

# NUTRITION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEALS, SNACKS AND BEVERAGES IN CAFETERIAS



IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE FOR THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

## PROMOTING HEALTHY FOOD IN THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

### FOOD SERVICE CONTRACTS

**IN 2011, THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ADOPTED A MOTION** requiring the Department of Public Health to review and provide recommendations for all food service Request for Proposals (RFP) prior to their release to ensure dietary requirements promote healthy nutrition. This policy applies to the many food service environments operated by the County of Los Angeles, including cafeterias. The following Implementation Guide includes a compilation of nutrition standards developed by Public Health for County departments operating cafeterias. The standards include limits for calories, sodium, sugar, trans fat and other nutrients. Because the nutrition standards included in County food service contracts may vary, it is important for vendors and staff to refer to the specific contract language to ensure adherence to the appropriate guidelines. The Guide also includes other recommended practices such as calorie labeling at point-of-purchase, signage, and product placement and pricing strategies to promote and increase consumer selection of healthy food and beverages in cafeteria settings.

### GOALS OF PURCHASING AND OFFERING HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGES

- › Increasing access to healthy meal, snack and beverage options.
- › Improving the health of employees and community members accessing government programs and facilities.
- › Aligning foods and beverages purchased by both public and private institutions based on recommendations from the USDA's *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*.
- › Leveraging the purchasing power of large institutions and agencies to promote and increase availability and demand of healthy food options.

## NUTRITION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEALS, SNACKS AND BEVERAGES IN CAFETERIAS

### HEALTHY ENTRÉES AND SIDE ITEMS

**A) At least two main dish/entrée selections and two side options at each meal** service to comply with nutrition standards below;

**B) Healthy entrée and side items** (which meet nutrition standards listed below) should be **clearly indicated on menus**;

**C) The price of these main dishes/entrées and side options should not exceed the price of other menu options**;

**D) No more than one deep-fried** main dish/entrée option should be offered per day;

**E) Menus should be designed to include a variety of culturally diverse foods**;

**F) Fresh seasonal food**, including fresh fruits and vegetables, should be included in the menu.



#### MEALS: MAIN DISH/ENTRÉE

- › No more than 35% of calories from fat
- › No more than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- › 0 grams trans fat
- › No more than 500 calories
- › No more than 600 milligrams of sodium



#### MEALS: SIDE ITEMS

- › No more than 35% of calories from fat
- › No more than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- › 0 grams trans fat
- › No more than 250 calories
- › No more than 360 milligrams of sodium

## NUTRITION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEALS, SNACKS AND BEVERAGES IN CAFETERIAS



### MEALS: COMBINATION MEALS

- › Combination meals (entrée plus side item and/or beverage) should offer as an alternative bottled water as a beverage option and non-fried vegetables or fruit as a side option



### MEALS: SODIUM REDUCTION

- › A gradual sodium reduction plan should be developed and implemented



### BEVERAGES:

- › Bottled water should be available as a beverage option and the price per ounce cannot be higher than any other beverage
- › The size of sugar-sweetened beverage (SSB)<sup>1</sup> fountain drinks should not exceed 12 ounces per container
- › For combination meals with a fountain drink, the size of SSB fountain drinks should not exceed 12 ounces per container



### SNACKS: (25% of all snacks should meet these standards)

- › No more than 35% of calories from fat (excluding legumes, nuts, nut butters, seeds, eggs, non-fried vegetables and cheese packaged for individual sale)
- › No more than 10% of calories from saturated fat (excluding eggs and cheese packaged for individual sale)
- › 0 grams trans fat
- › No more than 35% sugar by weight (with the exception of fruits and vegetables that have not been processed with added sweeteners)
- › No more than 250 calories per individual food item or package if a pre-packaged item
- › No more than 360 milligrams of sodium per individual food item or package if a pre-packaged item



### MEALS: OTHER RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

- › Offer low-sodium, low-calorie, low-fat, cholesterol-free and low-sugar options for condiments
- › Purchasing locally grown food is encouraged
- › Offer at least one vegetarian option daily

1. Sugar-sweetened beverages, also known as sugar loaded drinks, include all sodas, fruit drinks, sports drinks, low-calorie drinks and other beverages that contain added caloric sweeteners, such as sweetened tea, rice drinks, bean beverages, sugar cane beverages and nonalcoholic wines.

