



AHS Healthy Eating Environment Frequently Asked Questions

What is healthy eating?

Choosing a variety of healthy foods and consuming portion sizes that are consistent with Canada's Food Guide is considered healthy eating. This includes limiting the amount of added sugar, salt and fat in foods.

What is a healthy eating environment?

Our environment affects what and how much we eat or drink. A healthy eating environment makes healthy eating the easy choice. At AHS, this means making healthier food options available and promoting them throughout our sites (e.g. retail food outlets, lunchrooms and meetings).

Why is AHS working towards a healthy eating environment?

AHS needs to be a leader for all areas of health. We teach Albertans how to eat healthy at home, work and in the community. Building a healthy eating environment in AHS puts our words into action. We are walking the talk.

How are we creating a healthy eating environment in AHS?

AHS has a Healthy Eating Environment policy that is the foundation of the initiative. We are working together to make the gradual shift to a healthy eating environment. Input from AHS staff, physicians, volunteers, auxiliaries, foundations/trusts, patients and their families inform what, where, how and when changes will be made.

Changes within an area or site should be planned and developed with the input of stakeholders. Visit our [webpage](#) for more information, tools and resources on changes that can be made to support a healthy eating environment in your area.

What is the timeline for changes?

Creating a healthy successful eating environment in AHS takes time. Changes have been happening gradually since the policy was launched in 2011, and will continue to occur within AHS sites. We will keep staff updated as the AHS Healthy Eating Environment continues to grow.

About the policy

What is the policy about?

The Healthy Eating Environment policy demonstrates our organizational commitment towards change and provides direction on action areas. It drives the initiative and is endorsed by our executive leadership team.

Where does it apply?

The policy applies to food and drinks sold at all AHS facilities. This includes cafeterias, vending machines, gift shops, tuck shops and vendor booths operated by AHS, auxiliary, volunteer, external or third party retailers. The policy also applies to AHS funded activities including catering, celebrations, food rewards/incentives and fundraising activities.

How will the amount of healthy choices be determined?

The amount of healthy and less healthy foods available in AHS retail operations is determined through stakeholder engagement and success of sales of healthier choices in retail operations. As healthy options are added, less healthy options like candy or pop will be phased out. In the 2016 Staff Wellness Survey, staff said 75% of all food and drink options in AHS should be healthy.

Does it apply to food that people bring into sites (e.g., food from home)?

The policy is about what is sold in AHS facilities or provided at AHS-funded meetings and events. It does not apply to foods brought from home or staff social activities (funded outside of AHS). However, staff can support a healthy eating environment by bringing healthier food into sites, including for meals and snacks, and for sharing with others (e.g. potlucks).

Does it apply to food ordered for meetings, events and conferences?

The policy applies to AHS funded meetings and events. Staff social activities are excluded from the policy, however, all AHS leaders and staff are encouraged to select healthy food and drink choices. See [Healthy Meetings and Events](#) for resources.

How does it affect retail operators?

AHS is working with food services, auxiliary, volunteer, external and third party retailers that sell food and drinks to offer and promote healthier options. See [Foods and Drinks for Sale at AHS](#) for more information.

How does it affect patients?

Patients will see changes to foods offered for sale at retail outlets. It does not affect food bought in from home. This policy does not apply to meals provided to patients. A separate initiative, called *AHS Enhancing Patient Meal Experience Initiative* is working to make mealtimes matter for patients.

How does it affect staff and visitors?

The type of food available for sale in retail operations and provided at AHS funded meetings and events will change. How much change and how fast it happens will depend on feedback through stakeholder engagement and support for changes.

For more information, resources and tools:

Website: www.ahs.ca/nutrition/Page5234.aspx

Email healthyeatingenvironment@ahs.ca

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