



Healthy Food Procurement

Healthy Choices: Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide for Workplaces

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Contact

Prevention and Population Health Branch

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Acknowledgements

The Healthy Catering Guide is based on the NHMRC's Australian Dietary Guidelines and is aligned with *Healthy Choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals* and the *School Canteens and Other School Food Services Policy* and the Victorian Healthy Eating Enterprise's *Healthy Food Charter*

The Guide's contents adapt elements from and acknowledge the Queensland Department of Health's *A Better Choice: Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Health* (2007), WorkSafe Victoria's *Healthy Workplace Kit* (2010) and the Heart Foundation's *Workplace Healthy Catering Policy – sample template* (2010).

Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide for Workplaces

Every worker's health is important

There are currently 2.9 million people employed in Victoria¹, with the average employed man working 41 hours, and the average employed woman working 32 hours². Given the amount of time employees spend in the workplace, it makes it an important setting for health and wellbeing initiatives.

Victorians are not as healthy as they could be, with a range of risk factors contributing to an increase in chronic disease:

- 64.3% of all adults are overweight or obese
- 25.1% have hypertension (high blood pressure)
- 94.3% of Victorian adults don't eat enough fruit and vegetables
- 31% don't meet the national physical activity guidelines

The costs associated with chronic disease for employers is an estimated \$7 billion each year across Australia³ due to absenteeism and a further \$26 billion each year due to presenteeism (not fully functioning at work because of medical conditions).

Why create a healthier workplace?

Workplaces are identified as an important setting for action to promote health in *the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Plan 2011-2015* and Healthy Together Victoria. Healthy Together Victoria represents an individual, community and whole-of-sector commitment to improving the health and wellbeing where people live, learn, work and play. The Achievement Program, a Healthy Together Victoria initiative, supports the development of healthy workplaces and workforces. It focuses on five health priority areas in the workplace setting: smoking, physical activity, mental health and wellbeing, alcohol and healthy eating.

Creating healthier workplaces has benefits for both employees and employers. With the increase in chronic disease risks, it is critical that employers are able to assist in minimising these in order to sustain a productive workforce.

For **employers**, the benefits of promoting health and wellbeing in the workplace are wide-ranging and include:

- Reduced absenteeism: successful health and wellbeing programs have been shown to reduce sick leave absenteeism on average by 25.3%.
- Reduced turnover: healthier workplaces are more likely to retain employees, with organisations that do not manage health and wellbeing four times more likely to lose employees in the next twelve months.
- Becoming an “employer of choice”: studies have shown employees are more likely to remain with their employer and that creativity and innovation increases when health and wellbeing are promoted in the workplace.

For **employees**, the benefits of promoting health and wellbeing can include: improved health; increased productivity; improved morale and reduced stress and anxiety.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. Labour Force, Australia, May 2013
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/6202.0May%202013?OpenDocument>

² Australian Bureau of Statistics. Australian Social Trends, April 2013
<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/Lookup/4102.0Main+Features30April+2013>

³ Health Services Australia. (2002). Managing Absenteeism Report; as cited in Medibank Private. (2005). The Health of Australia's Workforce.

Why a Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide for Workplaces?

As many workers consume at least half of their meals and snacks during work hours, the workplace is an ideal environment to influence healthy eating on a regular basis. Promoting healthy eating in the workplace can contribute to:

- Better physical and mental health
- Reducing the risk of chronic disease: studies have shown a 4-10% reduction⁴ in heart disease risk for every additional serve of fruit or vegetable consumed each day
- Obtaining adequate vitamins and minerals by eating a wide variety of foods each day and boosting immunity by eating the recommended daily amounts of vegetables
- Maintaining a healthy body weight

The *Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide for Workplaces* is for organisations that want to provide healthier food and drink options to all employees and visitors.

Organisations are encouraged to use the *Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide for Workplaces* as part of a broader approach to health and wellbeing in the workplace. One way to do this is through participating in the Achievement Program. The *Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide for Workplaces* will assist organisations to meet the healthy eating benchmarks of the Achievement Program

The *Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide for Workplaces* has three parts:

1	Five Steps to Implementation – steps to assist with introducing the <i>Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide</i> in your workplace
2	Healthy Eating Policy template – a ready-to-use policy template that can be adapted to your workplace needs
3	Healthy Catering Guide – clear and practical guidance for choosing healthier options when purchasing food and drinks

Note: 'catering' is used as a broad term to cover any food and drink provided or paid for by your workplace for employees.

⁴ Dauchet L, Amouyel P, Hercberg S, Dallongeville J. Fruit and vegetable consumption and risk of coronary heart disease: a meta-analysis of cohort studies. *J Nutr* 2006 136(10):2588-93.

1. Five Steps to Implementation

The Healthy Eating Policy template (the Policy) and Catering Guide (the Guide) can be used as is or can be easily adapted to suit workplace and staff requirements.

The suggested process for implementing the Policy and Guide is outlined in five steps:

1. Getting started
2. Assessing the current situation
3. Developing a plan
4. Putting the plan into action
5. Maintaining momentum

For each step, there is a checklist of tasks recommended for all workplaces, and 'extra' tasks for workplaces that offer food and drinks from multiple locations (for example, catering for meetings, kitchen, staffroom, vending machine). For workplaces participating in the Achievement Program (website), these five steps are the same as the five steps for progressing through the Achievement Program cycle.

The Healthy Catering Guide in Section 3 can help workplaces select healthy food and drink options. The Guide classifies food and drinks into three categories (**GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED**) according to their nutritional value:

GREEN - to be available at all times, promoted and encouraged when food and drinks are provided by the workplace

Foods and drinks from the **GREEN** category should be included as the main choices, promoted and encouraged where possible and available at all times. Examples of **GREEN** food and drinks are multigrain and wholemeal breads, plain rice and noodles, wholegrain cereals, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, reduced or low fat milk and yoghurt, lean meat and fresh and frozen fish, eggs, and plain, unsalted nuts and seeds.

