

# Eat Smart North Carolina: Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings, and Events

Eating is one of life's greatest pleasures. There are many foods from which to choose, and many ways to build a healthy lifestyle, which leaves a lot of room for choice. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans<sup>1</sup> were designed to help people enjoy a variety of foods while ensuring good health. These Guidelines encourage eating a variety of foods from the Food Guide Pyramid and balancing food choices with physical activity. Having healthy foods and beverages available at events makes sense and supports good health.

## *Imagine a North Carolina where:*

- children and adults can select water as well as other beverages, and can select from a range of tasty foods, including fruits, vegetables, and lower fat, lower calorie options at community events, schools, civic, professional, and religious centers.
- caterers, restaurateurs, and other food and beverage-related industries provide healthy alternatives in appropriate portion sizes for customers.
- employees can purchase heart-healthy snacks in vending machines at work and are served healthy foods in meetings and seminars.
- foods and beverages are served in smaller portion sizes.
- healthy foods are offered at potlucks, meetings, health fairs, religious functions, and other community-based programs or events.

**Eat Smart, Move More...North Carolina** is a statewide initiative that promotes increased opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity. Your help is needed to create a North Carolina where Eating Smart and Moving More is the custom rather than the exception! Think healthy eating is boring? Doesn't taste good? Costs more money? Think again! Eating colorful fruits and vegetables, tasty breads, and pastas seasoned with delicious herbs and spices means great taste without blowing your budget. "Eating Smart" doesn't mean every single food you eat (or serve) has to be low in fat or high in fiber. It does mean balancing less healthy foods with healthier ones. It also means providing portion sizes that support good nutrition without excess calories.

**EAT SMART NORTH CAROLINA: Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings, and Events** is a tool to assist anyone who is in charge of food-related events for their organization. Simple changes to foods and beverages offered at organizational and community events provide North Carolinians with power-packed, disease-fighting nutrients—and give them the energy boost they may need.

## Why Should We Be Concerned?

Our food choices, lifestyle, and environment all affect our health. We know that food choices can prevent diseases and premature death. American (and North Carolinian) diets are low in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and are high in fat, saturated fat, and sugars. Food choices are associated with 4 of the 10 leading causes of death: coronary heart disease, some types of cancer, strokes, and Type II diabetes. Health conditions related to poor nutrition cost North Carolinians an estimated \$4.9 billion each year in medical expenses and lost productivity.<sup>2</sup>

North Carolina is experiencing an obesity epidemic. Currently, about two-thirds (61%) of NC adults are overweight or obese,<sup>3</sup> and children and youth seen in our state's public health settings are almost twice as likely to be overweight as the national average.<sup>4</sup> Nationally, approximately 400,000 deaths a year are currently associated with overweight and obesity.

Because of the strong relationship between diet and health, the increasing rates of obesity, and the NC Division of Public Health's commitment to health, the following guidelines were developed to help facilitate the selection of lower fat, lower calorie food and beverage options for all events where foods or beverages are served. We can model our commitment to good health by creating a healthy work environment ourselves and foster that vision across our state. Most importantly, by following these guidelines, you can promote your own health and reduce your risk for chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and diabetes.

So think about all of the food-related events you're involved in (meetings, trainings, church suppers, fundraisers, luncheons, receptions, etc.) and promote good health by using some of the suggestions listed in this guide.

\**Eat Smart North Carolina: Guidelines for Healthy Foods and Beverages at Meetings, Gatherings, and Events* was adapted from: *Guidelines for Offering Healthy Foods at Meetings, Seminars, and Catered Events* developed by the Public Health Nutrition faculty, staff, and students; Division of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota, 2003. *Meeting Well—A Tool for Planning Healthy Meetings and Events*, American Cancer Society, 2000; and *Eat Smart, Move More...North Carolina*, NC Division of Public Health—Physical Activity and Nutrition Branch.

