

October 2016

During the 2016 legislative session, Act 113 was passed and signed into law. This Act requires that all foods and beverages purchased, sold, served or otherwise provided by the State of Vermont, or on behalf of the State of Vermont, will meet food procurement standards set forth by the commissioner of health. Food procurement standards for cafés, cafeterias, catering services and concession stands in state parks and historic sites are posted on the Vermont Department of Health's website:

[http://healthvermont.gov/admin/about/documents/healthy\\_food\\_standards\\_implementation.pdf](http://healthvermont.gov/admin/about/documents/healthy_food_standards_implementation.pdf)



## Rationale for the Standards

Three health behaviors – lack of physical activity, poor diet and tobacco use – lead to four chronic diseases – diabetes, heart disease, lung disease and cancer, which account for more than 50% of deaths in Vermont. In Vermont, 25% of adults are obese, and an additional 36% are overweight. As an employer and host to state facilities and state-sponsored meetings, it is imperative that we lead the effort to *make the healthy choice the easy choice* by providing healthy food options.

In 2015, state employees slated to move back to the Waterbury campus were surveyed for a Vermont Certified Public Manager project. The survey asked about food preferences to be offered at the café in the new building. With a 47% response rate, 89% of employees said they preferred healthy food in their diet always, or as often as possible, 75% said they would be willing to spend more money for healthier options if they were available in the building, and 72% said they prefer locally grown or prepared items. Similar to other dietary needs related to food allergies, religious or cultural restrictions, food offerings at state buildings and events must include healthy choices for those who want them.

The Vermont Healthy Food Standards are based on the following guiding principles:

- Emphasize fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Reduce overall sodium content.
- Minimize use of processed foods that contain added sugar and sodium.
- Recommend healthy cooking techniques such as baking, roasting, broiling, grilling, poaching, steaming and stir-frying.
- Serve smaller portions if high-calorie items are provided – e.g. half sandwiches or bagels.
- Serve healthy local options when possible.
- Make water available at every meal.

These standards were in effect in the cafés and cafeterias in state buildings before Act 113. These venues include the Statehouse cafeteria and the cafés at 133 State Street in Montpelier, in Waterbury, and at the Health Department and Costello Courthouse in Burlington. These standards do not apply to private vendors in buildings where the state rents space. Vermont State Parks that have concession stands had already planned to provide healthy options at their stands during the summer of 2016.

## Implementing the Standards

The approach of the Healthy Food Standards is simple: ensure that healthy choices are available at all times. This can be accomplished by offering fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat and low-sodium options, water, 100% fruit juice and low-fat milk. Such healthy choices are already available at the cafés and cafeterias in state office buildings. Hotels and other conference venues as well as many local catering businesses that host or cater state functions have already been working with these guidelines, so implementation is simple. Sample menus and other resources are available at the end of this document.

Technical assistance is also available from the Health Department's Physical Activity and Nutrition program. Contact Sue Kamp at [susan.kamp@vermont.gov](mailto:susan.kamp@vermont.gov), or call 802-951-4006.

To monitor compliance with the Healthy Food Standards, the Health Department uses the attached prior approval form. This form can be replicated for your state agency's use, something similar can be developed, or there may already be a process in your agency to check and approve orders before they are placed. It is each agency's responsibility to implement a monitoring process to ensure compliance with these standards.

## Catering Meetings

In the event that a state agency is hosting a meal during a meeting or conference, the Healthy Food Standards will be used to guide menu choices.

Meeting planners should take the following steps to comply with the standards:

- 1) Make selections using the menu provided by the caterer or venue.
  - A. Use the Healthy Food Standards as guidance, making sure that both the foods and beverages supplied include healthy items that are low in fat, sugar and sodium.
  - B. If you don't see what you need on the menu, discuss it with the caterer or venue. They should be able to supply this food.
- 2) Use your state agency's approval system for ordering food.
- 3) Once approved, the food order can be placed.

