

## Menu Planning for Healthy Meetings, Conferences and Events

*The leadership of the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Oregon Health Authority are moving practices forward to create a culture of health and wellness in our agencies. The Healthy Meetings, Conferences and Events Policy accomplishes this by helping the agencies align our practices with our values. The policy demonstrates our leadership on health issues to partners around the state, ensures appropriate use of public funding, and supports widely shared employee goals for health and wellness.*

### Key points to remember:

**Food will not be provided using DHS and OHA funds for meetings under three hours, unless the meeting occurs during a regular meal time. If food is provided:**

- ✓ Select and offer choices of foods that are low in fat, sodium, and added sugar
- ✓ Align as much as possible with the *USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans* by focusing on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and lean protein
- ✓ Provide a vegetarian option and check for additional dietary needs
- ✓ Refrigerate perishable leftovers within two hours; use within four days
- ✓ Promote food safety by washing hands with soap and water before and after handling and/or eating food
- ✓ Support sustainability by providing local, seasonal foods; using tap water, not bottled water; and setting up recycling

### Healthy Menu Suggestions

#### Breakfast

- Yogurt with no added sugar, served with fresh fruits like banana and strawberries, and almonds or walnuts
- Scrambled egg sandwich on toasted whole-wheat bread with lettuce and tomato, served with fresh fruit salad
- Whole grain cereal buffet served with low-fat, non-fat and soy milk options, along with dried fruit and nuts



- Breakfast burrito with scrambled eggs, egg whites or egg substitute, filled with onions, peppers, black beans, and salsa, wrapped in a whole grain tortilla
- Low-sugar muffins or whole-grain bagels served with peanut butter and low-fat cream cheese options
- Oatmeal buffet with dried fruit, almonds, and sunflower seeds served with low-fat, non-fat and soy milk options



## Lunch

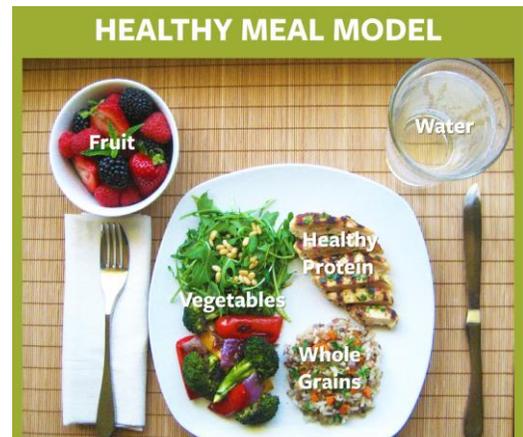
- Sandwich on whole-wheat bread with lean turkey, lettuce and tomatoes, served with red pepper strips, cucumber or carrot spears, and a piece of fruit such as an orange or apple
- Whole grain wrap with hummus, lettuce, cucumber and tomato, served with baked chips or pretzels and a piece of fruit
- Homestyle minestrone soup with kidney beans, corn, carrots, and tomatoes and served with whole wheat roll and salad
- Hearty spinach salad topped with lean protein like grilled chicken, chopped almonds or white beans, and flavored with mandarin oranges or other citrus and vinaigrette
- Grilled tempeh and vegetable skewers with a side dish of hearty seasoned grain like Mediterranean cous cous mixed with asparagus or lentils mixed with carrots
- Baked potato bar (regular or sweet potatoes) with a variety of toppings like plain low-fat yogurt mixed with chives, steamed broccoli or greens, chopped green onions, crumbled feta cheese, and chili beans



## Dinner

- Thai tofu salad rolls, skewers of lean meat such as pork or chicken, low fat peanut sauce on the side, and a salad with lime vinaigrette
- Grilled portobello mushroom or grilled chicken served over whole grain pasta or polenta with sautéed zucchini and marinara sauce, served with a green salad

- Baked salmon with lentils, quinoa or other whole grain, with roasted root vegetables like beets, squash or potatoes, served with salad
- Homestyle jambalaya made with low-fat turkey kielbasa and brown rice, or hearty vegetarian white bean stew with tomato, carrot, greens and sweet corn, served with whole grain roll
- Crispy oven-baked “fried” chicken, baked potato and sautéed green beans or shredded cole slaw with a vinaigrette dressing
- Burrito bar with grilled chicken or lean pulled pork with vegetarian black beans, sautéed onions and peppers, steamed corn, low-fat cheddar cheese, brown rice, homemade salsa, smashed avocado, tomatoes and lettuce



### Healthy Drink Suggestions

- Always provide water, preferably in pitchers. For a flavorful and pretty effect, add sliced lemons, cucumbers or oranges
- Assorted tea tray including decaffeinated options
- Coffee and decaffeinated coffee
- Iced tea without sweetener
- Low-fat or non-fat milk, and soy milk option
- Sparkling water or fruit-infused seltzers



**Did you know?** There are: 7 ½ teaspoons of sugar in a 12 oz serving of orange juice, 8 ½ teaspoons of sugar in a 12 oz serving of sweet tea, 10 ¼ teaspoons of sugar in a 12 oz serving of cola!

## Special Occasion and Celebration Suggestions

- Cut fruit or fruit kabobs, served with optional yogurt or dark chocolate sauce
- Parfait with low-fat granola, low-fat yogurt, and fruit
- Unsalted nuts such as almonds, hazelnuts, pecans, pistachios and walnuts, mixed with dried cranberries
- Airpopped popcorn with herb seasonings



### Other Serving Tips:

- Offer salad dressing and condiments on the side
- Serve recommended portion sizes: lean meat-3oz., cheese-1½ oz., rice-½ cup
- Offer the healthiest options, such as the salad, earliest in a food line
- Cut sandwiches, wraps and bagels in half. People can go back if they want another half
- Planning a buffet meal gives people the option whether to return or not, rather than have a larger than desired portion placed in front of them
- For boxed lunches, replace potato chips with low-fat, low-salt crackers
- For boxed lunches, replace the cookie with dried fruit or an apple
- Don't include dessert

## Getting Started with Vendors and Caterers

Meet with others in your organization who have successfully planned healthy meetings. Wellness committees can be great resources. Once you have identified caterers, vendors and venues that can accommodate healthy eating goals, work with them on menu planning. You can ask for detailed menus, and most will offer tastings of food. Food service professionals should be well-acquainted with healthier cooking techniques – like baking, broiling, grilling or roasting instead of deep frying, for example – and will work hard to accommodate your request and gain your business. You just need to start the conversation!