

Healthy eating workshops



'INFLUENCES IN YOUR WORKPLACE' WORKSHOP

Aim of workshop:

To increase awareness of how the work environment can affect employees' attitudes to healthy eating.

Level of knowledge required:

Suitable for all levels of nutritional awareness

Number of delegates:

Maximum 12

Resources:

Meeting room, flipchart, flipchart pens, paper

Time needed for workshop:

1 hour

Workshop outline

The purpose of this workshop is to raise awareness of how the workplace can influence the dietary habits of employees by investigating:

- the environment within which employees work
- the availability of food
- corporate messages promoting healthy eating
- patterns of behaviour
- level of nutritional awareness

The workshop is designed to help a group of 10-12 employees identify the issues within their workplace and rank them in order of priority. It may be necessary to invite an external facilitator, such as a health promotion specialist, nutritionist or community dietitian, to help draw out the key issues and smooth the progress of discussion.

Individually, or in pairs, delegates are asked to identify ways in which the workplace influences their own dietary choices and to write these down on pieces of paper. *Allow 5 minutes for this activity.*

The delegates are brought back into the group and are asked to feedback by sharing their ideas. These are written on pieces of paper which are stuck onto a flipchart to build up a 'wall of bricks'. The facilitator looks for common themes and classifies them into the following groups:

- Workplace facilities, eg, lack of kitchen equipment
- Poor choice of food and drink in the workplace
- Workplace issues, eg, lack of time for lunch
- Individual issues, eg, lack of willpower, need for ideas on healthy eating, desire to understand more about healthy eating.

Allow 15 minutes for feedback.

In groups of three or four, the delegates are asked to identify ways in which the problems could be addressed. It is useful to allocate each group a specific issue.

Allow 10 minutes for discussion and encourage creative ideas.

Each group is asked to present their ideas and collectively the concept of a healthy workplace is developed by removing the 'bricks in the wall' and replacing them with suggestions for improvements.

Allow 20 minutes for discussion.

Finish the workshop by asking delegates to list five changes that could be made immediately in the workplace and that would help them to improve their diet. Finally, ask the group to agree five key concerns to refer back to the healthy eating champion.

Allow 10 minutes for discussion and wrap-up.

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"WHAT'S IN YOUR FOOD?" WORKSHOP

Today, more than ever, people are questioning the value of what they eat. On a daily basis we are swamped with information about the value of different foods. And it can be difficult to decide what to buy, because the nutritional information provided on some food packages can be confusing and doesn't always make it easy to work out how much of everything we should be eating to have a healthier diet.

In response to this problem, **traffic-light labels** on foods have been introduced, to make it easier to choose healthy options.

Traffic-light labels

With traffic-light labels, you can see at a glance if the food you're about to eat has a high, medium or low amount of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt in 100g of the food, and in a portion or serving of the food. See the example below.

Chicken and vegetable bake



Typical Values	per 100g	per 350g pack
Fat	4.6g	16.1g
Saturated fat	2.0g	7.0g
Sugars	3.5g	12.3g
Salt	0.8g	2.8g

Red = Try to limit foods that have a red light on the packet, or balance them with healthier options.

Amber = These are OK choices most of the time, but try to balance them with more 'green' options.

Green = A green light indicates a healthier choice.

Traffic-light colours make it easier to compare foods and can help you get the balance right by helping you choose between products.

If a food doesn't have traffic-light labels, it may have a **list of ingredients** and **nutrition information**.

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List of ingredients

Some foods have a list of ingredients. The ingredients are listed in order of proportion, starting with the largest proportion first. It is worth looking at ingredients lists, as this will tell you a lot about what you are eating. And there may be some surprise ingredients that you weren't expecting – like added sugar or salt.

Nutrition information

The nutrition information labels on foods must provide information in line with current legislation. An example of a nutrition information label for 'Chicken and vegetable bake' is shown below.

Chicken and vegetable bake



NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Typical Values	per 100g	per 350g pack
Energy – kJ – kcal	– 480kJ – 115kcal	– 1,680kJ – 405kcal
Protein	9.5g	33.3g
Carbohydrate	8.6g	30.1g
Of which sugars	3.5g	12.3g
Fat	4.6g	16.1g
Of which saturate	2.0g	7.0g
Fibre	1.5g	5.3g
Sodium	0.3g	1.1g
Equivalent as salt	0.8g	2.8g

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How much is 'a lot' or 'a little'?

Is this 'Chicken and vegetable bake' a healthy option? To answer this question we need to assess the nutritional value of this meal by comparing the values in the 'per 100g' column with the figures below:



'A lot' per 100g	'A little' per 100g
15g of sugars or more	5g of sugars or less
20g of fat or more	3g of fat or less
5g of saturates or more	1.5g of saturates or less
3g of fibre or more	0.5g of fibre or less
1.5g of salt or more	0.3g of salt or less
0.6g of sodium or more	0.1g of sodium or less

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Size matters

But this is only part of the story, because it is the actual amount of food that you eat that will contribute towards your daily calories and nutritional intake. The important information to check is the 'amount per serving' (or, in the Chicken and vegetable bake example, the 'per 350g pack' figure). Use the Guideline daily amounts box below to work out whether you are getting too much fat, salt or sugar in your food. For example, the 'Chicken and vegetable bake' has 7g of saturated fat, and the guideline daily amount is 20g,



Guideline daily amounts

These are the guideline daily amounts for the most important nutrients listed on food labels.