1. Food recommendations included in this guideline were based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans issued in 2000 by the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The Dietary Guidelines

for Americans are science-based recommendations that provide advice for healthy Americans aged 2 years and over about food choices to promote health and prevent disease.

2. NC Prevention Partners, 2002, Health Management Associates, a financial cost appraisal of nutrition and overweight and obesity in the state of NC, 2001.

3. 2002 NC Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, NC Center for Health Statistics.

4. 2001 NC Nutrition and Physical Activity Surveillance System, NC Division of Public Health.

# FIVE GUIDELINES

## GUIDELINE 1

***Offer healthy food choices at breakfasts, lunches, dinners, potlucks, and receptions.***

There are many healthy and delicious options for foods and beverages. Fruits and vegetables are low in calories and high in vitamins, minerals, and fiber. Portion sizes are important, too. Portion sizes have increased substantially over the years. Larger portion sizes of high-calorie, high-fat foods contribute to overweight in adults and children. Offer smaller portions of foods and beverages. Offer lower calorie beverages—water, low-fat milk, and unsweetened teas. Offer baked, roasted, or grilled meats and fish served with vegetables prepared without added fat.

## GUIDELINE 2

***Offer alternatives to food at mid-morning or mid-afternoon meeting breaks.***

In America, we are surrounded by food all day, every day. Many meetings and seminars provide food at mid-morning and mid-afternoon breaks. With the increasing rates of obesity and the difficulty of controlling weight in a food-saturated environment, it is important to consider whether it is necessary to provide food at meetings, presentations, and seminars, especially mid-morning and mid-afternoon. Help create a norm that food does not have to be everywhere and does not have to be used to try to motivate people to attend events. Consider offering only beverages. If you do provide food, offer only fruits, vegetables, and/or other healthy foods. Another option is to offer a physical activity break instead.

## GUIDELINE 3

***Identify the healthy food and beverage choices.***

Consumers these days are interested in knowing which foods and beverages make smart choices. Consider ways to identify and market the healthy food and beverages you are providing. The Winner's Circle Healthy Dining Program™ is a national and



statewide program that aims to increase access to, recognition of, and demand for healthy foods in those places where individuals are most likely to eat away

from home: restaurants, cafeterias, vending machines, and many other types of venues. One way to ensure that you are serving healthy foods and beverages is to work with your local NC Winner's Circle community team to identify foods that meet the nutrition criteria set by the Winner's Circle Program. To search for the NC Winner's Circle contact in your county, visit

<http://www.EatSmart>

[MoveMoreNC.com/contacts/index.php](http://MoveMoreNC.com/contacts/index.php). For more information about the NC Winner's Circle Program visit <http://NCWinnersCircle.com>.



## GUIDELINE 4

### ***Keep food safe to eat.***

Foods that are safe from harmful bacteria and viruses are vital for healthy eating. From farm to table, everyone shares the responsibility of keeping food as safe as possible by washing hands and surfaces often; separating raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods while shopping, preparing, and storing; cooking and chilling foods to a safe temperature; and serving foods

safely. Your local health department or cooperative extension agency can provide you with more suggestions.



## GUIDELINE 5

### ***Lead by example.***

When an organization's leaders become role models in choosing healthier foods and in turn support the purchase of healthier foods, it makes a powerful statement. Show your members or employees that you are concerned about their health and well-being by signing a formal or informal Healthy Foods policy. Buy healthy foods when dining out and prepare and eat healthy meals at home. Share this document with other leaders in your community and challenge them to also lead by example.