AMBER - choose carefully and avoid large serves

Look for better choices from foods and drinks from this category. For instance, provide plain un-iced fruit buns instead of iced buns or provide plain scones (with the jam and margarine served separately). Offer wholemeal and wholegrain foods to boost fibre intake. Examples of **AMBER** food and drinks include flavoured milks and some dairy desserts, processed meats such as ham and corned beef in small amounts, and some crumbed chicken, fish or vegetable products. Order smaller serves where possible (such as mini muffins).

Avoid RED category foods and drinks

RED food and drinks are not to be supplied through catering, and no more than 20% of items in vending machines should be **RED**. Request reduced-fat, reduced-sugar and/or reduced-salt options, and use of low-fat cooking techniques. Examples of **RED** food and drinks are confectionary, pastries, cakes, biscuits, soft drinks, cordial, energy drinks, sports drinks, fried foods, potato chips, pies, sausage rolls and processed meats such as salami.

For more information about the GREEN, AMBER and RED classification of foods, refer to Section 3: Healthy Catering Guide.

TIP: The Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service can support workplace health and wellbeing initiatives by providing information, advice and resources about healthy food and drink options in the

workplace including the canteen, catering, vending machines and other food service facilities. Phone 1300 22 52 88 (Monday to Friday, 9am- 5pm) or email heas@nutritionaustralia.org.

1. Getting started

There are a number of steps for workplaces to take when implementing the Policy & Guide. Reading Part 3: Healthy Catering Guide and becoming familiar with the principles of classifying food and drinks into the three categories (**GREEN/AMBER/RED**) is recommended prior to starting.

The next steps are outlined in the table below.

Task	Done	Date
Recommended		
Seek management endorsement for implementing the Policy & Guide. Strong management leadership and support will assist with policy implementation and implementation and maintenance of any changes to current practice required.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Nominate a staff member, establish a new committee or use an existing committee to help plan and manage implementation of the Policy & Guide.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify opportunities for staff to give feedback on the Policy & Guide development. Involving staff in a meaningful way and gaining their input can be important to achieving success and ongoing support for the Policy & Guide. Example: suggestion box, email address, focus groups, survey, team meetings, staff emails, notices in staff rooms, newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Start an action plan for the implementation of the Policy & Guide (the action plan will be added to over the next four steps). Once the implementation steps and action plan are completed, review and update the Healthy Eating Policy template to reflect the commitments your organisation has made to healthy eating. See Appendix 3 for a sample action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Extra		
If establishing or using an existing committee, aim to have representatives from all parts of your workplace, including management. This allows the views and ideas of different groups to be considered and the responsibility for various aspects of implementation to be shared. If a committee is not formed, establish a way of involving all parts of the workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify workplace coordinator(s) to promote the Policy & Guide once implemented and motivate staff to make healthier food and drink choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

TIP: If your workplace has onsite retail outlets, they can be referred to the *Healthy Food Charter* (<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition/>), *Healthy Choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals* (<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthychoices/>) or the Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service, phone 1300 225288 (Monday to Friday, 9am- 5pm) or email heas@nutritionaustralia.org.

2. Assessing the current situation

The next step is to form a picture of the current range of food and drinks offered in your workplace and identify areas that may need improvement.

Task	Done	Date
Recommended		
Identify any current catering or food policies (workplace health and wellbeing policies may also be relevant).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify key stakeholders in your workplace, such as the staff responsible for organising catering or buying supplies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Compile a list of locations where food and drinks are offered in your workplace, and the type of food and drink offered in each location such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff rooms – fruit box, biscuits • Kitchens – coffee, tea, milk • Vending machines – soft drink, water • Staff cafeterias – lunches, snacks • Catering for meetings, functions and events – sandwiches, pastries • Onsite retail outlets, such as cafés – sandwiches, muffins 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Assess how the food offered in each location fits into the GREEN , AMBER or RED category listed in the Healthy Catering Guide (see Appendix 1. Food and drink categories). Example: Pastries ordered for morning tea are RED , the fruit box in the staff room is GREEN .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Record the categorised foods in your action plan. This will assist you with prioritising action areas (under Step 3).	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify the availability of facilities for employees to store and prepare healthy food and drinks brought into the workplace. Example: Refrigerator, microwave, cutlery and crockery, specific cupboards set aside to store food	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Extra		
Larger workplaces may have a high number of food locations to assess - consider allocating committee members to lead change in specific areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

TIP: The Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service can provide fact sheets to assist workplaces with assessing the current situation, such as how to promote healthy eating in the workplace. Phone 1300 22 52 88 (Monday to Friday, 9am- 5pm) or email heas@nutritionaustralia.org.

3. Developing a plan

The next steps are to identify what changes are required to support the introduction of healthier food and drink options, and reduce less healthy choices. Changes don't need to happen all at once. A staged approach may be appropriate for your organisation, for example using up current supplies prior to ordering healthier options or if more time is needed to make the changes.