	Men	Women
Fat (total)	95g	75g
of which saturates	30g	20g
Salt	6g	6g
Sugar	120g	90g
Fibre	24g	24g

On average, men need about 2,500 kcals (calories) each day and women need about 2,000 kcals. However, the number of calories you need varies from one person to another. For example, people who are active need more calories, and people who are trying to lose weight will need fewer calories.

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'HEALTHY SNACKING AT WORK' WORKSHOP

This workshop is designed to help you introduce healthier snack options into your workplace.

Snacks appear in the workplace from a variety of different sources:

- employees bringing food from home and storing it in desk drawers or lockers
- the shared 'team biscuit tin'
- snacks available in employee restaurants and brought back to work stations
- snacks available in vending machines provided by the employer.

Explore with your group which are the biggest influences for snacking and why.

Often people perceive snacking to be bad for us. In fact this is only the case if we snack on high-sugar, high-fat foods like crisps and chocolate. Switching to high-fibre, high-nutrient snacks will help to boost your daily intake of nutrients and maintain energy and concentration levels throughout the day.

One word of caution though – over-snacking can very quickly increase your calorie intake, because many snacks are high in fat and sugar. They can also contribute towards tipping your salt intake over the recommended levels. The key to healthy snacking is to plan snacks in advance so that you always have access to healthier choices.

With the group explore some of the healthier alternatives to snacking below.

Desk drawer snacks

Below are some suggestions for foods that don't need to be kept in the fridge and can therefore be stored in an office desk drawer or kitchen unit.

- Small cans or pots of fruit in fruit juice
- Cereal bars – check for no added sugar

- Small packets of unsalted nuts – for example, brazil nuts and walnuts, but watch the calorie intake
- Small packets of seeds – for example, pumpkin seeds and sunflower seeds, but watch the calorie intake
- Small packets of dried fruit – for example, dried apricots, figs or raisins, but watch the calorie intake
- Breadsticks, rice cakes, oatcakes or crispbreads
- Plain biscuits with less fat and sugar
- Small packets of low-fat crisps (unsalted or lightly salted) – these will often have the same number of calories as standard crisps, but will have less fat
- Small packets of corn tortilla chips (unsalted or lightly salted)
- Wholemeal crackers
- Small packets of pretzels (unsalted or lightly salted)
- Wholegrain breakfast cereals
- Plain popcorn
- Low-sugar chocolate drinks
- Low-salt slimmers' soups.

Below are some suggestions for snacks that could be brought into work and stored during the day in a cool bag.

- Fresh fruit – for example, melon wedges, strawberries, pineapple slices, apples, pears, plums or nectarines
- Fresh fruit smoothies
- Fresh vegetables – for example, cherry tomatoes, baby carrot sticks, pea pods or baby corn
- Yoghurt drinks – check for no added sugar
- Fat-free fruit yoghurt – check for no added sugar
- Wholemeal mini pitta pockets
- Fruit scones, fruit bread or buns
- Crumpets or English muffins
- Small pasta pots
- Diet drinks.

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Drinks

Drinks containing sugar contain lots of calories and increase the risk of dental decay, particularly if you have them between meals.

Here are some alternatives that could be offered:

- Mineral water
- Fruit juices
- Fruit smoothies
- Yoghurt drinks
- Semi-skimmed or skimmed milk
- Low-sugar drinks
- Tea and coffee with no added sugar.

Don't forget to provide lower-fat milk whenever you offer tea and coffee. Low-sugar drinks containing milk are good, tooth-friendly options for drinks taken between meals.

Ask members of the group to plan how they will try to snack more healthily while at work.

You may also wish to consider the influence of vending machines on snacking at work.

Vending machines

Many employees rely on vending machines to provide them with food when they are most hungry and don't have time to venture out of the workplace for a more substantial meal option.

Adding healthier options to vending machines provides employees with choice. Signposting healthier options in vending machines allows employees to make informed choices.

Simple steps for change:

- Analyse current usage of your vending machine. How often are the machines used? When are they used? What are the most popular products?
- Consult with your employees to find out why they use the vending machine and what changes they would be interested in.
- Talk to your vending supplier about extending the range of foods provided, and adding healthy options to your existing range if the interest is there from employees.
- If you don't get a satisfactory response from your vending supplier, consider switching to a new supplier who offers a better deal.
- Provide nutritional information close to your vending machines to allow employees to make informed choices.
- Consider the position of your vending machine – is it easily accessible by employees, or too accessible?
- Consider reducing the prices of healthier options on an introductory basis, to encourage employees to try your new options.