Don't forget about building physical activity into your events as well. Another great way to lead by example is to Move More by encouraging physical activity in your organization and to "walk the talk" yourself. Visit the **Eat Smart Move More...North Carolina** Web site for other ways to promote healthy eating and physical activity where you live, work, worship, or play. <http://www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com/index2.php>

### **Tips for stocking a healthy vending machine**

Ask your vendor about including some of these:

- Baked chips
- Reduced-fat cookies and crackers
- Reduced-fat chips
- Fig bars
- Pretzels
- Canned fruit (lite or packed in own juice)
- Animal crackers
- Popcorn (lite or low-fat—5g fat or less/serving)
- Graham crackers
- Reduced fat crackers
- Granola bars/cereal bars

#### **FOR REFRIGERATED UNITS**

- 100% fruit or vegetable Juices
- Yogurt (flavored, low-fat, non-fat or fat-free)
- Milk (skim or 1%)
- Reduced-fat cottage cheese or pudding
- Fresh fruit
- Mini carrots or other prepackaged vegetables
- Salads with low-fat/non-fat dressing choices
- Bottled water

Your vendor may also be participating in the Winner's Circle Healthy Dining Program, so check with your county Winner's Circle contact or visit <http://www.NCWinnersCircle.com> (see Guideline 3).

### **Tips for selecting foods lower in fat and calories**

- Ask the caterer to use lower fat or fat-free preparation methods, to serve added fats like dressings or condiments on the side, and to provide you with the number of calories and fat grams in entrées if available.
- Select lower fat entrées—approximately 12 to 15 grams of fat or less.
- Select items that are broiled, baked, grilled, or steamed rather than fried or sautéed.
- Include whole grain breads—skip the butter or margarine.
- Choose entrées in tomato-based sauces rather than cream, butter, or cheese sauces.
- Include fresh fruit.
- Include at least one vegetable—fresh or cooked, with no butter or cream sauces added.
- Choose lower fat/calorie desserts, such as cut-up fresh fruit with low-fat fruit yogurt dip, low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet, or angel food cake with fruit topping.

# Suggestions for Foods and Beverages

## BEVERAGES

- Ice water
- Bottled spring or sparkling water—regular or flavored with no added sugar
- 100% fruit or vegetable juices—avoid large-size bottles
- Skim or 1% milk (regular or lactose-free)
- Coffee—regular and decaffeinated
- Tea—regular and herb teas—hot or cold
- Soy beverage

## SNACKS

- Fresh fruit—cut up and offered with low-fat yogurt dip
- Raw vegetables—cut up and offered with fat-free or low-fat dressing or salsa dip
- Pretzels—served with mustard dip

## Tips for food preparation to cut fat and calories

- Serve salad dressings on the side, and offer low-fat or fat-free dressings.
- Consider serving baked, broiled, or oven fried chicken or grilled fish.
- Season greens, cabbage, and string beans with smoked turkey instead of fat back or salt pork.
- When making potato salad, macaroni salad, and chicken salad, use less mayonnaise and substitute a lower fat version in your recipe.
- Select leaner cuts of meat. Remove the skin from chicken before you cook it.
- Skim fat from gravies before serving.

- Tortilla chips—baked and offered with salsa dip
- Popcorn—lower fat (5g fat or less/serving)
- Whole grain crackers—(5g fat or less/serving)
- Angel food cake with fruit topping
- Beverages from “Beverages” list

## BREAKFAST MEETINGS

- Fresh fruit
- Yogurt—flavored non-fat or fat-free
- Bagels—3-1/2" diameter or less; serve with low-fat cream cheese, jam or jelly
- Muffins—small or mini (5g fat or less/muffin)
- Fruit bread (5g fat or less/1 oz slice)
- Granola bars—low-fat (5g fat or less/bar)
- Beverages from “Beverages” list

## CATERED LUNCHESS & DINNERS

- Select an entrée with no more than 12 to 15 grams fat
- Always offer a vegetarian entrée
- Avoid fried foods or cream sauces
- Include fresh fruit
- Include at least one vegetable—fresh or cooked, with no butter or cream sauces



- Serve salads with dressing on the side—offer at least one low-fat or fat-free dressing
- Include whole grain breads

- Choose lower fat/lower calorie desserts: cut up fresh fruit and offer with low-fat fruit yogurt dip, low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping
- Include beverages from “Beverages” list