Task	Done	Date
Recommended		
Decide on priority locations that require change.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
For each situation where food and drinks are provided, determine the changes that would be required to increase GREEN food and drink options and reduce RED options. Note: the Healthy Catering Guide provides a comprehensive list of healthier alternatives to commonly used food and drinks. Example: Order fruit bread for morning tea instead of pastries, support fundraising opportunities not related to food and drink, such as plant drives	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify supporters of change. Example: Positive links between healthy eating and physical activity, greater interest and awareness of health from staff, meeting the needs/requests of those staff wanting healthier options, embedding a healthy eating culture in your workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify barriers to change and ways to overcome them. Example: Cost, contracts with caterers, staff dissatisfaction with limiting RED options, difficulty in accessing GREEN products, lack of demand for healthy products, low priority of staff, concern over loss in profits, unsuitable facilities to prepare healthy food and drinks, extra time needed for staff to plan for and make changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Consider the timing of changes to replace existing items with healthier options, such as biscuits in your staff room. This could be dependent on levels of current stock and availability of healthier options from your supplier and/or caterer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If using external caterers, identify local caterers able to provide the healthier options as suggested in the Healthy Catering Guide.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Document timing of planned changes in your action plan, together with solutions to overcoming barriers for increasing healthier food and drink options and decreasing unhealthy options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Update (or replace) any current catering or food policies (including relevant workplace health and wellbeing policies) to reflect this Policy & Guide	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Extra		
Encourage on-site cafeterias and organisations with contractual or lease arrangements to follow a healthy food service policy and meet nutritional standards that align with the <i>Healthy Choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals</i> and the <i>Healthy Food Charter</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	

TIP: Provide a copy of the Healthy Catering Guide to your caterer and refer them to the *Healthy Food Charter* or *Healthy Choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals* for additional information.

The Healthy Together – Healthy Eating Advisory Service can provide information on embedding healthy eating criteria in contracts with caterers or food suppliers, if applicable.

Encourage your food and drink suppliers to contact the Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service for assistance in applying healthy food service guidelines. They can provide practical advice and ideas for making changes – phone 1300 225288 (Monday to Friday, 9am- 5pm) or email heas@nutritionaustralia.org.

4. Putting the plan into action

The change to healthier options and the ongoing promotion of these choices is important in ensuring the success of your Healthy Eating Policy and Healthy Catering Guide.

Task	Done	Date
Recommended		
Communicate the changes to staff through existing communication channels Examples: email, internal newsletters, team meetings, posters in staff rooms/kitchens. Remember to not only communicate what changes are occurring, but also why, how and when.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Communicate the changes to caterers and suppliers, if applicable. This can be done by providing them with a copy of the Healthy Catering Guide and/or the <i>Healthy Food Charter</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify any 'quick wins' - activities that can be undertaken immediately with little effort for large gains. Example: a chilled water tap or water cooler for your staff kitchen to encourage drinking water or a dedicated space for staff to take meal breaks away from their desks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ensure healthier food and drink choices are the easy and appealing choice. Example: Several companies now offer delivery of fresh fruit and vegetable boxes. These are a great alternative to offering biscuits in your staff room.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
If facilities are available, ensure food storage, preparation space and equipment is easily available and well maintained. See Appendix 2 – Food Safety for tips on food safety in the workplaces. Example: a fridge, sandwich maker, toaster and microwave can make it easier for staff to bring healthy lunches to work	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Identify additional resources that could be used to motivate and inform staff about healthy food and drink choices. Example: Posters, healthy eating leaflets, competitions between teams, sharing healthy recipes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Organise a morning tea or lunch with healthier options for staff to promote the changes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Note actions, issues and solutions in your action plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Extra		
Identify any operational issues that need to be addressed to support the phasing in of healthier food and drink choices and phasing out of unhealthy choices Example: change your caterer/supplier to the one who is able to provide healthier options as outlined in the Healthy Catering Guide	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Set up a catering panel or preferred caterer list for suppliers who are able to provide healthier food and drink options.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Australian Dietary Guidelines and Australian Guide to Healthy Eating – Posters, consumer brochures and other promotional materials are available at www.eatforhealth.gov.au

The Better Health Channel (<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>) has various fact sheets on food and nutrition and healthy recipes

The Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service has fact sheets and recipes available, phone 1300 225288 (Monday to Friday, 9am- 5pm) or email heas@nutritionaustralia.org.

5. Maintaining momentum

It is important to reflect on and communicate progress, and to seek and incorporate feedback. Further actions and alternatives may need to be developed and applied. Once food and drink choices for catering reflect the Catering Guide, maintaining the momentum is important to ensure healthier choices continue to be available to staff.

Task	Done	Date
Recommended		
Review your progress and identify any improvements or further changes that need to be made. Note these in your action plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Seek feedback from staff on the changes. Caterers and suppliers may also have feedback.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Highlight successful changes in internal newsletters, social media updates or team meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Provide ongoing opportunities for staff to increase their healthy eating knowledge and skills. Example: Cooking classes /making a healthy lunch class(either provided by workplace directly or as a staff reward)	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Encourage the active participation of staff in promoting healthier food choices.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Review the Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide, together with your action plans, after six months, and then every 12 months, to ensure they are still relevant for your workplace	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Celebrate success! Example: put on a healthy lunch for all staff to enjoy	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Extra		
Offer rewards or incentives for participation by staff. Acknowledge caterers who have made an extra effort to provide healthier options. Examples: workplace recognition, water bottles, health books, gift vouchers,	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Invite new people onto the implementation committee. New members often bring creative ideas, skills and enthusiasm and may identify issues that have not previously been noted.	<input type="checkbox"/>	

TIP: If your workplace is preparing the food, rather than ordering from caterers, the following resources will be able assist with simple ways to offer healthier choices to employees, such as changing a few ingredients or cooking methods

Healthy Food Charter – www.health.vic.gov.au

Health Choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals -

http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthychoices/downloads/healthy_choices_guidelines_1.pdf

Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service – phone 1300 225288 (Monday to Friday, 9am- 5pm) or email heas@nutritionaustralia.org.

Better Health Channel – www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

2. Healthy Eating Policy template

Purpose

This policy recognises and values the importance of healthy eating in promoting people’s health and wellbeing. <insert organisation’s name> encourages and supports our employees and visitors to make healthy eating choices. Through this policy we will ensure healthy foods and drinks are available at meetings, functions and events and through onsite retail outlets, vending machines and organisational fundraising.

Objectives

To support healthy eating in the workplace by:

1. Creating a healthy eating culture in <insert organisation’s name>
2. Increasing and promoting access to healthy food and drink choices for all employees and visitors;
3. Decreasing the availability of unhealthy food and drink to employees and visitors;
4. Increasing employee knowledge and skills for healthy eating; and
5. Supporting healthy eating initiatives and links with the community (applicable to organisations participating in the Achievement Program).

