

August 2018

During the 2016 legislative session, Act 113 was passed and signed into law. This Act requires that all foods and beverages purchased, sold, served or otherwise provided by the State of Vermont – or on behalf of the State of Vermont – will meet food procurement standards set forth by the commissioner of health. Food procurement standards for cafés, cafeterias, catering services and concession stands in state parks and historic sites are posted on the Vermont Department of Health's [website](#).



Why Is This Important?

Three health behaviors – lack of physical activity, poor diet and tobacco use – lead to four chronic diseases – diabetes, heart disease, lung disease and cancer – which are the cause of more than 50% of deaths in Vermont each year. In Vermont, 28 percent of adults are obese, and an additional 34 percent are overweight. As an employer and host of state facilities and meetings, it is imperative that we lead the effort to *make the healthy choice the easy choice* by providing healthy food options.

In 2015, state employees slated to move back to the Waterbury campus were surveyed for a Vermont Certified Public Manager project. The survey asked about food preferences for the café in the new building. With a 47 percent response rate, 89 percent of employees said they preferred healthy food in their diet always or as often as possible. Seventy-five percent of employees said they would be willing to spend more money for healthier options if they were available in the building, and 72 percent said they prefer locally grown or prepared items. Similar to other dietary needs related to food allergies, religious or cultural restrictions, food offerings at state buildings and events must include healthy choices for those who want them.

The Vermont Food Standards are based on the following guiding principles:

- Emphasize fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Reduce overall sodium content.
- Minimize use of processed foods that contain added sugar and sodium.
- Recommend healthy cooking techniques, such as baking, roasting, broiling, grilling, poaching, steaming and stir-frying.
- Serve smaller portions if high-calorie items are provided – for example, half sandwiches or bagels.

- Serve healthy local options when possible.
- Make water available at every meal.

These standards do not apply to private vendors in buildings where the state rents space.

Implementing the Standards

The approach of the Vermont Food Standards is simple: ensure that healthy choices are available at all times. This can be accomplished by offering fresh fruits and vegetables, low-fat and low-sodium options, water, 100% fruit juice and low-fat milk. These are already available at the cafés and cafeterias in state office buildings. Hotels and other conference venues as well as many local catering businesses that host or cater state functions have already been working with these guidelines, so implementation is easy. Sample menus and other resources are available in this document.

Technical assistance is also available from the Health Department's Physical Activity and Nutrition program. Contact Sue Kamp at susan.kamp@vermont.gov or call 802-951-4006 for assistance.

One way to monitor compliance with the Vermont Food Standards, is to use the Health Department's prior approval form (attached). This form can be replicated for your state agency's use, something similar can be developed, or there may already be a process in your agency to check and approve orders before they are placed. *It is each agency's responsibility to implement a monitoring process to ensure compliance with these standards.*

Catering Meetings

In the event that a state agency is hosting a meal during a meeting or conference, the Vermont Food Standards will be used to guide menu choices. Meeting planners should take the following steps to comply with the standards:

- 1) Make selections using the menu provided by the caterer or venue.
 - A. Use the Vermont Food Standards as guidance, making sure that both the foods and beverages supplied include items that are low in fat, sugar and sodium.
 - B. If you don't see what you need on the menu, discuss it with the caterer or venue. They should be able to supply this food.
- 2) Use your state agency's approval system for ordering food.
- 3) Once approved, the food order can be placed.

Catered Meals for Meetings

Continental Breakfast:

- Whole grain bagels cut in half to allow for smaller portions

- Low-fat cream cheese, no-sugar-added jam, natural peanut butter
- Non-fat or low-fat yogurt, that is low in added sugars
- Fresh fruit salad or whole fruit
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Small whole grain muffins or larger muffins cut in half
- Breakfast sandwiches or burritos with egg and low- or no- fat toppings on whole grain English muffins or wraps
- Coffee service, 100% juice, water

Lunch:

- Broth-based soups with vegetables
- Half-sandwiches or wraps
 - Whole grain bread with roasted or grilled tofu, lean meats, low-fat cheese and a variety of veggie toppings
 - Include vegetable sandwiches or wraps (whole grain) such as:
 - Southwestern bean and vegetable
 - Tomato and basil
 - Peanut butter and jelly
 - Roasted vegetables
 - Hummus
- Mixed green salad
- Hummus
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Whole or cut fruit
- Whole grain pasta or rice salad (made with light vinaigrettes or low-fat dressings)
- Bean salad
- Protein salads (prepared with low-fat mayo)
 - Egg salad
 - Tuna salad
 - Chicken salad
- Low-Salt or Baked Chips or air-popped popcorn
- If dessert is desired, provide a choice of whole fruit, fruit salad or applesauce with no added sugar, or low- or non-fat, low-sugar yogurt.

