Healthy Food and Beverages in the Workplace
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Why are healthy choices in the workplace important?

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Making healthy changes in the workplace, where many adults spend much of their day, is an important way to help people be healthier. It also helps cultivate social norms that foster healthier choices and behaviors.

A 2010 study showed that improving the types of foods and beverages served and sold in the workplace positively affected employees' eating behaviors and resulted in net weight loss.

The Guidelines

1. **Follow a healthy eating pattern across the lifespan.** All food and beverage choices matter. Choose a healthy eating pattern at an appropriate calorie level to help achieve and maintain a healthy body weight, support nutrient adequacy, and reduce the risk of chronic disease.

2. **Focus on variety, nutrient density, and amount.** To meet nutrient needs within calorie limits, choose a variety of nutrient-dense foods across and within all food groups in recommended amounts.

3. **Limit calories from added sugars and saturated fats and reduce sodium intake.** Consume an eating pattern low in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Cut back on foods and beverages higher in these components to amounts that fit within healthy eating patterns.

4. **Shift to healthier food and beverage choices.** Choose nutrient-dense foods and beverages across and within all food groups in place of less healthy choices. Consider cultural and personal preferences to make these shifts easier to accomplish and maintain.

5. **Support healthy eating patterns for all.** Everyone has a role in helping to create and support healthy eating patterns in multiple settings nationwide, from home to school to work to communities.

Key Strategies in
Creating a Culture of Healthy Eating at Your Workplace

- Organizational leader support
- Communication with employees
- Identify and use vendors and caterers who provide healthy foods and beverages
- Provide education to support healthy changes
- Implementation of policy

Focus on Healthy Beverages

Healthy Beverage Program Facts

According to industry surveys, employees rate water as the most important beverage choice in the workplace

Water – 34%

Unsweetened coffee – 25%

Soda/iced teas – 16%

Juice – 13%

Sweetened coffee drinks – 6%

Source: Public Health Law Center

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Developing a Healthy Beverage Program
for your Worksite

- Convene a workgroup
- Assess the beverage environment – baseline information on accessibility at meetings, in vending machines, in cafeteria
- Develop a healthy beverage policy
- Communicate the changes
- Provide education
- Implement policy
- Address challenges

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Healthy Beverages – Financial Impacts

- Many institutions report neutral revenue impacts when changing to healthy beverage standards

- The demand for healthy beverages is increasing

- Healthy food and beverage programs promote healthier employees, and healthier employees mean lower healthcare costs

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Healthy Beverages – Environmental Issues

Healthy beverage programs can also be an environmental initiative

Replacing sugary drink offerings with healthy selections dispensed in bulk (coffee, tea, juice, water stations) can eliminate the need to purchase single-use beverage bottles

Why focus on sugary drinks?

- About 16% of American's calories come from added sugars, and <u>46%</u> of these are from drinks with added sugar
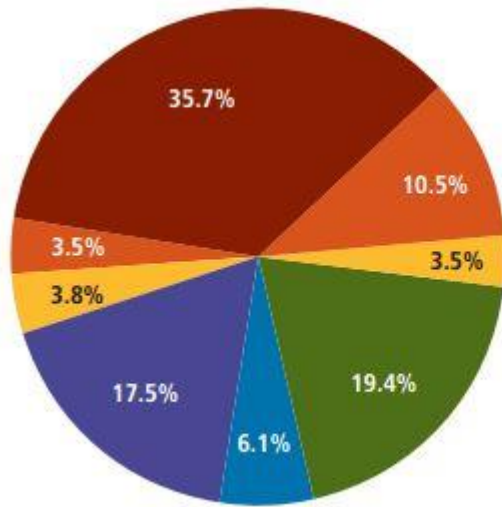
FIGURE 1: Sources of Added Sugars in Americans's Diets

Pie chart values: 35.7%, 10.5%, 3.5%, 3.5%, 3.8%, 19.4%, 6.1%, 17.5%

Legend:
- Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks
- Fruit drinks
- Tea
- Grain and dairy-based desserts
- Candy
- All other foods
- Ready-to-eat cereal
- Sugars and honey

Source: U.S. Dep't of Agric. and U.S. Dep't of Health and Human Servs., Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 29 (7th ed. 2010).

Higher consumption of sugary drinks associated with higher risk of:
- Weight gain
- Type 2 diabetes
- Heart disease
- Metabolic syndrome

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Defining "Sugary" Drinks

Sugary drinks contain caloric sweeteners and include carbonated soft drinks, "juice" drinks, sport drinks, tea and coffee drinks, and energy drinks.