- <insert organisation’s name> will ensure:
- <insert commitments your organisation has identified via the implementation steps and action plan ie:>
 - Management encourage employees to take meal breaks
 - Food and drinks supplied for catered meetings, functions and events are in line with the Catering Guide
 - No RED category food or drinks are to be supplied for catered meetings, functions and events
 - No more than 20% of vending machine items are from the RED category
 - Water is freely available
 - Healthy eating information will be provided in tea rooms and kitchens
 - Supportive leadership, participating and shared decision-making
 - Provision of resources, information and opportunities to increase knowledge and skills for healthy eating

Scope

This policy applies to food and drinks served or available at <insert organisation’s name> internal/external meetings, functions and events where catering is provided for employees, clients and visitors. The Policy includes food and drinks provided to employees in staff rooms and vending machines, but does not formally apply to food and drinks brought in by employees (for birthdays, morning teas, or personal fundraising). However, employees are encouraged to consider providing healthy options at these events and to avoid leaving confectionary fundraisers in public places, such as kitchens.

All employees have a shared responsibility to support <insert organisation’s name> Healthy Eating Policy.

Managers have a responsibility to:	Employees have a responsibility to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that all employees, contractors and volunteers are made aware of the Policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and understand the Healthy Eating Policy • Observe the Policy while on work-related duties

- Create a workplace culture that is supportive of healthy eating
- Oversee the implementation and review of the Policy and seek feedback from employees
- Provide opportunities for employees to develop healthy eating knowledge and skills

- Maintain a workplace culture that is supportive of healthy eating
- Provide caterers and suppliers with a copy of the Policy and Guide.

Development

This Policy has been developed and is guided by healthy eating recommendations and workplace healthy catering policy guidelines from government and health authorities. It will be supported by an action plan created as part of the implementation of this Policy and the Catering Guide.

<Insert relevant committee or position ie HR, OHS committee> has responsibility for implementing this Policy.

Endorsement

<insert organisation's name> supports the implementation of the Healthy Eating Policy and Catering Guide as an investment in the wellbeing of our employees.

This Healthy Eating Policy has been endorsed by

Signature:

Title:

Date:

Communication

This Policy will be easily accessible to all employees, who will be given the opportunity to read and discuss it.

This policy will be actively advertised and promoted in shared spaces (staff rooms, kitchens).

Employees will be encouraged to actively contribute and provide feedback during all stages of policy development and review.

Employees must be notified of all changes to this policy.

Caterers and suppliers will be provided with notification of any changes to this policy.

Review and Monitoring

<Insert organisation's name> Healthy Eating Policy will be reviewed six months from implementation and every 12 months thereafter.

<Insert relevant committee or position ie HR, OHS committee> has responsibility for leading the review of this policy. The process for reviewing the policy includes:

- Assess implementation to date and determine if all objectives have been met.
- Provide employees with the opportunity to give feedback, which will be considered by the committee/individual reviewing the policy.
- Seek management endorsement of the updated policy and make copies available to employees.

This Healthy Eating Policy has been reviewed in accordance with the process outlined above

Signature:

Title:



Date:

Date of next review:

3. Healthy Catering Guide

The *Healthy Catering Guide* (the Guide) provides clear and practical guidance for choosing healthier options when purchasing food and drinks for employees and visitors.

Offering healthier food and drink options can be as simple as:

- ensuring foods from core food groups are available
- limiting foods high in unhealthy saturated and trans fats, salt and sugar such as sweet biscuits, sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fried foods, potato chips, pies and sausage rolls
- including more fruit and vegetables
- reducing serve sizes.

How to provide healthy catering in your workplace

The Guide is based on principles from the *Healthy choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals*. These guidelines classify food and drinks into three categories according to their nutritional value: **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED**.

GREEN - to be available at all times, promoted and encouraged when food and drinks are provided by the workplace

Foods and drinks from the **GREEN** category should be included as the main choices, promoted and encouraged where possible and available at all times. Examples of **GREEN** food and drinks are multigrain and wholemeal breads, plain rice and noodles, wholegrain cereals, fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables, reduced or low fat milk and yoghurt, lean meat and fresh and frozen fish, eggs, and plain, unsalted nuts and seeds.

AMBER - choose carefully and avoid large serves

Look for better choices from foods and drinks from this category. For instance, provide plain un-iced fruit buns instead of iced buns or provide plain scones (with the jam and margarine served separately). Examples of **AMBER** food and drinks include flavoured milks and dairy desserts, processed meats in small amount such as ham and corned beef, and crumbed chicken fish or vegetable products. Order smaller serves where possible ie mini muffins. Offer wholemeal and wholegrain foods to boost fibre intake

Avoid RED category foods and drinks

RED food and drinks are not to be supplied through catering. No more than 20% of items in vending machines to be **RED**. Request reduced-fat, reduced-sugar and/or reduced-salt options, and use of low-fat cooking techniques. Examples of **RED** food and drinks are confectionary, pastries, cakes, biscuits, soft drinks, cordial, energy drinks, sports drinks, fried foods, potato chips, pies, sausage rolls and processed meats such as salami.

When ordering catering, either categorise menu items using Appendix 1 – Food & Drink categories, or use the 'Recommended options for catering' tables starting on page 15. These tables have already identified commonly offered **GREEN** and **AMBER** catering options (listed in the 'Recommended serving suggestions' column) and **RED** options (listed in the 'Not recommended' column).

This Guide recommends choosing healthier food and drink options for various catering occasions:

- Breakfast, morning or afternoon tea: refer to Table 1
- Main meals: refer to Table 2.

Further information on other food and drink categories is available in Appendix 1.

Note: if the food and drinks are being ordered on an ongoing or regular basis, such as biscuits in a staff room, the Recommend Options tables can also be used to ensure that healthier options are chosen.

