



Promote Healthy Food Choices at the Workplace

WHY this is important

Over 60 percent of employed adults in Vermont are overweight or obese, and more than 80 percent do not eat the recommended amounts of fruits and vegetables a day.

Healthy eating improves overall wellness and decreases obesity and the risk of developing chronic diseases. Worksites can play an important role in promoting healthy eating and making sure healthy food options are available to employees at meetings and events, and in vending machines and cafeterias.

HOW to support this outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Provide information about food resources in your community.
- Offer healthy food options at events.
- Create a nutrition challenge.
- Provide incentives for participating in nutrition and weight management activities.
- Include employees' family members in campaigns that promote healthy nutrition.

On-Site Support:

- Start an employee vegetable garden or become a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) drop-off site.
- Host an on-site nutrition education opportunity such as a free My Healthy VT Workshop.
- Provide on-site biometric screenings.

On-Site Support (continued):

- Provide refrigerators, microwaves and break areas.
- Provide access to free water available throughout the day.
- Support local food initiatives on-site by:
 - offering an on-site Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) program (discounting the cost of a CSA program can make this strategy more effective).
 - organizing a worksite garden—consider accessibility issues to make sure the garden can be accessed by individuals with disabilities.
 - providing local food in the cafeteria.
 - exploring opportunities with local farms for a mobile or on-site farmers' market.

Policy Changes:

- Adopt a healthy meeting policy or written guidelines.
- Create healthy food guidelines for cafes and vending machines.
- Support breaktime policies by encouraging a culture where staff regularly take their lunch break.
- Support healthy choices from vending machines and cafeterias by:
 - using competitive pricing to make healthier choices more economical in vending machines or cafeterias.
 - implementing healthy vending machine and cafeteria standards to increase the percentage of healthy options that are available.
 - using signs or symbols to make healthy choices stand out, and make nutrition information available for foods and beverages.

Becoming a Bronze, Silver or Gold Breastfeeding Friendly Employer also support healthy eating and nutrition. See page 20 for breastfeeding-friendly strategies for workplaces!

WHERE to go for resources

- Get worksite garden support at Vermont Community Garden Network: www.vcgn.org
- Find a CSA program: www.nofavt.org
- For healthy vending tools: <https://nems-upenn.org>
- Vermont 2-1-1 (dial 2-1-1)
- Food access resources: <https://www.hungerfreevt.org/resource-hubs>
- Healthy Living Workshops: MyHealthyVT.org
- American Cancer Society Tool for Planning Healthy Events: www.acsworkplacesolutions.com/wp-spdfs/meetingwell_guidebook_f251300.pdf

Toolkit ▶ *Sample Nutrition Policy Template*

For more info ▶ The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you: www.healthvermont.gov/local.