Examples:

Soft drinks – Coke, Pepsi, Mountain Dew
Fruit drinks – Sunny D, Hawaiian Punch
Tea and coffee drinks – Arizona Ice Tea, Snapple
Energy drinks – Red Bull, Monster, Rockstar
Sport drinks –Powerade, Gatorade

Defining "Healthy" drinks

Water

Milk – (contains naturally occurring sugar)

100% fruit juice – smaller portions

Diet/Artificially sweetened drinks

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Water

Ensure that water is always available at no cost

Offer water as a beverage choice at all meetings

Consider ways to promote drinking water
- refillable water bottle stations
- attractive water pitchers
- serve water with sliced lemons, oranges
- posters and educational materials on the benefits of water

Other healthy beverages

- Fat free or 1% milk
- 100% fruit or veg juice – serving size of 8 oz or less
- Coffee and tea – decaf or caffeinated

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Why A Formal Healthy Beverage Policy?

● Gives credibility and ensures sustainability to the changes being made to the healthy beverage access at work

● Communicates to employees and managers the importance and intent of healthy beverage changes

● Can more easily be incorporated into vending contracts and requests for bids

Beverage Policy Development

There is no "one size fits all" for beverage policies. Each organization has to consider its own culture and needs.

Ideally, a beverage policy covers:
- Beverages provided and served at meetings and events
- Beverages in snack stations
- Beverages sold in cafeterias and vending machines

A beverage policy should:
- Identify a standard for "healthy" beverages, including serving size
- Identify a criteria of choices (all beverages must be healthy, 50% of beverages must be healthy, etc)

Components of a strong beverage policy:

- Eliminates all sugary beverages from being served or sold in the workplace
- Provide only the drinks that meet healthy beverage standards in meetings or events
- Encourages consumption of water by making it accessible and available at all times
- Provides education to staff to reinforce healthy messages

Example of other beverage policy standards:

- At least 50% of offerings in vending machines should be water or no-calorie choices
- Only healthy beverages are provided at meetings and events
- Pricing structure is developed so that healthy beverages are more affordable than sugary drinks

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Education –

Provide reinforcing messages about healthy drinks

www.partnership4health.org

How PartnerSHIP 4 Health can help

- Resources
  - Sample policies
  - Resources from the Public Health Law Center

- $400-$750 mini-grant available, which can be used to support healthy beverage initiatives
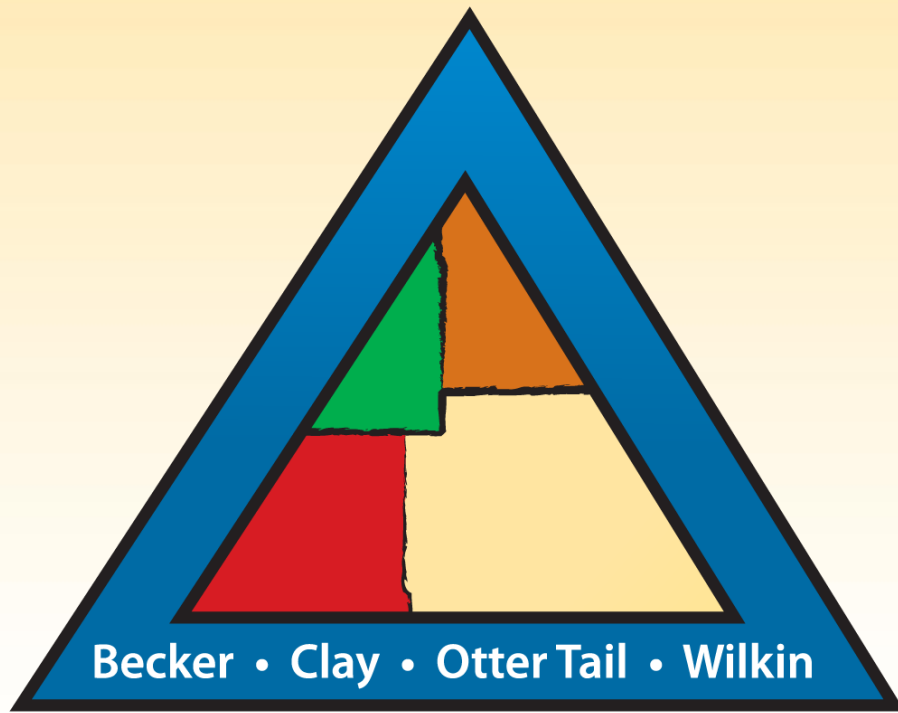
Other Resources

Healthy Workplace Food and Beverage Toolkit

American Heart Association

- http://www.heart.org/idc/groups/heart-public/@wcm/@fc/documents/downloadable/ucm_465693.pdf

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