## Box Lunch Sandwich Ideas

(always include a vegetarian option):

- Whole grain breads or pita wraps—prepared without butter/margarine, mayonnaise/salad dressing
- Meats, poultry or marinated tofu—low-fat (3g fat/oz)
- Cheese—1 oz
- Toppings of lettuce, sprouts, tomatoes, onions, pickles, mustard, catsup, low-fat mayonnaise
- Pretzels or baked chips (7g fat or less/oz)
- Fresh fruit

## CATERED RECEPTIONS

- Fresh fruit—cut up and offered with low-fat yogurt dip
- Raw vegetables—cut up and offered with fat-free or low-fat dressing, salsa or tofu dip
- Raw vegetable salads marinated in fat-free or low-fat Italian dressing
- Pasta, tofu, and vegetable salads with fat-free or low-fat dressing
- Cheese—cut into 3/4" squares or smaller
- Whole grain crackers—5g fat or less/serving
- Fish—not fried
- Lean beef or turkey—1 oz. slices
- Cake—cut into small 2" squares
- Angel food cake slices with fruit topping
- Beverages from “Beverages” list

# CALORIES & FAT OF POPULAR

(Note: all amounts given for calories and grams of fat are approximate.)

FOOD ITEM		CALORIES	GRAMS OF FAT
<b>Beverages</b>			
<b>Coffee Creamer</b> (1 tablespoon)	fat-free-skim milk	6	0
	half & half	20	1.7
<b>Milk</b> (8 oz carton)	Fat-free—skim milk	86	Trace
	Low-fat—1% milk	102	2.5
	Reduced fat—2% milk	121	5
	Whole milk	150	8
<b>Regular Soft Drink</b>	12 oz can	150	42g sugar
	20 oz bottle	250	70g sugar*
			*This is more than 17 tsp. sugar

**Breakfasts** *Total recommended calories and fat for breakfast = 300-400 calories;  
13g fat or less (based on 2000 calories/day)*

<b>Bagels</b>	3-1/2"	180	1
	4-1/2"	330*	3
			*This is the equivalent of 4 slices of bread
<b>Cream Cheese</b> (2 tablespoons)	Low-fat	60	2.5
	Regular	100	10
<b>Blueberry Muffins</b>	Small: 2-1/2"	160	4
	Large: 3-1/2"	250	9
<b>Croissant</b>	Regular size	230	12
<b>Apple Danish</b>	Regular size	260	13
<b>Glazed Doughnut</b>	Regular size	240	14

## Snacks

<b>Chips</b> (1 oz, about 12 chips)	Baked or low-fat potato	130	5
	Regular potato	150	10
	Baked or low-fat tortilla	125	4
	Regular tortilla	140	7
<b>Pretzels</b>	Regular size	110	1
<b>Cookies</b> (chocolate chip)	Small: 2-1/2"	50	2
	Large: 4"	280	14
<b>Cake</b> (3" x 2-1/4" piece)	Angel	130	Trace
	White	190	5
	Chocolate	200	8
	Carrot	240	11

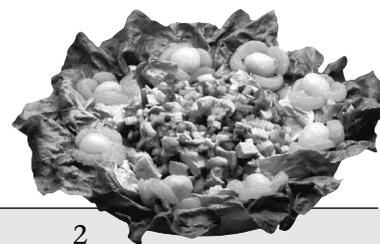


# FOOD & BEVERAGE ITEMS

FOOD ITEM	CALORIES	GRAMS OF FAT
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## Lunches & Dinners

*Total recommended calories and fat for lunch = 600-700 calories;  
23g fat or less (based on 2000 calories/day)  
Total recommended calories and fat for dinner = 700-800 calories;  
27g fat or less (based on 2000 calories/day)*



