

# HEALTHY CHOICES IN HEALTH FACILITIES

## Healthy Food and Drink in NSW Health Facilities for Staff and Visitors

### FAQs

#### What is Healthy Choices in Health Facilities?

- It's a NSW Health policy to move our health facilities towards providing healthier food and drink options for staff and visitors.
- We want to support our staff and visitors make healthy food and drink choices by increasing healthy options. Sugar-sweetened drinks with no nutritional value have already been removed from sale. Over the coming year staff and visitors can expect to see gradual changes with more healthy food choices on offer.

#### Why do we need it?

- One in two adults and more than one in five children in NSW are overweight or obese, so providing more healthier food and drink choices has never been more important.
- As a health provider, we want to lead by example by making healthy food and drink choices easy.
- 8 out of 10 staff and visitors support more healthy food and drink options in health facilities and we're committed to making this happen.<sup>1</sup>
- NSW Health has a responsibility for the wellbeing of our staff and visitors which is why we're increasing the healthy food and drink choices in our facilities.

#### Where does Healthy Choices in Health Facilities apply?

- It applies to outlets in NSW Health facilities where foods and drinks are available to staff and visitors and any catering provided for meetings and special events. e.g.: cafés and cafeterias, kiosks and coffee carts, vending machines, convenience stores, newsagents and pharmacies.
- It doesn't apply to food provided to patients or foods and drinks brought in by staff and visitors from outside the hospital or home.

#### How are foods and drinks classified?

- Based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines, foods and drinks are classified as either 'Everyday' (healthy) options, or 'Occasional' (less healthy) options.
- NSW Health facilities are slowly working towards offering more 'Everyday' (healthy) foods and drinks to at least 75% of the offering.
- Smaller portion sizes and the Health Star Rating are also used to select the healthiest versions of 'Occasional' (less healthy) foods and drinks.



**MORE**  
healthy food  
and drink choices



**SMALLER**  
portions of unhealthy  
food choices



**No sugar-sweetened  
drinks**

**TRY A HEALTHY OPTION TODAY**

**MAKE  
HEALTHY  
NORMAL**





## FOOD AND DRINK

### What are some examples of 'Everyday' and 'Occasional' foods?

- 'Everyday' foods are the healthiest choice and include sandwiches, salads, pasta, stir-fries and curries, wholegrain cereal, yoghurt and fruit.
- 'Occasional' foods are the less healthy choice and should only be eaten sometimes and in small amounts. These include hot chips, cakes, meat pies, salty snacks and lollies. Healthy Choices in Health Facilities continues to provide less healthy choices but in smaller portion sizes and with a health star rating of 3.5 star or more.

### Will I still be able to buy a chocolate bar and other less healthy options?

- Yes. Less healthy items will still be available, including chocolate bars, but they will make up no more than 25% of the food offered in facilities.
- Smaller portion sizes and the Health Star Rating (3.5 stars or above) will also be used to ensure that the healthier options of these foods are available.

### Why are some of the serving sizes changing?

- Serving sizes of food have increased dramatically over the past thirty years, contributing to obesity rates. This is why we're working to reduce serves of 'Occasional' (unhealthy) foods to their original sizes.
- Selling smaller portions is one way to support people to make healthier choices. This is why you will see smaller portion sizes of 'Occasional' (unhealthy) foods such as sweet muffins and hot chips.

### What drinks are available to staff and visitors in health facilities?

- Water is always the healthiest drink but other popular options will still be available such as juices with no added sugar, diet drinks, tea, coffee and milk drinks.
- Flavoured milk is still available; unlike other sugar-sweetened beverages, flavoured milk provides essential nutrients such as protein and calcium.



## RETAIL

### How are you working with retailers to implement Healthy Choices in Health Facilities?

- We are pleased to have the support of commercial food and drink retailers, suppliers and the United Hospital Auxiliaries of NSW to co-lead this drive for a healthier NSW.
- Our experience across the state shows that a range of businesses are able to successfully implement Healthy Choices in Health Facilities and provide more options for their customers.

- We know that staff and visitors are also supportive – 8 out of 10 support having more healthy food and drink choices.<sup>1</sup>
- Consumer demand for healthy foods and drinks continues to grow, and those retailers who can meet this demand will benefit.
- NSW Health is supporting retailers with tools to help them to easily find healthier options.



## HEALTH

### Can I still get a sugary drink if I have diabetes and I am having a hypo?

- Diabetes Australia recommends other alternatives to sugar-sweetened soft drinks in response to a hypo (a symptomatic hypoglycaemic event), such as 6 to 7 jelly beans, or half a glass of orange juice, or 3 teaspoons of sugar or honey, or glucose lollies. 99% fruit juice is available as are small portions of lollies.
- We recommend that staff and visitors with diabetes be prepared at all times to treat their hypoglycaemia, and not rely on cafés, vending machines and other sale points, as these may be closed or out of stock.

### What if my sick child (a patient) needs a sugar-sweetened drink like lemonade?

- Healthy Choices in Health Facilities doesn't apply to food provided to patients in hospital.
- To meet their special needs, the nutritional quality of meals and snacks served to in-patients is guided by a separate policy that has been in place for some years. Patients will be able to receive a sugar-sweetened drink under this policy, where it is required.
- Patients, visitors and staff will still be able to bring foods and drinks from outside.



## FURTHER INFORMATION

### I think healthy food and drink choices is a good idea. How can I support it?

- Purchasing healthy food and drink choices at your hospital is a great way to show your support.
- If you'd be interested in being an ambassador for Healthy Choices in Health Facilities and help us spread the word about it, please contact us at [healthyfood@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:healthyfood@health.nsw.gov.au) or call our helpline on 1800 930 966.

## CONTACT US

More information can be found at [www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal](http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/heal).  
Questions can be directed to [healthyfood@health.nsw.gov.au](mailto:healthyfood@health.nsw.gov.au)  
or call our Helpline on 1800 930 966.

<sup>1</sup> Survey of n=2394 participants across 10 rural/metro hospitals in NSW.