

This Healthy Catering Guide provides practical suggestions to help your organisation cater healthy food and drink.

This information is based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines in addition to Cancer Council Queensland's recommendations for reducing cancer risk.

You can use this resource as:

- A guideline for event caterers.
- Part of tendering requirements for new caterers.
- A checklist for purchasing food for functions, events and meetings.
- A checklist for reviewing current food and beverage options available at your organisation.

Organising catering for a function or event? Aim for the following:

- ☐ Always have a healthy alternative available such as a fruit platter, fresh wholemeal salad sandwiches or wraps, cold water, tea, coffee and low fat milk.
- ☐ Cater for varying dietary requirements for example gluten free, vegetarian and dairy free.
- ☐ Include plenty of plant based foods such as fruit, vegetables, wholegrain breads and cereals.
- ☐ Use moderate amounts of lean protein for example lean meat, skinless chicken, fish, eggs or legumes.
- ☐ Provide low fat dairy options for example low fat milk and cheese.
- ☐ Limit discretionary (junk) foods which are high in sugar, saturated fat and sodium (salt).
- ☐ Avoid processed meats (bacon, salami, ham and sausages) and sugar sweetened beverages such as soft drink, energy drinks and cordials.
- ☐ Limit alcohol or create an alcohol free event.
- ☐ Always practice safe food handling and storage.
- ☐ Try to avoid food wastage by catering for the correct amount of people and storing leftovers appropriately.



Small changes make a big difference when providing nutritious and tasty catering options. Use this table as a guideline:

Category	Recommended	Not recommended
Fruit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All types of fresh, frozen or dried fruit. Canned fruit in natural juice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit canned fruit in syrup. Limit sugar coated fruits e.g. glace fruits.
Vegetables <i>Fruit and vegetables should be included in most menu items.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All types of fresh or frozen vegetables. Canned vegetables should be salt reduced and rinsed. All types of legumes and lentils. Pickled or deli-style vegetables (e.g. sundried tomatoes) should only be used in small amounts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid deep fried varieties such as chips and hash browns. Avoid creamy coleslaws, dressings and butter sauces. Avoid bacon or processed meat in salads or vegetable dishes.
Diary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced fat and sugar yogurt. Reduced fat cheeses (ricotta, cheddar, cottage cheese). Reduced fat plain milk and alternatives for example soy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid cream, ice-cream and full fat soft cheeses. Limit flavoured milk products (maximum serve size should be 500ml).
Lean meat and alternatives <i>For ideas on creating a healthy BBQ refer to CCQ's 'Rethink the snag' resource.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lean meats with fat trimmed. Skinless chicken. Fish (fresh or tinned). Eggs. Unsalted nuts. Tofu, lentils and falafels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid processed meats (ham, bacon prosciutto, salami and sausages etc.) Avoid tinned meats such as corned beef or Spam.
Breads and Cereals <i>Wholegrain and wholemeal brown varieties are best!</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Untoasted muesli and oats. Wholegrain cereals (4 or 5 stars) e.g. Weet-Bix, All Bran, porridge or puffed rice. Wholemeal pasta, brown rice, cous cous, quinoa, rice noodles, egg noodles. Salt reduced wholegrain crackers and rice crackers. Wholemeal, wholegrain, white high fibre or rye bread, wraps, pita, English muffins or rolls. Raisin or fruit toast. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit refined grains – those made from white flour where possible.
Baked goods <i>Offer fresh fruit alongside baked goods.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low fat mini muffins or muffin halves for example savoury vegetable muffins or fruit muffins. Crepes, pikelets or pumpkin scones. Fruit or vegetable based cakes without icing such as carrot cake or banana bread. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit butter, cream or chocolate in baked goods. Avoid high fat baked goods (croissants and danish pastries). Limit pastry products. Avoid sugary toppings and icing on baked goods.

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Spreads, sauces, oils and dressings <i>Aim to use healthy food preparation methods - steaming, light grilling, oven baking, poaching and stir frying.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hummus, avocado, eggplant dip, low fat cheeses, honey, chutney, pesto, relish, salt reduced soy sauce. • Fresh herbs and spices. • Prepare dressings from ingredients such as olive oil, balsamic vinegar, lemon juice, herbs and spices. • Salt reduced tomato and BBQ sauce. • Poly – or mono – unsaturated oils and butter for example olive, canola, sunflower and peanut oil and margarines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit butter and margarine. • Avoid creamy, full fat dressings and dips.
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unflavoured water (still, sparkling or soda). • 100 per cent fruit juice. • Tea or coffee with low fat milk. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcoholic beverages. • Sugar sweetened beverages such as soft drink, energy drinks and cordial.

