

Tips for Successfully Implementing Healthy Food Guidelines

- **Partnerships** – vendors, the Department of Health, and other stakeholders (General Services Administration, health professionals, wellness directors, representatives from a variety of state agencies, community partners, advocacy organizations) could form partnerships to help with education, taste tests, promotions, and other activities to help ensure healthy food guidelines are successfully implemented.



- **Provide Education and Promote Program** – provide education to leadership and employees about the benefits of offering and choosing healthy foods and beverages. Use available methods to promote healthy options, cultivate support for the program, and promote educational events, taste testing, etc. Promotional methods might include speaking at staff meetings, posters, flyers, e-cards, emails to staff, newsletter articles, postings on bulletin boards, or signage near vending machines, cafeterias, or concession stands. Work with leadership from outset for strong buy-in and have messages from leadership or leadership's signature on promotional materials and messages.
- **Hold Taste Tests** – offer taste testing of a variety of snack, beverage, or meal options that meet the nutrition standards. Have survey cards handy and tally up votes. Share results of taste testing and keep vending machines, cafeterias, and concession stands stocked with preferred items. Note: preferences may be location specific.
- **Administer Online Surveys** – conduct online surveys in addition to or in lieu of in-person taste testing. Find out which products and meals customers enjoy, do not prefer, and which healthy foods they eat at home. Use online surveys as opportunities to promote healthy options.



- **Announce Healthy Food Program to Community** – share information with the public to increase acceptance of new healthier options and make healthier eating the norm. Share information with the public through press releases, social media, etc.
- **Phased-In** – if a high percentage of healthier options does not seem feasible at first, a phased-in approach over a number of years might be a reasonable approach.

If starting with less than 100% healthy foods and beverages, try these strategies to support the healthy options:

- **Product Selection** – identify products that currently are not selling well and replace those with healthy options.
- **Price** – beverages and foods that meet nutrition standards should be priced competitively (e.g., at or ideally, below) to similar items that do not meet the nutrition standards. Studies have shown that pricing strategies can increase healthy purchases without reducing revenue.



- **Placement** – beverages and foods that meet nutrition standards should be as or more visible than similar items that do not meet the nutrition standards (for example, they should be closer to eye level or at the beginning of the buffet line).
- **Promotion** – promotional space on vending machines (e.g., sides and front panel), including but not limited to language and graphics, should promote only products that meet the nutrition standards. Use signage in or near the cafeteria or concession stand to promote healthy options.
- **Descriptive Names** – in cafeterias and concession stands, label entrees and sides with descriptive names, such as “Tuscan Grilled Chicken with Rosemary” and “Roasted Carrots with Fresh Tarragon,” as opposed to “Grilled Chicken” and “Carrots.”
- **Presentation** – present healthy options in an attractive way with adequate lighting.

For more information, contact the Center for Science in the Public Interest at 202-777-8352 or nutritionpolicy@cspinet.org