## PRODUCT PLACEMENT, PROMOTION AND PRICING STRATEGIES

### Placement of Healthy Food and Beverage Options

*HEALTHY OPTION ITEMS SHOULD BE POSITIONED PROMINENTLY IN FACILITIES AND BE EASILY ACCESSIBLE FOR CUSTOMERS. BELOW ARE RECOMMENDED PLACEMENT STRATEGIES:*

- › **Display healthy food and beverage options** (complying with nutrition standards outlined on previous page) including healthy packaged snacks and water within five feet of all checkout registers.
- › **Display only water**, diet drinks ( $\leq 25$  calories per 8 ounces), 100% fruit juice, low-fat dairy products with no added sweeteners and milk alternative products in eye-level sections of all beverage cases.
- › **Display only healthy snacks** (complying with nutrition standards outlined on previous page) in eye-level sections of display areas.
- › **Place fruit within reach** of checkout registers.
- › **Place healthy entrée selections and side options** (complying with nutrition standards outlined on previous page) at the beginning of each food service area.
- › **Remove candy bars, cookies, chips and beverages with added sugars** (such as soda and sports drinks) from checkout register area or at point-of-purchase.
- › **Move salad bars closer to the checkout registers** or at point-of-purchase to increase sales of salads (if applicable).
- › **Identify healthier items in salad bar** with colored tongs (if applicable).

### VISIBLY DISPLAY HEALTHY SNACKS



### DISPLAY WATER AT EYE LEVEL IN ALL BEVERAGE CASES



## PRODUCT PLACEMENT, PROMOTION AND PRICING STRATEGIES

### Menu Labeling

*MENUS SHOULD LIST THE NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION FOR EACH ITEM IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE FEDERAL MENU LABELING REQUIREMENTS. BELOW ARE RECOMMENDED MENU LABELING STRATEGIES:\**

- › All items available in cafeterias must be labeled with calories per serving as sold (or calories per measure provided for salad bar-type service).
- › Calorie labeling must be displayed at the point of choice in a clear and conspicuous manner on the menu board, or if menu boards are not available, labeling must be prominently posted on signs adjacent to the food items or menus.
- › Exceptions to this standard are items not listed on a menu or menu board such as condiments and other items placed on the table or counter for general use; daily specials; temporary menu items appearing on the menu for less than 60 days; and custom orders.
- › Additional nutritional information must be made available in written form, on request. The nutrition information that must be available in written form to consumers upon request includes:
  - **The total number of calories derived from any source**
  - **The total number of calories derived from the total fat**
  - **Total fat**
  - **Saturated fat**
  - **Cholesterol**
  - **Sodium**
  - **Total carbohydrate**
  - **Sugars**
  - **Dietary fiber**
  - **Total protein**



### LABEL MENU ITEMS WITH CALORIES & CHOOSE HEALTH LA LOGO

- › **A prominent statement regarding the availability of additional nutrition information** available must be placed on the menu or menu board in written form, on request.
- › For County of Los Angeles government facilities, add **Choose Health LA logo** to identify healthier menu items.
- › **Add symbols to the menu** for items that feature local produce or vegetarian menu items.

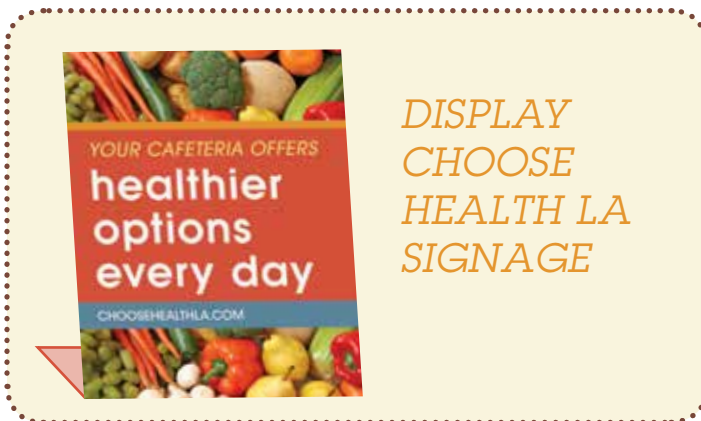
\*Set forth by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. Recommended strategies were extracted from the the Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations developed by the Health and Human Services (HHS) and General Services Administration (GSA).

## PRODUCT PLACEMENT, PROMOTION AND PRICING STRATEGIES

### Display Signage

PROMINENTLY DISPLAY SIGNAGE THAT PROMOTES HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE OPTIONS INCLUDING SNACKS. \* BELOW ARE OTHER RECOMMENDED PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES:

- › **Post pictures and names of featured healthy dishes** outside of cafeteria and include nutrition facts.
- › Highlight healthy cafeteria menu options in **newsletters and other communications** to employees.