Sample healthy menu ideas

Breakfast

Cold options

- Range of high fibre cereals for example untoasted muesli, bran and porridge served with low fat milk, yoghurt and fruit.
- Unsalted nuts and seeds.
- Fresh, dried or poached fruit.



Hot options

- Wholegrain or wholemeal toast with spreads.
- Raisin or fruit toast.
- Wholemeal pancakes/ crepes with fresh fruit.
- Breakfast wraps with avocado, egg, mushrooms, spinach and tomato.
- Omelettes or scrambled eggs with salmon or chicken and a variety of vegetables.



Morning/ afternoon tea

- Fruit and vegetable platter – a mix of fresh seasonal and dried fruit, vegetables cut into sticks, low fat dips (e.g. hummus, tzatziki, beetroot), low fat cheeses, unsalted nuts and seeds.
- Wholegrain crackers with cottage cheese, vegetables and lean meats.
- Antipasto platter – a mixture of sundried tomatoes, olives, dried fruit, low fat cheese and wholemeal crackers.
- Fruit skewers with low fat yogurt.
- Vegetable slice such as mini quiches or fritters.
- Low fat fruit, mini muffins, scones or friands (avoid sugar icing, use ricotta instead of cream and offer small portion sizes).



Lunch/Dinner

- Sandwiches/ wraps – wholegrain and wholemeal breads with:
 - Egg, lean roast meat, salmon, tuna, chicken or vegetable falafel.
 - Mixed salad, roast vegetables or avocado.
 - Low fat feta, cottage or cheddar cheese.
- A variety of salads for example Thai beef, pumpkin & feta, Greek, cous cous, tabouli or garden salad.
- Sushi, rice paper rolls, quiche and frittata.
- Chicken and beef skewers with vegetables.
- Grilled and stuffed vegetables.
- Wholemeal pita bread pizza slices with a variety of toppings (avoid processed meats).
- Soups for example pumpkin, pho, vegetable and lentil soup or potato and leek.



Desserts

Fruit should be part of all desserts for example;

- Apple strudel.
- Low fat lemon panna cotta with berries.
- Crepes with fruit and ricotta.
- Fruit crumble.
- Mini fruit tarts.
- Poached fruit and low fat sorbet.



Drinks

Responsible Service of Alcohol

Alcohol is classed as a type 1 carcinogen – a known substance that causes cancer. Drinking alcohol can increase your risk of an alcohol-related cancer. To reduce the risk of cancer, Cancer Council Queensland recommends people limit their consumption of alcohol. For those who choose to drink alcohol, Cancer Council recommends to drink within the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) guidelines which states no more than two standard drinks a day.

Cancer Council Queensland recommends you investigate options for limiting alcoholic beverages at catered events such as creating an alcohol free event, avoid supplying alcohol or providing a bar tab and provide healthy alternatives to alcoholic drinks.

Sugar sweetened beverages

Drinks containing high levels of sugar (soft drinks, flavoured milks, sports drinks and cordial) increases your risk of being overweight and obese, which then increases your risk of developing certain cancers. Cancer Council Queensland recommends you provide healthier alternatives such as water with fruit, soda water, 100% fruit juice, unflavoured low fat milk, tea and coffee. Find out more at Rethink Sugary Drinks <http://www.rethinksugarydrink.org.au/>

Food safety and hygiene

Food safety refers to the careful handling, storage and preparation of foods to reduce the risk of food poisoning. Cancer Council Queensland advises that all food handlers be familiar with the Food Safety Standards – <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/>

As a start here are some suggestions to help eliminate the risk of food poisoning:

- Always wash hands before preparing or serving food.
- Clean surfaces with hot soapy water.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator.
- Do not buy out of date or damaged food products.
- Avoid food contamination and never use the same plate, container or utensil that held raw meat products.
- Ensure all food is steaming hot and heated all the way through before serving.
- Left overs should always be returned to the refrigerator or an esky with ice as soon as possible with a temperature at or below 5°C.
- Be considerate of food allergies and intolerances.

