliminate high fat, high sugar, high sodium and low fiber items at meetings, such as:
 - cakes, donuts, pastries, cookies, regular muffins
 - soda and fruit drinks (less than 100% juice)
 - chips
 - fried foods
 - cream-based sauces and soups

All events and meetings sponsored or supported by NQF will include the following healthy items:

- **fruits and/or vegetables**
examples of such items include fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits (such as grapefruit, oranges, apples, raisins or 100% fruit juices), and fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables
- **lowfat milk and dairy products**
examples include skim/nonfat or 1% milk; lowfat and fat-free yogurt; soy milk and yogurt
- **foods made from grains (like wheat, rice, and oats), especially whole grains**
examples include low-fat whole-wheat crackers, bread and pasta; whole grain ready-to-eat cereal, low fat baked tortilla chips, pita bread

¹ Kindig DA, Asada Y, Booske B, A population health framework for setting national and state health goals, JAMA, 2008;299(17):2081-2083.

Guidance for Facilities Hosting NQF Events/Meetings

Menus should be healthy. Examples of healthy food and beverage options include the following:

Beverages:

- water – bottled and spring water
- 100% fruit or vegetable juices – unsweetened
- milk – non-fat, low-fat (1%), or soy
- diet sodas
- coffee – regular and decaf
- tea – regular and herb, hot or non-sweetened iced

Breakfast:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fresh and dried fruit • yogurt – non-fat, low-fat, or soy • bagels – whole-grain, small or cut in half or quarters • muffins – whole-grain, low-fat, small or mini • breads and toasts – whole grain, low-sugar, low-fat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • granola bars – low-fat, low sugar, high fiber • light cream cheese, low sugar fruit spreads, jam or jelly • lean meats – fat-free turkey or chicken • all-natural peanut butter • eggs and egg whites • oatmeal |
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Breaks and snacks:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fresh/dried fruit • raw vegetables • cheese cubes or slices • pretzels – plain, whole grain • tortilla chips – baked • popcorn – low-fat • crackers, flavored rice cakes – whole grain, low-fat | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • granola bars • hummus with pita bread wedges • low-fat yogurt dip, fat-free or low-fat dressing, salsa, bean dip • unsalted dry roasted or natural nuts • healthy trail mix (made with nuts, dried fruits, whole grain cereals, etc.) |
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Lunch:

- low-fat entrees – broiled, baked, grilled or steamed items
- lean meats, chicken, turkey, fish and/or shellfish
- vegetables, fresh or cooked, without butter or cream sauce
- salads made with tofu, beans, and/or raw or cooked vegetables
- fat-free or low-fat dressings on the side
- sandwich bar with whole grain breads, low-fat meats and cheeses, and grilled vegetables
- vegetable wraps
- breads or rolls – whole grain
- fresh fruit
- lower-fat/lower calorie desserts- fresh fruit with low-fat fruit yogurt dip, angel food cake with fruit topping

Adapted from a model policy of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials. ASTHO notes: "To encourage a healthy lifestyle among their staff, many state public health agencies have implemented healthy foods policies. To demonstrate alignment with these health promotion initiatives, ASTHO has adopted a healthy foods policy which may be used as a model for public health organizations and others to promote healthy eating habits among their personnel and meeting participants."