Will alcohol be served?

Where facilities are licensed to provide alcohol to employees and/or visitors at functions, meetings or events, alcoholic drinks should not be provided in excessive quantities and should be served in accordance with the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998*. When providing alcohol to employees and visitors, no greater than two standard drinks per person should be supplied, along with non-alcoholic options (and water).

For further information on the responsible service of alcohol, refer to the Victorian Commission of Gaming and Liquor Regulation website (<http://www.vcglr.vic.gov.au/home/laws+and+regulations/standard+licence+obligations/responsible+service+of+alcohol/>)

Recommended options for catering

The tables below and on the following pages provide details on healthier food and drink options for your meetings/events.

How much?

Determining quantities to order for catering can be difficult due to the wide variety available in most food categories – such as bread, which can range from standard sandwich slices to extra thick ‘café style’ fruit toast. As a general guide, serving size suggestions are:

- 1 sandwich or wrap per person for lunch
- 1 cup of green leafy or raw salad vegetables per person, ½ cup of cooked vegetables
- A suitable serve of fruit per person is 1 medium piece (apple, banana or pear), 2 small pieces (apricot, plum or kiwi fruit) or 1 cup of diced or canned fruit
- 40g (2 slices) cheese per person

Always provide water as the main drink at meetings and in your workplace.

Note: These tables, and those in Appendix 1, classify food and drinks in a general nature. If classifying a specific food or drink product is required, such as a certain brand of meat pie, it can be assessed using the product’s nutrition information panel and the nutrition criteria in *Healthy choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals*.

Table 1. Breakfast, morning or afternoon tea guidelines

Item	Recommended serving suggestions	Not recommended
Drinks	Offer a variety of hot and cold options: - Chilled plain water - Plain and decaffeinated coffee - Plain and herbal teas - Reduced-fat or skim milk for tea and coffee - Artificial sweetener for hot beverages.	Soft drinks, fruit drinks, iced tea drinks, flavoured water, cordials, energy and sports drinks.
Fruit Dried fruit & nuts	Whole, sliced or cut pieces of fresh fruit. Small portions of dried fruit and/or plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts.	All confectionary and deep-fried foods. Salted, coated and/or fried nuts or chocolate, carob or yoghurt coated dried fruit.
Sweet breads, loaves, buns and scones	Plain, un-coated, un-iced breads, scones, loaves, or buns: - raisin or fruit bread - plain or fruit-based pikelets - plain, fruit or pumpkin scones - banana or date loaf - plain biscotti	Coated, iced or filled breads, loaves, buns, cakes or those containing confectionary or chocolate.
Spreads, dips and condiments	Serve spreads and condiments separately. Use poly- or mono-unsaturated margarine (ensure you can see the bread through the spread), reduced-fat cream cheese, pure fruit jams, hummus, tzatziki, avocado, whipped ricotta or vanilla yoghurt. Nut butters with no added sugar, salt or fat.	Cream, butter or dairy blend spreads; high fat, cream or oil-based dips
Sweet biscuits	Un-iced, un-coated, plain or wholemeal sweet biscuits that are a small to medium serve size 30 grams per person or 2-3 small biscuits); try reduced-fat and/or reduced-sugar varieties that contain high fibre ingredients, for example, wholemeal flour and/or fruit, vegetables or nuts.	Fancy sweet biscuits such as cream filled, chocolate coated, choc chip or iced.

Item	Recommended serving suggestions	Not recommended
Savoury breads and crackers	Plain, un-coated, low fat savoury breads and loaves; wholemeal reduced fat, salt reduced crisp breads and crackers, lavosh, rice crackers, pita and lebanese breads or water crackers. Top with a variety of garnishes including reduced-fat cheeses, relishes, chutneys or vegetables.	Large serves of savoury breads such as garlic or pull-aparts topped with cheese and processed high-fat meats such as bacon or salami.
Muffins	Un-iced fruit- or vegetable-based muffins that are a small to medium serve size (two mini muffins or 60 grams muffin per person); include reduced-fat and wholemeal varieties that contain fruit or vegetables.	Large muffins; those containing confectionary such as chocolate chips; iced or coated varieties.
Cakes, slices and scrolls	Un-iced, un-filled, un-coated cakes, slices, scrolls that contain wholemeal flour, fruit, vegetables or nuts, and low levels of sugar/fat and are of a small to medium serve size (a small finger or slice of cake 50-60 grams per person);.	High-fat options such as sweet pastries, tarts, croissants and Danishes. Iced, filled and/or coated cakes, slices, muffins, bars or scrolls. Any cakes, slices and scrolls that contain confectionary or chocolate.
Muesli or fruit-filled bars	Un-iced, un-coated cereal, muesli or fruit-filled bars, of a small to medium serve size (30-40 grams).	Yoghurt or chocolate-coated cereal or muesli bars or those containing confectionary such as chocolate chips; large serve sizes of cereal, muesli or fruit-filled bars greater than 40 grams.
Toppings, dips, antipasto	Low fat, low or reduced salt varieties. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tomato, basil and cheese - cherry tomato, onion and avocado - low-fat vegetable-based salsas or relishes such as tomato, capsicum, bean or corn - reduced-fat versions of dips including tzatziki, Hommus - vegetable-based dip varieties including beetroot, capsicum or eggplant. - chargrilled vegetables, such as zucchini, eggplant and capsicum 	Oil, cream and or cheese-based dips such as aioli, sour cream, tapenades
Cheese platters	Small serves of cheese such as cottage, ricotta, fetta or hard cheeses, reduced-fat where possible, with a variety of accompaniments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - different bread varieties, wholemeal, salt reduced crispbreads and crackers, pita bread, lavosh or water crackers - fresh fruit and small amounts of dried fruit - fresh cut vegetable sticks with reduced-fat dips - roasted or grilled vegetables (served drained of oil) - plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts. 	Large portions or blocks of all cheese varieties. Chocolate almond bread, high fat- and salt-crackers Salted, coated and/or fried nuts.

