

WHY HEALTHY EATING?



Healthy Workplaces

What and how much employees eat and drink is important for good health. When people eat well, their quality of life and sense of wellbeing at work can be improved.

Workplaces that promote healthy eating can have a strong influence on reducing sick leave and increasing productivity.

BY EATING WELL, PEOPLE CAN:

- work well and feel better, leading to increased productivity
- be active in everyday life, and in turn have improved sleep
- improve their immunity, and physical and mental state
- reduce their weight and/or maintain a healthy body weight, and
- lower their risk of heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

The four food groups provide a variety of nutrients for everyday health:



Plenty of vegetables and fruit



Grain foods, mostly whole grain and those naturally high in fibre



Some milk and milk products, mostly low- and reduced-fat



Some legumes, nuts, seeds, fish and other seafood, eggs or poultry, or red meat with the fat removed

IN THE WORKPLACE

An average adult will spend a third of their life at work and consume about a third of their daily food intake during work hours. Workplaces can empower staff to assess and take responsibility for their own health by supporting and encouraging healthy eating. Many factors within the workplace have a significant role in influencing what individuals eat.

These include:

- choice, availability and cost of different food/drink options
- promotion and marketing of food/drink choices
- work practices e.g. workload, hours of work
- facilities available for purchasing and/or preparing food/drinks
- dietary habits of colleagues, and
- individual knowledge and skills.

The knowledge and skills that staff gain at work can influence whānau and communities



KEY MESSAGES

Healthy eating is important for good health

- Following the [Eating and Activity Guidelines](#) can support healthy eating.
- Working adults consume a third of their daily food intake during work hours.
- Workplaces can support employees by creating a healthy eating culture.
- A significant proportion of New Zealand adults are not meeting fruit and vegetable intake recommendations.

INCORPORATING HEALTHY EATING INTO YOUR WORKPLACE

Your efforts to support and encourage healthy eating practices within the workplace should consider a **multi-level approach** to ensure it is effective and sustainable.

A multi-level approach involves considering what is available within your workplace at each of the following levels:

1. Organisational policies and procedures

Create a healthy eating culture over time through a healthy food and drink policy to guide the workplace, and encourage leaders to role-model healthy eating.

Consider adopting or adapting the [Healthy Food and Drink Policy for Organisations](#).

2. Environmental infrastructure and facilities

Make 'the healthy choice the easy choice' for staff by providing and marketing affordable and healthy food and drinks.

3. Individual opportunities to learn more and develop skills to support healthy eating

Encourage team development and goal setting in:

- benefits of healthy eating
- healthy eating tips/recipes
- reading food labels
- tips for shift workers
- supermarket shopping tips
- hydration, and
- food safety.

WHAT ARE SOME OF OUR HEALTHY EATING CHALLENGES IN NEW ZEALAND?

[The 2015/2016 New Zealand Health Survey](#) indicated that:

- Only 40% of adults are meeting the recommended intake for both vegetables and fruit:
 - 63% of adults are meeting the recommended three or more servings of vegetables a day.
 - 56% of adults are meeting the recommended two or more servings of fruit a day.
- Pacific, Asian and Māori adults, and those living in lower socioeconomic areas are less likely to meet recommendations for vegetable and fruit intake.
- Two-thirds of adults are either obese or overweight:
 - 32% of adults are obese, and this is higher among Pacific (67%) and Māori (47%) adults.
 - A further 35% of adults are overweight.



For more information to support your workplace wellbeing contact:

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Healthy workplaces is funded by the South Canterbury District Health Board