

Healthy Meeting Policy FAQs

Will healthy meetings be more expensive?

By focusing on ordering the appropriate amount of food to reduce waste and eliminating the purchase of sugar-sweetened beverages, the cost can be comparable.

Why can't we buy sugar-sweetened beverages?

Sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs) contribute to increased risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and tooth decay. Additionally, with all of the work that our employees are doing with external partners (specifically the metro healthy beverage partnership), it's important that we set a good example in our own workplace and practice what we preach.

Why are active meeting breaks important? Shouldn't people exercise outside of work time?

Physical activity breaks can improve concentration and increase energy levels during a meeting. When it comes to activity – every little bit counts! Excessive sitting has been shown to have negative consequences on our health, so even a five minute walk/stretch break can be beneficial. Since we spend so much of our time in the workplace, we should make an effort to include some activity throughout the day when possible. Even if employees exercise before/after work, it is still important to stand and move around during the workday too.

Does this mean we aren't allowed to have doughnuts or treats in meetings anymore?

No, it just means that this can't be the only option available. If this were a breakfast meeting, you might consider including whole grain bread with nut butter in addition to the doughnuts. You could serve these items with fresh berries and Greek yogurt for a high protein choice. The idea of the policy is to make healthy choices readily available. If it were a mid-morning or mid-afternoon meeting, you might reconsider whether food is even necessary.

This seems like a lot of extra time/work. Will we learn more about the policy before being expected to implement it?

There will be a period of education prior to when the policy takes effect to ensure that employees are aware of and comfortable with using it. There is also a toolkit with further resources which can be helpful. The toolkit includes resources such as allergy information, estimating how much food to purchase based on number of attendees, recipes and food safety tips. This will be available to staff as needed along with "cheat sheets" with some of the most-used information easily accessible.

Shouldn't individuals be responsible for their own food choices?

The goal is not to take away food choice, but to be more diligent about the food and beverages that taxpayer dollars are funding and make healthy food an easy choice. Numerous employees have requested a policy like this because consistent unhealthy options can lead to feelings of frustration, especially for those that are actively trying to lose weight or make healthy lifestyle changes. Employees may still bring in whatever food they choose from home.

Who is going to enforce this policy?

The success of this policy will depend on the courtesy and the cooperation of staff. Signage posted in each office will clearly convey the policy to the public (such as, "we are a healthy workplace" signs posted in conference rooms). Everyone is responsible for following and helping to enforce the policy. Issues or noncompliance should be brought to the attention of management.

How does this impact staff-funded purchases?

Meetings and events utilizing staff funds to purchase food and/or beverages do not fall under this policy. It will be up to staff to follow this policy for those events if they so choose. This includes purchases made with the sunshine fund and coffee fund, along with office potlucks, off-site meals and holiday parties.