



Healthy Catering Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

For the purpose of this policy, the University of Ottawa Heart Institute (UOHI) and the Ottawa Heart Institute Research Corporation (OHIRC) are collectively referred to as “the Institute”.

The Institute is dedicated to understanding, treating, and preventing heart disease. Staff, physicians, and volunteers are at the core of achieving this mandate, and supporting their overall health and well-being is a key factor in ensuring delivery of the highest quality care and services to patients and the community at large. As a leading health care provider, the Institute has a unique opportunity to role model healthy environments and behaviours that facilitate the ability of employees and visitors to make the healthy food choices we teach patients in our clinical settings.

Establishing a Healthy Workplace Nutrition Environment means providing surroundings and conditions that foster good health and support healthy eating. Giving consideration to the foods and beverages made available at various meetings and events is one important component.

2. PURPOSE

The Institute is committed to promoting workplace health and wellness through meetings and events where food and beverages are provided. The purpose of this policy is to:

- Position the Institute as a leading cardiovascular health centre across all aspects of service delivery;
- Foster a workplace nutrition environment that promotes and models healthy eating;
- Facilitate decreased consumption of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and beverages (i.e. foods and beverages high in calories and low in vitamins, minerals, and other micronutrients); and,
- Provide guiding principles to support Institute staff’s ability to offer healthy, delicious-tasting foods and beverages at approved meetings and events.

3. POLICY

This policy applies to all meetings and events that are organized or hosted by the Institute, whether internal to the Institute or externally-sponsored/ offsite events being organized in part or fully by the Institute, where food or beverages are provided. This is inclusive of:

- Workshops & presentations
- Conferences

- Lunch 'n Learn events
- Rounds (Grand, Research, Cardiology, Rehabilitation, etc.)
- Endowment lectures
- CME events
- Town Halls
- Other functions where Institute partners, stakeholders and/or the public are present

3.1 Applying the policy

The Institute will ensure nutritious food and beverage offerings are provided where appropriate at all meetings and events according to the *Nutritional Framework for Food and Beverage Offerings at Institute-Catered Functions* (see Appendix for details).

3.2 Collaborating with community partners

Corporate sponsors and foods served at external (offsite) events hosted collaboratively by the Institute and community partners must be assessed to ensure alignment with Institute health promotion messages. Institute staff may refuse to participate in community events or partnerships that are not in line with the nutrition messages established in this policy.

3.3 Consideration of the Broader Public Sector Accountability Act (BPSAA)

The BPSAA is designed to improve accountability and transparency in hospitals and across the Broader Public Sector (BPS). Included in the Act is a BPS Expense Directive which states that hospitality may never be offered solely for the benefit of BPS organizations. When considering catering for a function, consider your audience and whether or not it is appropriate to offer food and beverage; once confirmed, the Nutritional Framework outlined in this policy would apply.

3.4 Where the policy does not apply

This policy is intended for catering purposes only and does not apply to daily food retail offerings at the Institute or foods brought from home.

3.5 Celebrations

Celebrations, such as birthdays, bridal/baby showers, team potlucks, and seasonal parties such as the Holly Jolly Social, also offer an opportunity for the Institute to role model healthy nutrition environments. Staff are strongly encouraged to ensure nutritious food and beverage offerings are considered and made available at celebrations within the Institute.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 In-house catering services (Tickers cafeteria)

The Institute cafeteria, Tickers, shall serve as the primary supplier of food and beverages for catered events, unless the event is held at an hour or venue not suitable to be serviced by Tickers.

4.2 External vendors

When engaging with external food providers or venues, Institute staff are responsible for ensuring that the vendor confirms as part of their contractual obligation, their ability to produce and deliver a menu that meets the Nutritional Framework outlined in this policy. Language to be included is provided in the Appendix to this policy. Consultation services with a Registered Dietitian will be made available to support Institute staff in developing a suitable menu.

5. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Division of Prevention and Rehabilitation will:

- Provide leadership and implementation support for the policy, including in-service training opportunities to familiarize staff with the guidelines and menu consultation services with a Registered Dietitian as required.

Directors, Managers & Supervisors will:

- Ensure awareness of the policy with all staff and volunteers.
- Ensure adherence to the policy, for example, by reviewing catering requests.

Administration will:

- Make the policy available on InfoWeb.

Employees will:

- Follow the guidelines when ordering food or beverages for meetings and events.
- Share the guidelines with catering vendors and solicit their support to amend food offerings according to your needs.

6. REFERENCES

- Broader Public Sector Accountability Act: <http://www.oha.com/CURRENTISSUES/ISSUES/Pages/BroaderPublicSectorAccountabilityAct.aspx>
- Broader Public Sector Expenses Directive: http://www.mgs.gov.on.ca/en/Spotlight2/STDPROD_098139.html
- Canada's Food Guide: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>
- Eastern Ontario Health Unit Healthy Choices Catering Menu & Ordering Guidelines
- Ontario School Food and Beverage Policy: www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/healthyschools/policy.html
- Ontario Society of Nutrition Professionals in Public Health Workplace Nutrition Advisory Group
- Ottawa Public Health (OPH) Policy: Foods Served at External Meetings and Events Hosted by OPH
- UOHI Division of Prevention and Rehabilitation Food and Beverage Policy: www.ccpnetwork.ca/DivisionandPreventionandRehabilitationFoodandBeveragePolicy.htm

APPENDIX:

Nutritional Framework for Food and Beverage Offerings at Institute-Catered Functions

Guiding Principles for Healthy Catering

The following principles are intended to guide food and beverage selection for Institute meetings and events such that the overall offering is higher in essential nutrients (such as fibre, vitamins, and minerals) and lower in saturated & trans fat, sugar, and sodium. The guidelines also consider the *quality* and *quantity* of calories, thereby contributing to a balanced and nutritious food pattern.