Hotel or Conference Center Menus

Continental Breakfast:

- Seasonal fruit
- Whole grain breads or bagels cut in half
- Natural peanut butter, low-fat cream cheese, low sugar or 100% fruit jams

- Low-fat granola
- Oatmeal
- Breakfast sandwiches or burritos with egg and low- or no- fat toppings on whole grain English muffins or wraps
- Low-fat yogurt
- 100% juice
- Coffee service, including low-fat milk
- Water

Lunch:

- Salad buffets: request toppings (chicken, tofu, cheese, etc.) on the side, low-fat dressings on the side
- Sandwich Buffets:
 - Low-fat or low-sodium meats
 - Low-fat cheeses
 - Vegetarian options should be provided: grilled vegetables, hummus
 - Whole grain breads, wraps or rolls
 - Low-fat or low-sodium condiments
- Salads made with low-fat dressing or dressing on the side
- Broth-based (not cream-based) soups that are low in sodium and include vegetables
- Hot Entrées:
 - Vegetable stir fry with tofu and brown rice
 - Grilled chicken with whole grain starch and steamed vegetables
 - Baked fish (scrod, haddock) with green salad and whole grain starch

Dessert:

- Fresh fruit kabobs with dark chocolate drizzle
- Fruit salad
- Berry parfait with low- or non-fat yogurt
- Whole fruit

Selection of water, 100% juice and unsweetened iced tea

Break:

- Fresh fruit platter or whole fruit
- Fresh raw vegetable platter with low-fat, low-sodium dip

- Coffee and tea service, water, seltzer, 100% juices

Further Information and Resource

Sodium

The average American diet includes too much sodium – 90 percent of the sodium we eat is in the form of salt. More than 75 percent of this sodium comes from pre-packaged foods and restaurant meals. Eating too much sodium increases the risk of high blood pressure. High blood pressure can lead to heart disease and stroke, the nation's first and third leading causes of death.

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020* recommends that people consume less than 2300 mg of sodium a day – about 1 teaspoon of salt. People with high blood pressure, diabetes or kidney disease, people age 51 or older, or African Americans of any age, should consume no more than 1500 mg of sodium a day – about 2/3 teaspoon of salt.

Tips for reducing sodium:

- Salt is often in foods that are not considered savory or salty, such as dairy products (especially cheeses), cereals and instant hot cereals, bread and condiments. Read labels and choose items with 200 mg of sodium or less.
- Avoid processed products whenever possible. If this is not possible, read labels to find the lowest sodium versions.
- Select whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, lower-sodium dairy products, whole grains, dry and fresh beans and peas, unsalted nuts, eggs and minimally processed meats whenever possible.
- Avoid pickled and brined foods and read labels to limit portions when offering olives.
- Let your caterers and suppliers know you are interested in lower sodium products.

Sugar

Healthy eating patterns limit added sugars. Less than 10 percent of daily calories should come from added sugars. Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods or beverages when they are processed or prepared. This does not include naturally occurring sugars, such as those consumed as part of milk and fruits. Choose beverages with no added sugars, such as water, 100% juice, low-fat or fat-free milk. Reduce portion sizes on desserts and sweet snacks and choose no-sugar-added versions of canned fruit, fruit sauces and yogurt.

Dairy

Most people over the age of two should choose fat-free or low-fat milk and other dairy products such as yogurt. This includes lactose-free or lactose-reduced products and fortified soy beverages.

Whole Grains

The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020* recommends that half of all grains consumed be whole grains. Shifting from refined or white grains to whole grain versions of commonly consumed foods increases whole grains in the diet. For example, switching from white to 100% whole wheat breads, whole grain pasta, and brown rice. Review the ingredient list on packaged foods to select foods that have whole grains listed as the first grain ingredient. Reduce refined grain desserts and sweet snacks such as cakes, cookies and pastries. These foods are also high in added sugars, solid fats, or both, and are a common source of excess calories.