Table 2. Main meal (lunch/dinner) guidelines

Item	Serving suggestions	Not recommended
Drinks	Offer a variety of hot and cold options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chilled plain and sparkling water - Plain and decaffeinated coffee - Plain and herbal teas - Reduced-fat or skim milk for tea and coffee - Artificial sweetener for hot beverages - 99 – 100% fruit juice with recommended serve size of 250ml (maximum 300ml) per person (not sweetened fruit drinks). Recommend serving in small cups. 	Soft drinks, fruit drinks, cordials, energy and sports drinks. Large serves of fruit juice per person (greater than 300ml).
Sandwiches	Offer a variety of breads, sandwich types and fillings; try finger or pinwheel sandwiches, open-faced, bread rolls, pita pockets or lavosh wraps. Use a wide variety of breads and rolls including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - multigrain - wholemeal - rye - high-fibre white - lavosh and other flat breads - bagels - plain foccacias or Turkish bread - small baguettes. 	Large portions of high-fat savoury breads such as garlic or pull-aparts topped with cheese and high-fat processed meats such as bacon or salami. Large portions of breads such as long hot dog rolls
Sandwich spreads	Use spreads or condiments sparingly and try reduced-salt, low- or reduced-fat varieties including poly- or mono-unsaturated margarine, avocado, cottage cheese, ricotta, reduced-fat cream cheese, mustards, relishes, chutney, hummus or tzatziki.	Butter, dairy blend spreads, mayonnaise; oil-, cream- and or cheese-based dips such as aioli, sour cream, tapenades, pesto.
Sandwich fillings	Lean cuts of meats, meat alternatives or reduced-fat cheeses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - roast beef - roast chicken with no skin - lean turkey, chicken breast or ham - tinned fish (canned in spring water) - eggs - ricotta or cottage cheese - reduced fat hard or soft Use plenty of raw salad or vegetables. Roasted or grilled vegetables drained of oil	High fat cured luncheon meats such as salami, chicken loaf, cabana, devon, bacon, strasburg or mortadella. Do not add salt to sandwiches or filling ingredients.
Sushi and rice paper rolls	Try options that contain lean, un-coated and un-crumbed meats, egg or seafood and use a variety of vegetable fillings. Use low-fat, reduced-salt ingredients in dipping sauces such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - sweet chilli sauce - reduced-salt soy sauce or reduced-salt fish sauce with fresh herbs, garlic, onion or shallots. 	Sushi or rice paper rolls containing deep-fried, coated or battered ingredients. Cream- or oil-based sauces.
Salads	Garden, bean, pasta, rice or noodle, potato, tabouleh, couscous, coleslaw, roasted vegetables or egg salad. Use balsamic vinegar/lemon juice dressings, or low fat mayonnaise or yoghurt dressings. Offer dressing on the side. If accompanied by meat: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lean (visible fat trimmed), un-crumbed meats that have been grilled, roasted or cooked in minimal amounts of poly- or mono-unsaturated oil 	Salads containing deep-fried croutons, bacon or coated meats that have been deep-fried. High fat cured meats such as salami, chicken loaf, cabana, devon, bacon, strasburg or mortadella.

Item	Serving suggestions	Not recommended
Salad dressings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lean chicken (with no skin) - lean ham (no visible fat) - tinned fish canned in spring water <p>If accompanied by cheese, choose reduced-fat varieties where possible, such as ricotta or cottage cheese. If accompanied by nuts, choose plain and/or dry-roasted, unsalted and un-fried nuts.</p> <p>It is preferable to leave salads undressed or serve dressings separately. Low-oil or no-oil dressings such as lemon, orange or lime juice, natural yoghurt, balsamic or wine vinegar with herbs or pepper. Reduced-fat, low-oil, no-oil or low-joule commercial dressings. If preparing dressings use poly- or mono-unsaturated oils for example, canola, sunflower, sesame, olive and peanut oils.</p>	<p>Do not add salt to salads or dressings. Cream or mayonnaise-based dressings such as Caesar or sour cream.</p>
Finger foods, Antipasto, Dips	<p>Vegetable-based salsas or relishes such as tomato, bean, or capsicum. Reduced-fat yoghurt-based dips such as beetroot, eggplant, capsicum, avocado, tzatziki or hommus. Roasted or grilled vegetables served drained of oil. Olives served drained of oil. Lean cold meat such as roast beef or skinless baked chicken, pastrami or shaved lean ham. Hot options such as lean meat and vegetable kebabs, mini frittatas or bruschetta. Fresh cut fruit and/or vegetables sticks. A variety of different breads, rice crackers, water crackers or crisp breads – wholemeal varieties where possible. Vegetable-based fritattas.</p>	<p>Deep-fried items including savoury pastries such as dim sims, spring rolls, samosas; coated or crumbed meat or vegetable products; and potato chips, wedges, gems, scallops or hash browns. Hot or cold savoury pastries such as pies, sausage rolls, party pies, croissants or quiches. High fat cured meats such as salami, chicken loaf, cabana, devon, bacon, strasburg or mortadella. Oil, cream, and/or cheese based dips such as aioli, sour cream, tapenades and pesto.</p>
Fruit platters	<p>Whole, sliced or cut pieces of fresh fruit. Try fresh fruit kebabs with low-fat or reduced-fat dipping sauces such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fruit purees - vanilla yoghurt - whipped ricotta. 	<p>Whipped cream or chocolate.</p>
Cheese and cheese platters	<p>Small serves of cheese (low- or reduced-fat where possible) such as cottage, ricotta, fetta or hard cheeses with a variety of accompaniments such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - different bread varieties, wholemeal salt reduced crispbreads and crackers, pita bread, lavosh, rice crackers or water crackers - fresh fruit and small amounts of dried fruit - fresh cut vegetable sticks with reduced-fat dips - roasted or grilled vegetables (served drained of oil) - plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts. 	<p>Large portions or blocks of all cheese varieties. High fat or high salt crackers</p>

Sample menus

These two sample menus were prepared using the tables on previous pages.

