UC Berkeley Guide to Healthy Meetings and Events
A tool for campus event planners

Developed by Health*Matters
UC Berkeley Wellness Program
for Faculty and Staff
Dear Campus Event Planners,

The University is committed to creating and sustaining a healthful, safe, and inspiring place to live, work, and study. This *UC Berkeley Guide for Healthy Meetings and Events*, developed as a tool for campus event planners, represents a step toward that commitment.

Meetings, events, and celebrations are a major part of the campus culture. Many meetings and events include food and beverages, as well as long periods of sitting. This guide provides recommendations and resources on how to make meetings more healthful for faculty, staff, and students by including nutritious food and beverage options, using sustainable supplies, and providing activity breaks.

This guide has been developed and produced by University Health Services Health*Matters, the wellness program for faculty and staff, with input from the UC Berkeley Nutrition and Physical Activity Work Group and campus event planners. We would like to thank the work group and all those who contributed their expertise and ideas.

We hope you will find this *Guide for Healthy Meetings and Events* a useful resource, as you share in the commitment to making campus gatherings more healthful.

Ron Coley  
Associate Vice Chancellor  
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Executive Director  
University Health Services
This UC Berkeley Guide for Healthy Meetings and Events supports a campus effort to foster health and create an environment in which opportunities to eat healthfully and be physically active are readily accessible to all faculty, staff, and students.

**Why a focus on healthy meetings?**

It is well recognized that our physical and social environments have a tremendous impact on our health. The environment in which we work, study, and live each day shapes many of the choices we make, and either can support or hinder efforts to eat well and be active on a daily basis.

Faculty, staff, and students spend a significant portion of each day on campus and make food, beverage, and physical activity choices all day long, including at meetings and events. With the majority of today’s meals and snacks prepared by food service providers, our health depends upon healthy food options being available everywhere we access food.

Healthy eating isn’t about all or nothing—it’s about balancing choices. Our goal is for healthy options to be accessible wherever food is provided, regardless of whether food is prepared by a caterer, restaurant, or at home. In addition to this, when an activity break is included at meetings longer than two hours, we can make great strides in supporting the health of the faculty, staff, and students and creating a healthy campus.

**How were these guidelines developed?**

The UC Berkeley Guide for Healthy Meetings and Events provides guidelines for nutrition, physical activity, and sustainability recommended for campus meetings and events. These principles are in alignment with the Eat Well Berkeley nutrition guidelines, and are derived from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and State of California nutrition standards, and are supported by the UC Berkeley Nutrition and Physical Activity Work Group and campus sustainability goals.

**Eat Well Berkeley Catering**

Eat Well Berkeley Catering encourages healthy food and beverage options at meetings and events by helping caterers serving the campus and campus event planners to identify healthy menu options using the Eat Well Berkeley check mark (✓) icon.

*Eat Well Berkeley is a nutrition initiative created in partnership with the City of Berkeley.*
Eat 5-9 servings of fruits and vegetables. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), only 14% of adults eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables. A variety of colorful fruit and vegetables contribute essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber. Limit juices, high in calories and low in fiber, to less than 6-8 ounces per serving.

Reduce sodium and sugar. Research shows that eating less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium (about 1 tsp of salt) per day may reduce the risk of high blood pressure. Most of the sodium people eat comes from processed foods, not from the salt shaker. Sugars contribute calories with few, if any, nutrients. Look for food and beverages low in added sodium and sugar.

Drink water. Water meets the body’s fluid needs. Beverages such as sodas, coffee specialty drinks and other sweetened drinks can add hundreds of calories a day without any nutritional value.

Consume less bad fat, more good fat. There are benefits to eating less saturated fat and eliminating trans fats, both contributors to heart disease. Saturated fats are found in red meat, cold cuts, butter, cheese, and milk products. Trans fats are found in processed, baked, and fried foods made with “partially hydrogenated” oils. There are health benefits from consuming healthy fats such as mono- and polyunsaturated fats and omega-3 fatty acids, found in olive or canola oils, corn and soybean oils, nuts and seeds, peanut butter and avocados, and salmon and tuna.

Eat healthy portions. Portion sizes of many foods purchased outside of the home have increased dramatically, which in turn has caused increases in body weight. For example, bagels, muffins, cookies and sandwiches have doubled or tripled in size and calories over the past several decades. Choices for healthy portions can be offered by requesting smaller or “mini” portions, cutting baked goods in half, serving sandwich halves, or providing foods in bulk for self-service.

Be active. Regular physical activity helps manage body weight, boosts mood and energy level, and is important for overall health and fitness. The general recommendation is to be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. This can be broken into short bouts of activity that can add up to 30 minutes over the course of the day. Just 10 minutes of an activity break during a long meeting can support participants in achieving this goal.