Protein

Based on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020*, adults should make lean protein between 10 to 30 percent of their daily calories. For example, someone who weighs 150 pounds needs about 2,000 calories a day to maintain their weight. That means they need 200-600 calories of proteins, or about 5-6 ounces per day. Sources rich in protein include beans, nuts, soy, meat, fish, dairy and eggs.

Healthy Incentives: How to say thank you! I appreciate the work you did.

Incentivizing employees is an important part of supervision. Employees need to know that supervisors notice and recognize their day-to-day efforts, especially when they go above and beyond their job duties. Here are some ideas for ways to provide incentives and thank employees that will help them feel good about their work, but not add inches to their waistline.

Non-Food Incentives:

Celebrate a job well done. Even more than money, an incentive motivates employee performance.

- Take the time to thank the employee for a job well done.
- Recognize one employee per week or month. Create a simple "ABCD" card to be given when someone goes "Above the Call of Duty".
- Honor employees at staff meetings. Recognize someone at the start of every staff meeting.
- Devote space on a bulletin board or poster for employee recognition. Encourage other employees to post thank you cards, too.
- Feature employee recognition in a newsletter.
- Have a designated dress casual day.
- Give a small plant, flowers or low-cost books.
- Give stress balls or other trinkets.
- Have a supervisor swap task-for-task with an employee for a day.

Healthy Food Incentives:

- Smoothies at staff meetings or make your own in the kitchen with low-fat or non-fat ingredients
- Fruit tray
- Veggie tray
- Potluck with healthy foods
 - Provide sample recipes
 - Challenge staff to find low-calorie recipes
- Low-fat yogurt parfait potluck celebration
- Catered healthy lunch

REFERENCES:

- *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2015-2020*: <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines-americans>
- *State of Washington Healthy Nutrition Guidelines Implementation Guide for Agencies, Sites and Vendors*: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/340-224-HealthyNutritionGuidelines.pdf>

REQUEST FOR PRIOR APPROVAL

Request for prior approval is required for conferences, staff meetings and training sessions when costs are involved. Please submit this form to the Business Office two weeks prior to the meeting date. Include form with payment to Business Office.

DIVISION: _____ CONTACT PERSON: _____ PHONE #: _____

NAME OR TYPE OF MEETING: _____ DATE OF MEETING: _____

NAME AND LOCATION OF FACILITY: _____

ARE THERE ANY ADEQUATE STATE-OWNED FACILITIES AVAILABLE? ____

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING: State Employees: _____ Non-state Employees: _____

COST OF MEETING:

ROOM CHARGE: _____

Group rate of _____ a person

MEALS: \$ _____

OR

(Circle meal: breakfast, lunch, dinner.)

Individually reimburse on expense account at _____ a person

MILEAGE: \$ _____

LODGING \$ _____

HONORARIUMS: \$ _____

List names: _____

OTHER: \$ _____

Explain: _____

TOTAL APPROXIMATE COST AND SOURCE OF FUNDS: _____

PROGRAM CHARGED TO (cost center): _____

VERMONT FOOD STANDARDS:

To ensure and to promote healthy eating during state sponsored meetings and conference, please use the following standards: (recommended menus for lunches can be found on VDH [website](#)).

Beverages

No sugar sweetened beverages (This includes any beverages with added sugar or other caloric sweeteners such as high fructose corn syrup, including soda, sports drinks, fruit drinks, teas, flavored/enhanced waters, and energy drinks). If providing milk use only 1% or fat-free milk. Drinking water should always be available.

Food

- A fruit (not fruit juice) or vegetable choice is included -When grains are served a whole grain food is included.
- Meals should include a low fat vegetarian option, lean meat, poultry, or fish.
- Offer half or reduced-size portions of sandwiches or entrees.
- Serve lower fat versions of condiments (e.g. dressings, mayo, cream cheese, or sour cream)
- Danish, pastries, cookies, cakes, pies or deep-fried foods are not allowed.

Signature of Division Director or Representative Date

Signature of Commissioner or Representative Date