Morning tea

Jugs of water

Low or reduced-fat milk if required for hot drinks

Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee

Sugar and artificial sweetener

Reduced-fat mixed berry and apple cinnamon mini muffins

Seasonal fresh fruit platter. A suitable serve of fruit per person is 1 medium piece (apple, banana or pear), 2 small pieces (apricot, plum or kiwi fruit) or 1 cup of diced or canned fruit

Lunch

Jugs of water

Low or reduced-fat milk if required for hot drinks

Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee

Sugar and artificial sweetener

Sandwiches, wraps and whole-grain mini rolls (1.5 sandwiches or wraps per person for lunch) with assorted fillings such as low fat cheese, lean meats or alternatives, including plenty of salad. For example:

- roast beef, fruit chutney, red onion, tomato and lettuce
- shaved ham, reduced-fat cream cheese, carrot, tomato and lettuce
- roasted capsicum, hummus, sprouts and baby spinach.

Seasonal fresh fruit platter or fruit and cheese platter. A suitable serve of cheese is 40g per person

Always provide water as the main drink at meetings and in your workplace.

Useful resources

Healthy Together Healthy Eating Advisory Service - fact sheets and recipes available. Phone 1300 225288 (Monday to Friday, 9am- 5pm) or email heas@nutritionaustralia.org

Australian Guide to Healthy Eating – Posters, consumer brochures and other promotional material are available at www.eatforhealth.gov.au

Better Health Channel (<http://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/>) - various fact sheets on food and nutrition and healthy recipes

Healthy Choices: food and drink guidelines for public hospitals - <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthychoices/>

Healthy Food Charter – www.health.vic.gov.au

Heart Foundation – www.heartfoundation.org.au

WorkHealth - www.workhealth.vic.gov.au

Appendix 1 – Food & drink categories

The GREEN category – Best choices

Food Type	Examples
Breads	Multigrain, wholemeal, rye, hi-fibre, white breads or rolls. Examples include English muffins, plain focaccia, lavosh, Lebanese, pita, raisin or fruit breads, tortillas and Turkish breads. Plain corn or rice cakes or crispbreads.
Cereal foods	Plain rice, pasta, plain unflavoured noodles, polenta, couscous and buckwheat.
Breakfast cereals	Wholegrain breakfast cereals that are high in fibre and lower in salt and added sugar. Examples include wheat biscuits, cereal flakes with a variety of grains, bran, un-toasted muesli or porridge.
Fruit	All fresh, frozen and dried fruits, and fruit canned in natural juice, water with artificial sweetener or fruit puree with no added sugar.
Vegetables	All fresh, frozen, salt-reduced canned, dried plain vegetables and salads.
Legumes	All forms of dried and prepared beans and peas. Examples include baked beans, red kidney beans, soy beans, mung beans, lentils, chick-peas, split peas, bean curd, or tofu.
Dairy products	Plain reduced- or low-fat milk, reduced- or low-fat plain and flavoured yoghurt, reduced-fat cheese, reduced-fat custard, reduced fat flavoured milks.
Dairy Alternatives	Reduced- or low-fat soy varieties including plain soy-milk, reduced- or low-fat plain or flavoured yoghurt, cheese and custard.
Lean meat, fish, poultry, eggs and alternatives	Lean chicken, turkey, beef, pork, lamb and veal with fat and skin removed. All fresh and plain frozen fish. Tuna, salmon, sardines canned in spring water with no added salt. Eggs.
Nuts and seeds	All plain, unsalted, dry or un-roasted nuts and seeds. All nut and seed pastes with no added sugar, salt, or fat.
Drinks	Water. Reduced- or low-fat plain milk and soy milk.

The AMBER category - choose carefully

Food Type	Examples
Dairy foods and alternatives	Plain full-fat milk, full-fat yoghurt (plain and flavoured), full-fat custard and full-fat cheese including full-fat soy varieties.
Dairy-based snacks	Milk-based plain or reduced-fat flavoured puddings, fromage frais, rice pudding or creamed rice
Flavoured milk drinks and milkbased smoothies	Frequent consumption of both full-fat and reduced-fat flavoured milks in large sizes may contribute to excessive energy (kilojoules) and sugar intake. Maximum serve size 300ml.
Fruit juice	Frequent consumption of fruit juice in large sizes may contribute to excess energy (kilojoules) and sugar intake. Given the lower fibre content and higher sugars, fruit juices should not be used as a substitute for fresh fruit. Offer 99% fresh or frozen fruit juices. Recommend serve size 250ml with maximum serve size 300ml.
Artificially sweetened drinks	Diet, low-joule, sugar-free or no-sugar soft-drinks, cordials, flavoured mineral waters and iced teas.
Breakfast cereals	Refined and processed breakfast cereals with added sugars and/or saturated fats. Examples include some toasted mueslis, flavoured and/or sugar-sweetened corn, rice or wheat based cereals.