Choose whole grains. Whole grains found in breads, cereals, rice, crackers, bulgur, and many other less refined starches provide fiber, vitamins, and minerals and help us feel more satisfied because they take longer to digest, delaying hunger between meals. Half of our daily grains should be whole grains.
Guidelines for Healthy Choices at Campus Meetings and Events

When food and beverages are provided at campus meetings and events, whether purchased from a caterer, local grocery store, or big box food store, it is recommended to include food and beverages that meet the Eat Well Berkeley nutrition guidelines. When purchasing from a caterer that participates in the Eat Well Berkeley program, look for the check mark (✔) to help identify healthy menu choices.

Refreshments of any type

- If any refreshments are being served at a meeting or event, include water and fresh fruit or vegetable options (at a minimum).

Meals and Snacks

- Emphasize fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and nonfat or low fat dairy products.
- Include lean meat such as skinless poultry, fish, beans, and tofu, or eggs, nuts, and seeds.
- Remember to include a vegetarian option; consider a vegan option for larger groups.
- Select food with no trans fat, and low in saturated fat, sodium, and added sugar.
- Choose food that is prepared by grilling, baking, or sautéing with healthy fats.
- Serve healthy portions. See the Portion Plate™ included in this guide.

Beverages

- Water should always be included, preferably served in bulk containers such as water pitchers rather than individual plastic bottles.
- Other healthier beverage choices include (when possible, serve beverages in bulk):
  - Non-caloric beverages such as coffee or tea.
  - Carbonated water or iced teas, flavored or unflavored, with no added sweeteners.
  - Nonfat or 1% milk or dairy-free alternative (soy, rice milks, lactaid).
  - 100% fruit and vegetable juices, less than 6-8 ounces per serving.

Sustainability

- Choose reusable, washable serving containers and eating utensils whenever possible.
- Use paper and compostable products when disposable is the only option.
- Order food, beverages, and condiments in bulk containers or platters rather than single servings.
- Choose food and beverages that are local, organic, fair trade, or humane whenever possible.
- Provide recycling containers for cans, bottles and cardboard/paper. Consider composting* to make the event zero waste. If possible, donate edible leftovers.
- Provide information and signage on the green and healthy aspects of the event.
- Standard signs for compost, recycling and garbage containers are available to download and print (see Resource Section).
- For composting information* and more green recommendations, see the campus Green Event Resource Guide and Green Certification:  [http://sustainability.berkeley.edu/os/pages/gcerts/](http://sustainability.berkeley.edu/os/pages/gcerts/)
Menu Suggestions for Healthy Choices

The following chart is designed as a resource tool to help with planning and selecting food and beverages for meetings and events. It is not all-inclusive and is meant to provide representative examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choose more of these:</th>
<th>Choose fewer of these:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In General</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthy portions (small to moderate) and half portions</td>
<td>Large portions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food prepared by baking, roasting, broiling, grilling, poaching, steaming, stir-frying</td>
<td>Fried food, food prepared or served with a lot of added oil, fat, mayonnaise, and/or dressing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foods prepared with healthy fats such as olive, canola, and soybean oils</td>
<td>Foods prepared with oils or spreads made from trans fat (partially hydrogenated fat), butter or cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole grain products without trans fat, high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS), or added sugar</td>
<td>Baked goods with white flour, trans fats, HFCS, and/or high sugar content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit and vegetables in a variety of colors, sides including fruit and vegetables, platters with half fruit and/or vegetables to complement other choices (cookies, cheese/crackers)</td>
<td>Starchy sides without fruit and vegetables and platters with only refined carbohydrate choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Snacks &amp; Appetizers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit: whole or sliced such as berries, melon, pineapple, grapes, apples, kiwi, banana, dried fruit</td>
<td>Baked goods high in sugar and/or fat such as cakes, pastries, cookies, pies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables: whole or sliced such as baby carrots, pear/cherry tomatoes, broccoli &amp; cauliflower florets, celery, bell pepper; raw, grilled or roasted</td>
<td>Vegetables prepared with a lot of added fat, fried or served with high fat dips or dressings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole grain crackers and breads/pita/tortillas</td>
<td>White flour crackers and breads/pita/tortillas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts and seeds (low in added sugar &amp; salt)</td>
<td>Nuts and seeds high in added sugar &amp; salt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked chips, pretzels, low fat popcorn, breadsticks, rice cakes, “puffed” or “popped” snacks</td>
<td>Fried chips, regular popcorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spreads and dips: hummus, olive tapenade, tuna with lemon, small cheese cubes, salsa, low-fat dips</td>
<td>Spreads and dips: large cheese cubes/slices, salami, high fat dips such as ranch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beverages</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water and carbonated water, unflavored or flavored without sweetener (try adding citrus slices!)</td>
<td>Soda and other sweetened drinks (fruit-flavored drinks, juice, sports drinks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee &amp; hot tea* (decaf or regular), herbal tea *Offer skim or low fat milk in addition to half &amp; half</td>
<td>Sports and energy drinks with caloric sweetener and/or high caffeine content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100% fruit or vegetable juices, less than 6-8 ounces per serving</td>
<td>Juices less than 100% fruit, fruit-flavored drinks, portions of juice greater than 6-8 oz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsweetened iced teas</td>
<td>Sweetened iced teas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfat (skim) or 1% milk, nondairy alternatives</td>
<td>Whole or 2% milk, milk with added sweetener</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Choose more of these:  
### Choose fewer of these:

#### Breakfast

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choose more of these:</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit: fresh, frozen, canned (unsweetened); see snacks &amp; appetizers section</td>
<td>Fruit canned in syrup or sweetened</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs prepared with minimal added fat, egg white dishes, vegetable omelets</td>
<td>Egg dishes with a lot of added fat such as butter, cream, meat and/or cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean sausage and bacon (or meat substitute)</td>
<td>Regular bacon and sausage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese; yogurt or cottage cheese fruit parfaits</td>
<td>Regular fat and sugar yogurt or cottage cheese; Yogurt with high fructose corn syrup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low-fat/high fiber granola</td>
<td>Regular granola with high fat, sugar, low fiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mini bagels, muffins, small portion baked goods</td>
<td>Regular or large baked goods, croissants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfat or low-fat spreads such as low-fat cream cheeses or fruit spreads, salsa; nut butters</td>
<td>Butter or regular cream cheese spreads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baked alternatives to fried potatoes/hash browns</td>
<td>Fried food such as hash browns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts and fresh or dried fruit such as berries or apples to top cereal and yogurt</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Lunch, Dinner & Boxed Lunches

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choose more of these:</th>
<th>Choose fewer of these:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables: fresh, steamed, oven roasted or grilled; see Snacks &amp; Appetizers section</td>
<td>Vegetables fried or in butter, cream, or mayo sauces such as béchamel, hollandaise, aioli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole grain breads, pasta, and tortillas, corn tortillas, brown rice, and wraps</td>
<td>Breads, pasta, and tortillas made with white flour, white rice, biscuits, croissants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lean protein such as skinless turkey or grilled chicken, fish, tofu, beans/legumes; nut butters</td>
<td>Higher fat/saturated fat protein such as ham, beef, poultry with skin, cheese, fish packed in oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platters of half-sandwiches or “tea sandwiches”; lavash or tortilla wraps cut into pieces</td>
<td>Large pre-portioned sandwiches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dressings made from olive, vegetable or nut oils</td>
<td>Cream-based dressings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soups and sides made with clear stock base, vegetables, beans and legumes</td>
<td>Soups and sides made with cream base, cheese and/or meat high in saturated fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sushi made with fish, vegetables, tofu, avocado</td>
<td>Sushi made with cream cheese, mayo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condiments: mustard, oil &amp; vinegar, salsa, spreads made w/healthy fats, served on the side</td>
<td>Condiments: butter, mayonnaise, sour cream, cheese or cream sauces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheese as a garnish (if used)</td>
<td>Cheese as the main protein source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For boxed lunches: whole grain &amp; lean protein or vegetable main with fruit or vegetable side(s) and dessert from choices below</td>
<td>Boxed lunches with high carbohydrate or saturated fat mains, sides (pasta, potato, egg &amp; macaroni salads, fried chips) and desserts below</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Desserts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Choose more of these:</th>
<th>Choose fewer of these:</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Fresh fruit or fruit salad  
Served with low-fat dip such as yogurt, if desired | Large portions of baked goods (cake, pie, cookies) with no fruit ingredients |
| Small/half portions of baked goods (1 oz or smaller), made w/fruit ingredients, whole grains | Desserts high in fat and calories: ice cream, cake, pie, cheesecake, cookies, pastries |
| Desserts: Small portions or desserts low in fat and calories: fruit, angel food, low-fat yogurt, meringues, sherbet, sorbet, mints, hard candy | |
Portion Considerations

One of the major recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines is to consume smaller portions and fewer calories. The Portion Plate™ below shows appropriate portions and illustrates the make-up of a meal meeting the Dietary Guidelines. To help individuals with portion control and to reduce food waste, provide smaller single serving portions and food in bulk containers for self-service such as sandwich halves on platters, cut-up fruit or salads in large bowls, and beverages in pitchers.