### Pricing Strategies

ESTABLISH PRICES FOR HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE ITEMS EQUAL TO OR LESS THAN PRICES OF OTHER MENU OPTIONS. BELOW ARE OTHER RECOMMENDED PRICING STRATEGIES:

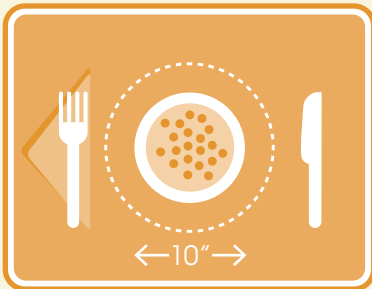
- › **Make reduced-size portions available** at a lower price for menu items (when feasible).
- › **Establish pricing for salad bars** (if applicable) that is competitive with other main dishes/entrées.



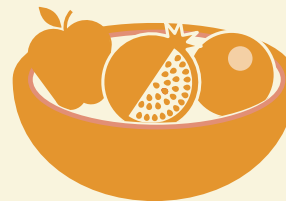
## PRODUCT PLACEMENT, PROMOTION AND PRICING STRATEGIES

### Additional Strategies

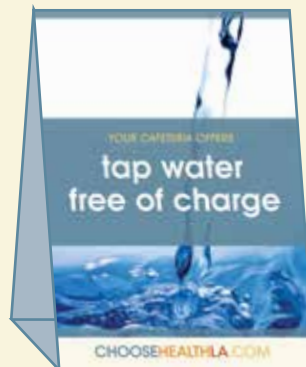
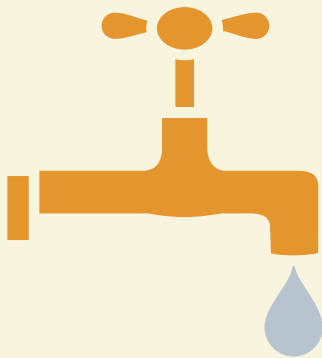
- › **Utilize 10" plates** or smaller for meals in food service.
- › **Display fruit** in brightly colored bowls or woven baskets.
- › **Highlight fruit offerings with a sign** (e.g., "Last Chance for Fruit!" "Fresh Fruit Today" "Did You Grab Some Fruit for Later?").
- › **Include descriptive names** using appealing language on menus such as "fresh" "local" "Mediterranean" or "spicy."
- › **Promote water consumption by providing access to fresh, cold tap water.** Include signage of water availability at soda fountain or hydration station.
- › **Discuss healthy food options with food service staff** and post visible copies of policy and implementation guidelines.



USE 10" OR  
SMALLER  
PLATES



HIGHLIGHT  
FRUIT  
OFFERINGS  
NEAR  
CHECKOUT



PROMOTE WATER  
CONSUMPTION BY  
PROVIDING ACCESS  
TO FRESH, COLD  
TAP WATER



## SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- › **Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010**  
<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/dietaryguidelines.htm>
- › **Improving the Food Environment Through Nutrition Standards: A Guide for Government Procurement**  
[http://www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/dhdsp\\_procurement\\_guide.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/salt/pdfs/dhdsp_procurement_guide.pdf)
- › **Understanding Healthy Procurement: Using Government's Purchasing Power to Increase Access to Healthy Food**  
[http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Understanding%20Healthy%20Procurement%202011\\_20120717.pdf](http://changelabsolutions.org/sites/default/files/Understanding%20Healthy%20Procurement%202011_20120717.pdf)
- › **Los Angeles County Department of Public Health: Comparison of Nutrition Standards and Other Recommended Procurement Practices for Improving Institutional Food Offerings in Los Angeles County, 2010-2012.** *Advances in Nutrition* 4:191-202, 2013.

**CHOOSE HEALTH LA** is a multi-sectoral initiative to prevent and control chronic disease in the diverse communities of Los Angeles County. Supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other agencies in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the initiative is working with community partners to develop innovative strategies aimed at reducing tobacco use and second hand smoke exposure; improving nutrition and opportunities for physical activity; and increasing access to high quality, clinical preventive services.

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### Writing and Editorial Team

Christine Montes, MPH  
Ali Noller, MPH  
Michelle Wood, MPP

### Graphics & Layout

Colleen Corcoran, MFA

### Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Jonathan E. Fielding, MD, MPH, Director and Health Officer  
Cynthia A. Harding, MPH, Chief Deputy Director  
Paul Simon, MD, MPH, Director, Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention  
Tony Kuo, MD, MSHS, Deputy Director, Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention

### Contributors and Reviewers

Linda Aragon, MPH  
Steve Baldwin, MS, RD  
Noel Barragan, MPH  
Patricia L. Cummings, MPH  
Michael Leighs, MPP  
Brenda Robles, MPH  
Rachel Tyree, MPH