Processed meats	Use in small amounts only, as larger serve sizes can provide too much saturated fat and/or salt. Examples include plain ham, processed sandwich meats, corned beef, pastrami, diced processed chicken meat.
Fats and oils	Use in small amounts in cooking and make sure you can see the bread through the spread. Recommend mono- or poly-unsaturated margarine, oil sprays and vegetable oils such as canola, olive, peanut, sesame, sunflower, soya bean, cottonseed, or flaxseed.
Spreads	Use sparingly. Choose reduced-salt, reduced-fat varieties where available. Examples include peanut butter and other nut spreads, fish, chicken and meat paste, pure fruit spreads, yeast and vegetable extracts.
Sauces and condiments	Use sparingly. Choose reduced-salt, reduced-fat varieties where available. Examples include tomato sauce, soy sauce, sweet chilli sauce, mayonnaise, chutney, vegetable- or yoghurt-based dips, mustard and gravy.
Savoury commercial products	Reduced-fat and/or reduced-salt oven-baked savoury pastries, steamed dim sims, pizza, ovenbaked potato products, grilled meat patties (not crumbed), grilled or ovenbaked meat balls or chicken drumsticks.
Savoury snack foods and biscuits	Oven-baked snack biscuits, flavoured rice crackers, flavoured popcorn and some dry biscuits.
Snack food bars	Breakfast bars, cereal and/or muesli bars and fruit bars. Avoid those containing confectionary or that are coated in chocolate or yoghurt.
Cakes, muffin, sweet tarts, pastries, pies, biscuits and slices	Un-iced, un-filled cakes, muffins, slices and biscuits that are a small to medium serve size or have been modified to reduce the levels of fat and/or sugar and include fibre. Examples include reduced-fat fruit cake, small reduced-fat fruit- or vegetable based muffins, Plain wholemeal biscuits with dried fruit and/or nuts.
Ice-creams, milk- based ice confection and dairy desserts	Reduced fat dairy desserts and ice creams, ice-blocks, sorbet, water- or fruit-based ice confection, and slushies. Watch serve sizes.

The RED category - limit

Food Type	Examples
Sugar sweetened drinks	Soft drinks, fruit drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks, cordials and flavoured mineral waters.
Confectionary	Lollies and chocolates
Cakes, muffin, sweet tarts, pastries, scrolls and slices	Croissants, donuts, sweet pastries, Danishes, cream- or chocolate-filled and/or coated buns, scrolls, muffins, cakes, and slices. Large serves of plain cakes and muffins.
Ice-creams, milk- based ice confection and dairy desserts	Chocolate coated and premium ice creams and dairy desserts
Biscuits	Premium, fancy biscuits that are coated, iced and/or filled with chocolate, caramel, cream, jam or icing.
Deep-fried foods	All types including hot chips, deep-fried spring rolls and dim sims, deep fried chips, wedges or other potato products.
Savoury snacks	Crisps, potato chips and other similar products.
Hot savoury items	Pies, pastries, sausage rolls, quiche or other savoury pastries,
Alcohol	Excessive supply of alcohol is not recommended; if provided limit to no more than two standard drinks per person.

TIP: *Healthy Choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals* (<http://www.health.vic.gov.au/healthychoices/>) provides more detailed criteria.

Appendix 2 – Food Safety



Cold storage

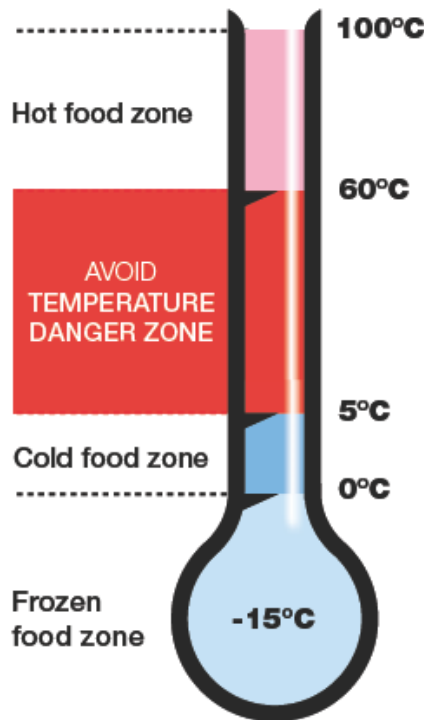
- Cold food must be 5°C or colder.
- Frozen food must be frozen hard.
- Check the temperature of fridges and cold storage areas regularly.
- Thaw food in your fridge, away from, and below, cooked or ready to eat food.

Preparation

- Limit the time that high-risk food is in the temperature danger zone and return to the refrigerator during delays.
- If food is kept within the temperature danger zone for a total time of 4 hours or more, throw it out.

Cross-contamination

- Cross-contamination occurs when harmful bacteria or allergens spread to food from other food, surfaces, hands or equipment. This can lead to food-poisoning, to ensure crosscontamination does not occur, make sure you;
 - Keep raw food separate from cooked or ready-to-eat food.
 - Use separate utensils and cutting boards when preparing raw and cooked or ready-to-eat food.



Cooking food

- Use a thermometer to make sure foods are thoroughly cooked and the centre reaches 75°C.
- Hot food must be kept at 60°C or hotter.
- Check that only clear juices run from thoroughly cooked minced meat, poultry, chicken or rolled roasts.

Cooling food

- High-risk food must cool from 60°C to 21°C in the first 2 hours, and then to 5°C or lower in the next 4 hours.
- Once food has cooled to 21°C put it in the refrigerator or freezer.
- Large portions of food take longer to cool. Divide large portions into smaller batches before cooling.

Cleaning

- Use clean, sanitised and dry cutting boards, equipment and utensils.
- Clean and rinse wiping cloths after each use, and change frequently.
- Wash hands thoroughly and regularly.

For more information call 1300 364 352
www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety



Temperature



Hygiene



Cross-contamination



Department of Health

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TIP: Display posters in common food areas to promote safe food practices in the workplaces, including hand washing, safe food storage and safe use of kitchen equipment. Comprehensive food safety information, including resources and posters to be used in the workplace, can be found at: <http://health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety/about.htm>

Ensure all kitchens, staff rooms and areas where food is prepared or stored, are cleaned regularly and food will be stored safely

Appendix 3 – Sample action plan

Step	Activities	Responsibility	Measure of success	Date	Done
Getting started					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessing current situation					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
Development of actions and alternatives					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
Putting the plan into action					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintaining momentum					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>
					<input type="checkbox"/>

www.health.vic.gov.au/nutrition
