

Indiana State Department of Health
Healthy Meeting Guidelines and Strategies

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Indiana State
Department of Health

What Is a Healthy Meeting Guideline?

What is a healthy meeting guideline?

A healthy meeting guideline states that any meeting conducted for state purposes on state time at which refreshments are offered (see [HERE](#)) will provide healthy food options and encourage physical activity through active breaks.

What does healthy mean?

Healthy means taking into consideration *what* is being served and *how* it is being prepared. Organizers should consider offering servings of fruits, vegetables and whole grains; be cognizant of portion sizes; and consider not providing food at break times, but instead offer physical activity.

Why do we need a healthy meeting guideline?

Nearly half our waking hours are spent at work, and many of these hours are in meetings or conferences. By adopting healthy meeting guidelines, *(insert agency name)* will create an environment that supports individuals' efforts to eat well and be physically active. In addition, *(insert agency name)* will be encouraging the notion that all individuals should have access to healthy, nutritious foods and chances to be physically active.

How does this apply?

These guidelines apply to meetings, conferences and events that serve to advance the mission of *(insert agency name)*, on state time, using state or federal dollars. It does NOT apply to social pitch-ins, potlucks, going away parties, etc. that use donated dollars or food. However, we *encourage* employees to consider offering healthy alternatives at these events as well.

Where can I get more information?

Information about this guideline, how to implement it and suggestions for healthy foods and physical activity breaks can be found on the *(insert agency name)* intranet page. In addition, staff and managers are welcome to contact the Indiana State Department of Health, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity Director Lindsey Bouza at 317-234-3580 or lbouza@isdh.in.gov and/or dnpa@isdh.in.gov.

Other resources for tips and ideas:

<http://cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/Healthy-Meeting-Toolkit.pdf>

(Insert Agency Name)
Healthy Meeting Recommendations

Introduction

The connection between food, physical activity and health is well documented. Offering healthy choices at meetings and other events can make it easier for people to eat healthy foods and be physically active. Making simple changes to foods, drinks and breaks offered at conferences and meetings provides employees and community partners the opportunities to have healthy foods and beverages, as well as be physically active.

The (insert agency name) Healthy Meetings Recommendations apply to meetings and events using state and/or federal dollars, on state time, for the purposes of advancing the mission of (insert agency name). They do not apply to social pitch-ins, potlucks, going away/retirement parties that use donated dollars or food. However, we *encourage* employees to consider offering healthy options at these events as well.

There are three parts to these guidelines—general recommendations and tips for planning, suggestions for menus and ways to incorporate physical activity into meetings and events.

General Recommendations

Serve the healthiest food options available that make sense for the event you are hosting. Healthy food can taste good, and many catering companies and conference venues will modify menus if asked.

Here are some general guidelines to use when planning for healthy meetings and other events:

- Consider whether it is necessary to serve food at your event.
- Give participants an opportunity to inform you of dietary needs or restrictions.
- Meet with the caterer or food service vendor to discuss your options and how menu items can be modified for your event—it never hurts to ask!
- Emphasize fruits and vegetables—make sure they are served at every meal.
- Keep portion sizes in mind when ordering food (for example, bagels cut into halves or quarters or mini muffins instead of full-sized muffins).
- Choose whole wheat options when available.
- Limit the sodium content of meals.
- Offer low-calorie and low-fat foods.
- Include a vegetarian option at all meals.
- Light desserts — choose fruit parfaits or fruit crisps and smaller portions.
- Provide pitchers of water.
- Plan physical activity breaks in the agenda.
- Encourage attendees to stand during meetings (notify speaker so they are aware).

Ensure participants are aware of access to lactation rooms for breastfeeding. This does not have to be a dedicated space for only pumping; it can be an unused conference room or office or any private room with a comfortable chair and a door that locks. The bathroom should not be considered as a lactation space. See additional details below concerning state and federal laws and policies for breaks to express breast milk for an infant child.