## Delivered Meals for Meetings

### Continental Breakfast:

- Whole grain bagels, cut in half to allow for smaller portions
- Low-fat cream cheese, no-sugar-added jam, natural peanut butter
- Non-fat yogurt
- Low-fat granola
- Fresh fruit salad or whole fruit
- Coffee service, water

### Lunch:

- Platter of half sandwiches made with low-sodium meats, whole grain breads and wraps and low-fat spreads – include a vegetarian option
- Tossed green salad
- Whole fresh fruit or fruit salad
- Selection of water, 100% juice and unsweetened iced tea

### OR:

- Meat tray with a selection of low-sodium meats and cheeses, lettuce, tomato, onion
- Hummus
- Low-fat mayonnaise, mustard
- Selection of whole grain breads and wraps
- Whole grain pasta or grain-based salad with low-fat dressing
- Whole fresh fruit or fruit salad
- Selection of water, 100% juice and unsweetened iced tea

## Hotel or Conference Center Menus

### Continental Breakfast:

- Seasonal fruit
- Whole grain breads or bagels, cut in half
- Natural peanut butter, low-fat cream cheese, low sugar or 100% fruit jams
- Low-fat granola
- Oatmeal
- Low-fat yogurt
- 100% juice
- Coffee service, including low-fat milk
- Water

**Lunch:**

- Salad buffets: request toppings (chicken, tofu, cheese, tec.) on the side, low-fat dressings on the side

**Deli Buffets:**

- Low-fat/low-sodium deli meats
- Low-fat cheeses
- Vegetarian options should be provided: grilled vegetables, hummus
- Whole grain breads, wraps or rolls
- Low-fat/low-sodium condiments
- Salads made with low-fat dressing or dressing on the side

Soups: choose broth-based (not cream-based) soups that are low in sodium

**Hot Entrées:**

- Grilled chicken with whole grain starch and steamed vegetables
- Baked fish (scrod, haddock) with green salad and whole grain starch

**Dessert:**

- Fresh fruit kabobs with dark chocolate drizzle
- Fruit salad
- Berry parfait with low-fat yogurt
- Whole fruit

Selection of water, 100% juice and unsweetened iced tea

**Break:**

- Fresh fruit platter or whole fruit
- Fresh raw vegetable platter with low-fat, low-sodium dip
- Coffee/tea service, water, seltzer, 100% juices

## Further Information and Resources

### Sodium

The average American diet includes too much sodium – 90% of the sodium we eat is in the form of salt. More than 75% of this sodium comes from pre-packaged foods and restaurant meals. Eating too much sodium increases the risk of high blood pressure. High blood pressure can lead to heart disease and stroke, the nation's first and third leading causes of death.

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020* recommends that people consume less than 2300 mg of sodium a day – about 1 teaspoon of salt. People with high blood pressure, diabetes or kidney disease, people age 51 or older, or African Americans of any age, should consume no more than 1500 mg of sodium a day – about 2/3 teaspoon of salt.

Tips for reducing sodium:

- Salt is often in foods that are not considered savory or salty, such as: dairy products, especially cheeses; cereals and instant hot cereals; bread and condiments. Read labels and choose items with 200 mg of sodium or less.
- Avoid processed products whenever possible. If this is not possible, read labels to find the lowest sodium versions.
- Select whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, lower-sodium dairy products, whole grains, dry and fresh beans and peas, unsalted nuts, eggs, and minimally processed meats whenever possible.
- Avoid pickled and brined foods, and read labels to limit portions when offering olives.
- Let your caterers and suppliers know you are interested in lower sodium products.

### **Dairy**

Most people over the age of 2 should choose fat-free or low-fat milk and other dairy products such as yogurt. This includes lactose-free or lactose-reduced products and fortified soy beverages.

### **Whole Grains**

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020* recommends that half of all grains consumed be whole grains. Shifting from refined to whole-grain versions of commonly consumed foods – such as from white to 100% whole wheat breads, white to whole grain pasta, and white to brown rice – increases whole grains in the diet. Review the ingredient list on packaged foods to select foods that have whole grains listed as the first grain ingredient. Reduce refined grain desserts and sweet snacks such as cakes, cookies and pastries, which are also high in added sugars, solid fats, or both, and are a common source of excess calories.

### **Sugar**

Healthy eating patterns limit added sugars. Less than 10% of daily calories should come from added sugars. Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared. This does not include naturally occurring sugars such as those consumed as part of milk and fruits. Choose beverages with no added sugars, such as water, 100% juice, low-fat or fat-free milk. Reduce portion sizes on desserts and sweet snacks, and choose no-sugar-added versions of canned fruit, fruit sauces and yogurt.