<b>Sauces</b> (1/2 cup)	Marinara (tomato-based)	50	2
	Alfredo (cream-based)	200	15
<b>Salad Dressings</b> (2 tablespoons)	Fat-free	50	0
	Regular	150	16
<b>Chips</b> (1 oz, about 12 chips)	Baked or low-fat	130	5
	Regular	150	10
	Baked or low-fat tortilla	125	5
	Regular Tortilla	140	7
<b>Pretzels</b> (1 oz, about 12 pretzels)	Regular size	110	1
<b>Cheesecake</b> (1/10 slice of 12" cake)	Bakery style	460	30*
			*This is more than 7 tsp. of fat
<b>Ice Cream</b> (1/2 cup)	Regular Vanilla	140	7

## Receptions

<b>Salad Dressings</b> (2 tablespoons)	Fat-free	50	0
	Regular	150	16
<b>Pasta Salads</b> (2 tablespoons)	Low-fat Italian dressing	190	2
	Regular creamy dressing	350	22
<b>Egg Rolls</b> (1 3-1/2 oz)	Chicken	215	10
<b>Spring Rolls</b> (1 3-1/2 oz)	Vegetable, fresh—not fried	80	3
<b>Buffalo Wings</b> (1 mini chicken wing)	Barbecued	85	6
<b>Chicken Drumlette</b> (1 mini drumstick)	Barbecued	85	6
<b>Snack Crackers</b> (approx. 8 crackers)	Reduced fat whole grain	120	3
	Regular butter-flavored	130	7
<b>Cake</b> (3" x 2-1/4" piece)	Angel	130	Trace
	White	190	5
	Chocolate	200	8
	Carrot	240	11



# COMPARISONS OF FOOD

## CHOOSE . . .

## INSTEAD OF . . .

### For Beverages

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carbonated (with no sugar), coffees or teas,  
100% fruit or vegetable juices

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flavored soft drinks or fruit flavored drinks

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1% low-fat or skim milk

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whole or 2% milk

### For Breakfasts

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fresh fruits, dried fruits, unsweetened juices

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sweetened canned fruits and juices

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low-fat yogurt

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regular yogurt

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small bagels—3-1/2" or smaller

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regular bagels

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small or mini muffins—2-1/2" or smaller

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regular or large muffins

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small bagels or muffins, low-fat granola bars

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regular or large bagels or muffins, croissants,  
doughnuts, sweet rolls, pastries

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toppings of light margarine,  
low-fat cream cheese, jam or jelly

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regular butter, cream cheese, peanut butter

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unsweetened cereals

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sweetened cereals

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whole grain waffles and French toast

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waffles or French toast made from white bread

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whole grain bread or English muffin

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white bread or English muffin

### For Lunches or Dinners

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salads with dressings on the side

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salads with added dressing

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low-fat or fat-free salad dressings

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regular salad dressings

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soups made with vegetable puree or skim milk

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soups made with cream or half and half

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pasta salads with low-fat dressing

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pasta salads made with mayonnaise  
or cream dressing

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sandwiches on whole grain breads

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sandwiches on croissants or white bread

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lean meats, poultry, fish, tofu (3g fat/oz)

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high-fat and fried meats, bacon, poultry with  
skin, cold cuts, oil-packed fish

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baked potatoes with low-fat or vegetable toppings

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baked potatoes with butter, sour cream,  
and bacon bits

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steamed vegetables

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vegetables in cream sauce or butter

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whole grain bread or rolls

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croissants or white rolls

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margarine without trans-fatty acids

---

butter

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lower fat/lower calorie desserts: fresh fruit,  
low-fat ice cream, low-fat frozen yogurt,  
sherbet, sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping

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higher fat and calorie desserts: ice cream,  
cheese cake, pie, cream puffs, large slices of  
cake