Portion Plate graphic used with permission of beBetter Networks and The Portion Plate™
Meetings Can Be Productive and Healthy with Activity Breaks

If you incorporate physical activity breaks into your meetings, you are likely to find that participants have increased energy, attention span and participation, and less fatigue. Taking a few minutes to move can save much time in lost productivity. Research suggests that there also are health benefits for individuals who integrate short bouts of activity into their day.

A Physical Activity Break is:

- An opportunity to be physically active for a short period during the workday.
- Modifiable to fit your needs. Can be a 1-2 minute stand-up-and-stretch, a 5-minute low-impact aerobic activity (see Instant Recess below), or a 10-30 minute walk break.
- An energizer for the rest of the meeting.

A physical activity break should:

- Be completely voluntary.
- Allow participants to go at their own pace and remain comfortable and pain-free. Advise participants to do only what feels good and to stop immediately if anything hurts.
- Be do-able without breaking a sweat.
- Be fun and safe, and not require professional leaders.

Guidelines for Activity Breaks

- For two-hour meetings, include a “stand-up-and-stretch” break. Participants can gently stretch the neck, shoulders, arms, hands, legs, feet, and back; and make circles with their arms, head, and hips.
- For two- to four-hour meetings, include a 5-10 minute activity break for walking, or schedule a 5-minute light aerobic activity (see Resources below).
- For all-day meetings, in addition to stretch breaks and 5-minute activity breaks, schedule time for a 30-minute break and encourage participants to take a walk or engage in another physical activity.

Resources

- Instant Recess is a 5-minute fun, low-impact group activity that has participants moving their arms and legs to music. Instant Recess was specifically designed for the workplace and accommodates all shapes, sizes and abilities. It is available as a DVD and is appropriate for large or small groups. Contact Health*Matters at 643-4646 to borrow the DVD.
- Recreational Sports may be able to provide a certified exercise instructor to lead a physical activity break. Contact Recreational Sports at 643-5151.
Food Safety

Food safety is about ensuring that people do not get sick from the food or beverages they consume. Campus event planners can use the following tips to follow basic food safety practices.

- Keep hot food hot at 135°F or above, and cold food cold at 41°F or below.
- Perishable foods not kept hot or cold as described above should be discarded after holding for 4 hours or more at room temperature.
- Persons handling food—preparing, displaying, or serving—should wash their hands before doing so. People who are ill should not handle food or utensils.
- Verify that any off-campus food vendor has a valid health permit from the issuing health jurisdiction.
- Submit a Special Event Temporary Food Permit application to EH&S for events open to the general public or large events serving the campus community at which foods or beverages will be served. Department organized meetings and events serving food and beverages attended by faculty, staff and students or registered participants typically do not require a permit. Call EH&S at 642-3073 if you are unsure whether a permit is needed.
- For a more thorough list of safe food handling practices, please see the resources available on the Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) website at http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu. Look for Special Event Safe Food Handling Practices.

Resources

Healthy Meetings and Events
http://www.uhs.berkeley.edu/healthymeetings
This website provides additional resources for campus event planners, including caterers participating in Eat Well Berkeley Catering, and links to the Instant Recess video, shopping lists for healthier meeting food options at grocery stores, referral for leftover food donations and more.

Berkeley Events Network (BEN)
Berkeleyeventsnetwork-subscribe@yahoogroups.com
BEN is a professional networking group that provides information on resources, tips, and policies of interest to UC Berkeley event planners. To subscribe to the listserv, send an email to the address above.

Campus Green Event Certification and Resource Guide
http://sustainability.berkeley.edu/os/pages/gcerts/
This website provides more information and ideas about putting on a green event and how to be certified for your efforts.

Signs for Waste Dispensers
Signage that can be used to identify compost, recycling and “landfill” bins, along with information on what can be disposed of in each bin are available on the Healthy Meetings website (see above). The signs were created by Building Sustainability @ Cal (BS@C).
UC Berkeley Nutrition and Physical Activity Work Group

University Health Services provides leadership to the UC Berkeley Nutrition and Physical Activity Work Group consisting of faculty and campus experts in nutrition, exercise, and public health and City of Berkeley representatives. The work group’s charge is to recommend strategies that improve accessibility to healthier food, beverages, and physical activity on campus to support a healthy student body and workforce at UC Berkeley.

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For more information on the UC Berkeley Guide to Healthy Meetings and Events, please contact Health*Matters, UC Berkeley wellness program for faculty and staff, at (510) 643-4646.

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