Menu Suggestions

Breakfast

- Fresh fruit (cut up and offered with low-fat yogurt dip)
- High-fiber cereals such as bran flakes, low-fat granola or oatmeal
- Fruit toppings (fresh strawberries, bananas, blueberries, peaches, raisins or dried fruit mix) for hot and cold cereals
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Vegetable omelets
- Low-fat yogurt
- Eggs made with egg substitute or without yolks
- Thinly sliced ham or no meat at all
- Bagels (cut in half or quarters) served with fruit spreads, jams, hummus or low-fat cream cheese
- Whole wheat English muffins with peanut butter
- Low-fat granola bars

Light Refreshments

- Consider whether it is necessary to offer food at a morning or afternoon break
- Fresh sliced fruit and vegetable tray offered with low-fat dips
- Whole grain crackers or granola bars (5g fat or less per serving)
- An assortment of low-fat cheeses and whole grain crackers
- Baked pita chips served with hummus
- Whole grain muffins (cut in half if not serving mini muffins) and whole grain breads
- Low-fat yogurt
- Pretzels, popcorn, baked chips or trail mix

Lunch and Dinner

- Salad that includes a variety of mixed salad greens and served with low-fat dressing
- Whole grain breads and rolls
- Mustard and low-fat mayonnaise as condiments for sandwiches
- Sandwiches presented in halves, so people can take a smaller portion
- Broth-based soups or soups using evaporated skim milk instead of cream
- Pasta dishes with low-fat cheeses and extra vegetables, or pasta with tomato or other vegetable-based sauces
- Pasta salad with low-fat dressing
- 4-ounce maximum portions of meat and plenty of low-fat, low-calorie side dishes

- Raw vegetables or pretzels instead of potato chips or French fries
- Vegetables (steamed, fresh or cooked without butter or cream sauces)
- Boxed lunches/dinners: whole grain or pita bread or wraps; request veggies instead of chips; or if including chips, request pretzels or baked chips

Desserts

- Small serving sizes
- Angel food cake with fresh fruit topping
- Low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt
- Fruit parfait
- Small chocolate bar
- Small cookie

Active Meetings

Providing participants with physical activity breaks at meetings and events will help them stay alert and focused. In addition to including physical activity breaks in the agenda, it's important to consider hotel location, facilities and accommodating people of all abilities in any activities planned.

For additional ideas on fun, innovative physical activity breaks, please see the health and wellness tab on the intranet.

- Schedule brief activity breaks: 10-15 minutes at a time, every 2 or so hours. Participants can actively network, or someone can lead participants in a physical activity break. Include this break time in the meeting agenda.
- Encourage active applause. When attendees clap at the end of a presentation, encourage them to stand while clapping.
- Choose a location where participants can safely and easily take a walk. Provide this information when they arrive at the meeting or at registration.
- If hosting an overnight meeting, consider organizing an early morning walk, run or classes such as yoga or Pilates.

Examples of physical activity breaks:

- Stretching
- Chair yoga

(Insert Agency's Name)
Physical Activity Strategies

Walking Areas or Maps

The availability of areas for walking varies across agencies and physical locations. Some sites have mapped walking paths around the building or indoors; few sites have both. Some sites have identified a fitness room within the building. The state drafted rules and waivers to facilitate the use of fitness rooms within state agencies.

Example: The Indiana Department of Technology created indoor walking maps around the Government Center. Find those [HERE](#). In addition, the Indiana State Department of Health created indoor and outdoor maps from their buildings, as well as outdoor maps for the Government Center. Find those [HERE](#).

Social support for physical activity: This strategy provides a supportive environment for individuals attempting to increase and sustain regular physical activity. Such interventions might aim to increase social support within the family (targeting the family as a whole, the parents or the spouse/partner), the faith community, the worksite or other community-based sectors. Techniques regularly used in social support interventions include group-oriented goal setting, problem-solving, discussion and physical activity opportunities or events.

Potential Policies to Implement

Comfortable shoes daily: The dress code is especially important to support other strategies such as a stair use campaign, walking meetings, walking/stretching breaks, nearby mapped-out trails and onsite bike racks. Normal business attire can create a barrier for employees to be physically active during the workday.

Sample policy: To support our employees' efforts to be physically active during the workday, employees are permitted to wear comfortable walking shoes. Employees should keep professional attire in mind in relation to internal and external meetings.

Flex time or alternative work schedule for physical activity: Alternative work schedules address one of the most common barriers to physical activity—lack of time. Allowing employees a flexible schedule to come in earlier or leave later gives them the flexibility for physical activity before work, after work or during an extended lunch break, when it is most convenient, based on workload and schedule.

Sample policy: To the extent possible, employees will be permitted to adjust their workday schedule for physical activity within the following times: Start between 6:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.; finish between 3:30 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Employees will be permitted to extend their

lunch hour to 1.5 hours if the additional time is made up during the day. Individuals must establish their permanent start, finish and lunch times with their supervisor.

Other Ideas

Walking meetings: Instead of sitting in a conference room for a meeting, attendees can meet while walking along hallways, around the building and at nearby parks or walking trails. Whenever appropriate, promote physical activity by encouraging employees to facilitate “meetings on the move.”