- Choose fresh, whole foods over pre-packaged or prepared foods.
- Emphasize brightly coloured vegetables and fruit.
- Use whole grains over refined grains. Common whole grains include corn, oats, quinoa, rice, rye, and wheat. Look for the words “whole grain” as the *first ingredient* of any food product ingredient list.
- All meals should include 3 of the 4 food groups from Canada’s Food Guide.
- Food should be prepared in a healthy manner – that is, using cooking methods that require little or no added fat or sodium, such as baking, barbecuing, boiling, broiling, grilling, microwaving, poaching, roasting, steaming, or stir frying.
- Items such as condiments, spreads, sauces, dips & dressings tend to be high in saturated or trans fat, sugar, and/or sodium. Use these items sparingly, use healthier varieties, and/or offer on the side where possible.
- Foods and beverages should be served in appropriately-sized portions (e.g. slice bagels/ breads in half).
- Dietary and cultural considerations should be taken into account (e.g. vegetarian).

Food Group Suggestions

Vegetables and Fruits:

- Fruit: whole fruit, sliced fruit, fruit skewers or kebabs, fruit salad
- Vegetables: vegetable platter (cut and plated), salad, soup (broth- or tomato-based)

Milk and Alternatives:

- Cheese (28% milk fat or less, phasing towards 20% milk fat or less) (sliced or small cubes)
- Cottage cheese (2% milk fat or less)
- White milk (2% milk fat or less)
- Yogurt (3.25% milk fat or less)

Meat and Alternatives:

- Chick peas & hummus
- Lentils & beans
- Tofu
- Cooked/roasted chicken, turkey, lean beef (vs. deli meats)
- Salmon or tuna
- Eggs (hard-boiled, omelettes or frittatas)
- Nuts & seeds (including nut or seed butters)

Grain Products:

- Brown rice
- Oats or oatmeal
- Whole grain bread products (e.g. sliced bread, rolls, pitas, tortillas, English muffins, bagels, crackers, pizza crust)
- Whole wheat couscous
- Whole wheat pasta
- Quinoa

Beverages:

- Assorted teas and herbal teas (served with 2% milk; a small proportion of 5% creamers may also be provided)
- Coffee (served with 2% milk; a small proportion of 5% creamers may also be provided)
- Diet soft drinks (maximum 355 mL serving, phasing towards 250 mL serving)
- Water (plain or carbonated)
- White milk (2% milk fat or less)
- 100% fruit juice (maximum 300 mL serving, phasing towards 125 mL serving)
- 100% vegetable juice (preferably sodium-reduced)

Miscellaneous Items:

- Healthy marinades and salad dressings can be made easily. Ask vendors to make from scratch using olive oil, herbs, and/or vinegars.

Desserts:*Preferred (healthier) options:*

- Fruit: whole fruit, sliced fruit, fruit skewers or kebabs, fruit salad. Drizzle a small amount of dark chocolate on fruit kebabs, or dip a small amount of dark chocolate on strawberries.
- Low-fat yogurt (3.25% milk fat or less) with fresh berries and honey
- Whole grain baked goods, such as banana bread or zucchini bread

Alternative:

When planning a **comprehensive meal plan** (i.e. for events where a full meal or multiple meals are being provided), it is reasonable to consider offering a small dessert that falls outside of the guidelines (e.g. square, cookie), provided the dessert is reasonably portioned and accompanied by a healthier option (per above). However, desserts that do not follow the guidelines must not be offered as stand-alone refreshments or snacks.

Foods & Beverages to Avoid:

- Deep-fried and other fried foods
- Confectionery items, including candy, chocolate, energy bars, licorice, gum, or gummies
- Popsicles or freezies not prepared with 100% juice
- Chocolate milk
- Energy & sports drinks
- Regular soft drinks & juice-‘ades’
- Butter on sandwiches and wraps
- Salt packets or shakers

Sample Letter of Compliance for External Vendors

[Place on Institute letterhead or add logo]

[Insert date]

Dear Catered Food Supplier,

The University of Ottawa Heart Institute is committed to creating a healthy nutrition environment for our employees and visitors. As part of this commitment, we are requesting that all food and beverages made available at our catered meetings and events comply with the Healthy Catering Policy adopted by our Institute.

The attached *Nutritional Framework for Food and Beverage Offerings at Institute-Catered Functions* will help ensure that your menu is in compliance with our Healthy Catering Policy.

In signing below, you acknowledge that you have read and understood the attached *Nutritional Framework for Food and Beverage Offerings at Institute-Catered Functions* and are able to comply with the standards as outlined.

For more information about the policy, please visit [insert web address]. If you require additional clarification, or if you wish to have your menu assessed by a Registered Dietitian, please contact [insert name and contact info of UOHI staff member organizing the catering].

Thank you in advance for your cooperation. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

The University of Ottawa Heart Institute

Please complete and return to via email or fax to [insert coordinates].

Name of Caterer: _____

Address: _____

Key Contact: _____

Email: _____

Tel: _____

We/I, the above named Caterer, have read and understood the attached *Nutritional Framework for Food and Beverage Offerings at Institute-Catered Functions* and are able to comply with the standards as outlined.

Signature

Date