**Breakfast:**

- Fruit pieces or whole fruit (offer seasonal, local fruit whenever possible), do not serve juice
- Low-fat or non-fat yogurt
- Small muffins or large muffins cut in half – look for whole-grain muffins
- Whole grain bread and/or whole grain English muffins
- Mini whole grain bagels, or larger bagels cut in half
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Low-fat granola or granola bars
- Low-fat or whipped cream cheese spread
- Unsweetened cereals
- 1% or fat-free milk
- Coffee/tea
- Spreads that can be offered: single servings of peanut butter, jam, jelly, low-fat cream cheese

**Lunch:**

- Vegetable-based soups
- Half-sandwiches or wraps  
Whole grain bread, lean meats, low-fat cheese, variety of veggie toppings – include vegetable sandwiches or wraps (whole grain) such as:
  - Southwestern bean and vegetable
  - Tomato and basil
  - Peanut butter and jelly
  - Roasted vegetables
  - Hummus
- Mixed green salad
- Hummus
- Whole or cut fruit
- Whole grain pasta or rice salad (made with light vinaigrette or low-fat dressing)
- Protein salads (prepared with low-fat mayonnaise)
  - Egg salad
  - Tuna salad
  - Chicken salad
- Veggie chips or low-salt/baked chips

### **Healthy Incentives: How to say thank you! I appreciate the work you did.**

Incentivizing employees is an important part of supervision. Employees need to know that supervisors notice and recognize their day-to-day efforts, especially when they go above and beyond their job duties. Here are some ideas for ways to provide incentives and thank employees that will help them feel good about their work, but not add inches to their waistline.

#### Non-Food Incentives:

Celebrate a job well done. Even more than money, an incentive motivates employee performance.

- Recognize one employee per week or month. Create a simple "ABCD" card to be given when someone goes "Above the Call of Duty".
- Honor employees at staff meetings. Recognize someone at the start of every staff meeting.
- Use social media to publicly recognize a job well done.
- Devote space on a bulletin board or poster to employee recognition. Encourage other employees to post thank you cards, too.
- Feature employee recognition in a newsletter.
- Have a designated dress casual day.
- Give a small plant or flowers, or low cost books.
- Give stress balls or other trinkets
- Have a manager swap task-for-task with a supervisee for a day.

#### Healthy Food Incentives:

- Smoothies at staff meeting or make your own in the kitchen with low-fat or non-fat ingredients
- Fruit tray
- Veggie tray
- Potluck featuring healthy foods
  - Provide sample recipes
  - Challenge staff to find low-calorie recipes
- Low-fat yogurt parfait potluck celebration
- Cater a healthy lunch

#### **REFERENCES:**

- *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020*: <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines-americans>
- State of Washington *Healthy Nutrition Guidelines Implementation Guide for Agencies, Sites and Vendors*: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/340-224-HealthyNutritionGuidelines.pdf>

October 2016

REQUEST FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

Request for prior approval is required for conferences, staff meetings and training sessions when costs are involved. Please submit this form to the Business Office two weeks prior to the meeting date. Include form with payment to Business Office.

DIVISION: \_\_\_\_\_ CONTACT PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE #: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OR TYPE OF MEETING: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF MEETING: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME AND LOCATION OF FACILITY: \_\_\_\_\_

ARE THERE ANY ADEQUATE STATE-OWNED FACILITIES AVAILABLE? \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING:

State Employees: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-state Employees: \_\_\_\_\_

COST OF MEETING:

ROOM CHARGE: \_\_\_\_\_

MEALS: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Circle meal: breakfast, lunch, dinner.)

Group rate of \_\_\_\_\_ a person  
OR

Individually reimburse on expense account at \_\_\_\_\_ a person

MILEAGE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

LODGING \$ \_\_\_\_\_

HONORARIUMS: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

List names: \_\_\_\_\_

: \_\_\_\_\_

OTHER: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Explain: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL APPROXIMATE COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDS: \_\_\_\_\_

PROGRAM CHARGED TO (cost center): \_\_\_\_\_

HEALTHY FOOD STANDARDS:

To ensure and to promote healthy eating during state sponsored meetings and conference, please use the following standards: (recommended menus for lunches can be found on VDH Intranet).

Beverages

No sugar sweetened beverages (This includes any beverages with added sugar or other caloric sweeteners such as high fructose corn syrup, including soda, sports drinks, fruit drinks, teas, flavored/enhanced waters, and energy drinks). Provide only 1% or fat-free milk, and drinking water should always be available.

Food

-A fruit (not fruit juice) or vegetable choice is included -When grains are served a whole grain food is included.

-Meals should include a lean meat, poultry, fish, or low-fat vegetarian choice.

-Offer half or reduced-size portions of sandwiches or entrees.

-Serve lower fat versions of condiments (e.g. dressings, mayo, cream cheese, or sour cream)

In keeping with a healthy eating, Danish, Pastries, Desserts (including cookies), or deep-fried foods are not allowed.

Signature of Division Director or Representative Date

Signature of Commissioner or Representative Date