Sample policy: Whenever possible, employees will be permitted to host “meetings on the move.” All employees shall gain supervisor approval prior to departing the worksite for a “meeting on the move.” A meeting on the move is appropriate when: all participants agree, the agenda requires mostly talking as opposed to writing, the meeting will last no more than 30 minutes and there are four or fewer participants.

Physical activity breaks at meetings: By incorporating physical activity breaks into your meetings, you provide employees and participants with the opportunity to add 10 minutes of physical activity in their workday.

Sample policy: Employees who organize a full working day conference must incorporate at least 10 minutes of physical activity during scheduled break times.

Sample policy: Employees who organize a meeting lasting longer than two hours in length must incorporate a physical activity break into the meeting.

Secured bicycle parking: Providing secure bicycle parking at your work location encourages employees to bike to work. Secure parking availability removes a barrier by providing the necessary facilities for employees to store their bikes during the workday.

Below are a few examples of bicycle storage options:

Facility/Equipment Type	Estimated Cost
The bicyclist may bring the bike inside the building and store it next to or near his/her desk.	No cost
The employer can set aside a locked closet for bicycles and issue keys to users.	Varies
The employer can supply outdoor bicycle parking racks.	Varies; a rack to park a few bikes might cost a few hundred dollars in addition to having it properly installed.

Discount gym memberships: The state does offer this and many gyms participate (see [Invest in Your Health](#)). If your gym isn't on the list, contact the State Personnel Department.

Stairwell prompts: Taking the stairs is one way to be more physically active. Using the stairs

requires little additional time, no wardrobe change and few additional costs. Check with your building manager and safety officer to identify all relevant permits and fire and building codes BEFORE you make any purchases to enhance the stairwells. Encourage employees to point out stairways as well as elevators and escalators when escorting guests around the building.

Example: The ISDH utilizes signs near the elevators to remind employees and show visitors where the stairs are located.

Recreational sports: Talk with employees to find out what sports or activities they enjoy the most. Talk with local recreational sports teams to learn how to form a new team or join an existing team. If you have a small number of employees, try collaborating with other small companies in your area to develop a team. Ask other companies and organizations to form teams and participate. Examples of recreational sports include basketball, softball, volleyball, soccer, baseball, tennis and bowling.

Example: Many state agencies participate in the coed softball league in Indianapolis.

Walking groups: Social support interventions for physical activity can focus on existing social networks or creating new social networks.

Resources: Start on page 26 of the [Indiana Healthy Worksites Toolkit](#) for other policy, environmental supports and activity ideas.

(Insert Agency's Name)
Lactation Support Recommendations

Sample recommendations for state agencies to show support for breastfeeding.

- Breastfeeding employees are allowed a flexible schedule for breastfeeding or expressing milk. The time allowed will not exceed the normal time allowed for lunch and breaks. For time above and beyond normal lunch and breaks, employees can use leave or work an adjusted schedule.
- A private room (not a toilet stall or restroom) will be available for employees to breastfeed their babies or express milk. The room will have electric outlets for an electric breast pump and a sink close by for washing hands and pump parts.
- The breastfeeding area/room will be easily accessible for all breastfeeding employees and contain a comfortable chair with arms, a small low table and other equipment as necessary.
- A refrigerator will be available for safe storage of expressed milk. Breastfeeding women will provide their own containers, and milk stored in the refrigerator will be clearly labeled with name and date. If a refrigerator is not available, mothers can bring in a small, insulated lunch bag with re-freezable ice for storing their milk.

(Adapted from Oregon Department of Human Services' How to Become a Breastfeeding Mother Friendly Employer)

IGC-South has two lactation rooms available

Two lactation rooms are available in the Indiana Government Center South building. The Conference Center Room 23 location is available first come, first served, and the key is available at the information desk in the Atrium.

The location next to the Health and Wellness Center is available by scheduled appointment only. Please reference [this document](#) for scheduling information.

Health Care Reform Supporting Working Breastfeeding Mothers: With the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act effective March 23, 2010, all employers in the United States are now required by federal law to provide nonexempt (overtime-eligible) employees the following:

- Reasonable break time to express milk for infants for up to one year after birth.
- A private place, other than a bathroom, where employees can express milk.

Businesses employing 50 or fewer people may file for an undue hardship exemption.

State agencies and political subdivisions of the state shall provide reasonable paid break time for expressing breast milk for the employee's infant child in accordance with Indiana Code 5-10-6-2 and Indiana State Personnel Department's standardized policy in support of Nursing Mothers at <http://in.gov/spd/2396.htm>.