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# & BEVERAGE OPTIONS

## CHOOSE . . .

## INSTEAD OF . . .

### For Receptions

fresh vegetables, cut up and served with low-fat dressing, salsa or tofu dip

tempura or deep fat fried vegetables

cut up fresh fruits

fruit tarts, pie, cobbler

grilled or broiled chicken without skin

fried chicken, chicken with skin

miniature meatballs made with lean meat

large meatballs made of high-fat meat, meatballs served in gravy or high-fat sauces

broiled or poached seafood: shrimp, fish, scallops, oysters, clams

deep fat fried seafood, seafood in high-fat sauces

mushroom caps with low-fat cheese

stuffed mushrooms with high-fat cheese stuffing or mushrooms marinated in oil

miniature pizzas made with English muffins, tomato sauce, mozzarella cheese, and mushrooms

pizza with pepperoni, Italian sausage or other high-fat meats

vegetable spring rolls—fresh, not fried

egg rolls

small cubes of cheese (3/4" squares or smaller)

large slices of cheese

whole grain crackers (5g fat or less/serving)

regular crackers

low-fat, "lite" popcorn (5g fat or less/serving)

regular popcorn

baked or low-fat chips, pretzels

regular chips

dips made of salsa, low-fat cottage cheese, hummus or low-fat salad dressings

dips made from regular mayonnaise, sour cream, cream cheese or cheese sauce

small slices of cake (2" square)

large slices of cake

### For Snacks

cut up fresh fruits and/or vegetables

chips or cookies

whole grain crackers (5g fat or less/serving)

regular crackers

low-fat, "lite" popcorn (5g fat or less/serving)

regular popcorn or buttered popcorn

baked or low-fat chips, pretzels

regular chips

small slices of cake (2" square)

large slices of cake



# SAMPLE MENUS

## Sample Breakfast Menu

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Assorted mini-bagels or muffins  
(some whole grain or bran)

Assorted reduced-fat cream cheese  
(plain, vegetable, strawberry, honey nut, etc.)

Assorted fresh fruit (sliced honeydew and  
cantaloupe, grapes, bananas, sliced oranges)

Peanut butter

Assorted 100% juices (orange, grapefruit,  
tomato, apple)

Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage

Coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal),  
hot chocolate (made with skim milk), and non-  
fat creamer

Water

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## Healthy Break

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*Consider replacing a food break with a physical activity break! Or, include a physical activity break with the following:*

Assorted whole fruit and fruit skewers

Trail mix, granola bars

Low-fat yogurt

Assorted fruit juice (100%), vegetable juices,  
and bottled water

Coffee (regular and decaf), tea (regular and herbal),  
hot chocolate (made with skim milk), and non-  
fat creamer

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## Sample Lunch and/or Dinner Menus

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Grilled (or baked) chicken sandwich, on whole  
grain bread with lettuce, tomato and pickle

Sliced seasonal fruit

Pretzels/baked potato chips

Low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt

Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage, (regular  
and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot choco-  
late (made with skim milk), non-fat creamer, and  
bottled water

Mixed green salad with a variety of fresh raw  
vegetables (low-fat dressing on the side)

Baked potato with salsa and/or vegetable topping  
or Pasta Primavera in light sauce

Fresh fruit salad with yogurt topping

Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage, (regular  
and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot choco-  
late (made with skim milk), non-fat creamer, and  
bottled water

Mixed green salad with cherry tomatoes  
and low-fat dressing on the side

Italian baked chicken or seasoned baked chicken

Brown rice

Steamed green beans

Whole grain rolls, margarine

Angel food cake with fresh strawberries and light  
whipped topping

Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage, (regular  
and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot choco-  
late (made with skim milk), non-fat creamer, and  
bottled water

Baby spinach salad with fresh strawberries and  
seasoned pecans (low-fat raspberry dressing on  
the side)

Baked pork chops with peach salsa or Barbecue  
baked pork chops

Baked sweet potato

Garden peas

Whole grain rolls, margarine

Cupcake

Low-fat milk (1% or less), soy beverage, (regular  
and decaf), tea (regular and herbal), hot choco-  
late (made with skim milk), non-fat creamer, and  
bottled water