



Creating Change: Healthy Eating Environment in AHS

Strategies and Ideas
for Staff





Introduction

Alberta Health Services (AHS) is leading the way to helping Albertans make healthy eating the easy choice. The [Healthy Eating Environment Policy](https://extranet.ahsnet.ca/teams/policydocuments/1/clp-ahs-pol-healthy-eating.pdf) supports healthy food and drink options in AHS (<https://extranet.ahsnet.ca/teams/policydocuments/1/clp-ahs-pol-healthy-eating.pdf>).

Why are we doing this?

As a health organization, AHS wants to lead by example. Healthy eating is an important part of promoting health and in preventing and managing chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes and cancer. Teaching people what and how much to eat is not enough. Having healthier food choices makes it easier to eat for health.

AHS needs to model healthy eating so that our actions (the environment) support what we are recommending to patients, clients and staff. AHS leaders, staff, physicians, volunteers and the public have told us that leading and role modeling healthy eating is the right thing to do for a health organization.

It takes all of us

Together we can make the gradual shift to a healthy eating environment.

All AHS staff have an important role and opportunity to support healthy eating. Changes, whether big or small, will help AHS create a healthy eating environment.



Strategies and ideas for staff

Promote healthy eating:

- Share information and resources on healthy eating at work.
- Put up [posters](#) and [tips sheets](#) in common areas.
- Lead by example- choose and share healthy foods and drinks, take meal breaks.
- Organize or initiate team wellness activities.
- Be a champion in making changes at your facility/site. Join the AHS Wellness Champion Network.
- Share ideas with other champions/ areas/facilities/sites/zones.

Support healthy events:

- Bring healthy dishes to potlucks and celebrations.
- Organize potlucks with a healthy theme (for example, harvest soup, built-a-wrap, dishes all contain a vegetable).
- Set a quota for the type of dishes at potlucks. Include more vegetables and fruit, and fewer unhealthy items.
- Consider having some members bring non-food items as their contribution to potlucks such as decorations, flowers, cutlery or napkins.
- Ask for healthy foods choices for social events.
- Include healthy foods at birthday and retirement events (for example, if cake is served, offer smaller portions and serve fruit on the side).
- Choose healthier foods if using food to show appreciation or recognition.
- Use healthy food or non-food fundraisers.



Support a healthy eating environment:

- Share this booklet with coworkers, supervisors and managers.
- Request meetings outside of mealtimes to allow meal breaks.
- [Arrange](http://www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/EatSmartMeetSmart.html) or request healthy catering at meetings, events and conferences (www.health.alberta.ca/health-info/EatSmartMeetSmart.html).
- Create healthy food zones in common areas where healthy foods can be shared.
- Share healthy foods with others.
- Reconsider bringing in holiday leftovers, candy, cakes and other treats to share with others.
- Request healthy foods at meetings and from food outlets.
- Provide feedback about changes to your manager.

Resources:

For more information, resources and success stories, visit:
www.albertahealthservices.ca/nutrition/Page5234.aspx

or contact: healthyeatingenvironment@ahs.ca