



Eat Smart North Carolina:

Healthy Celebrations and Events

*Providing better snacks and meals
for children, youth and their families*



Many celebrations and gatherings take place in youth organizations—from holiday celebrations to family nights. Along with the fun, usually comes food. One celebration alone can include pizza, sugary drinks, cake and ice cream. So what's the harm?



Two slices from a large (14-inch) pepperoni pizza
700 calories



Twenty fl. oz. of cola
250 calories



One typical (2-3 oz.) piece of cake
220 calories



One typical (½-cup) vanilla ice cream scoop on a cone
150 calories

= 1,320 calories

There is nothing wrong with an occasional treat, but unhealthy choices have become the norm rather than the exception. Overall, our children's eating habits are poor and obesity rates among children and youth are on the rise. Constant exposure to low-nutrient foods makes it difficult to learn how to make healthy food choices. Giving children and youth more nutritious choices wherever and whenever food is served strengthens the message that healthy food choices lead to healthier bodies and minds. It also furthers

the mission of most youth serving organizations, which is to help children realize their full potential as healthy, productive citizens.

Kids ages 4-13 need only about 1,200-2,000 calories per day.

(ChooseMyPlate.Gov, 2011)

Challenged with a tight budget?

Healthier options may feel out of reach when operating on a tight budget. This resource has been developed with limited budgets in mind. It provides simple alternatives to the usual high calorie, low-nutrient foods and drinks. This guide is organized by types of food to help those responsible for making purchases for youth functions, events or special celebrations easily prepare and plan ahead of time.

Keep in mind that celebrations and events don't always require food. Shift the focus to fun activities, games, or non-food rewards such as stickers, crafts or extra recess time.

- ✓ Plan a scavenger hunt.
- ✓ Offer "free choice" activities.
- ✓ Set up craft stations.
- ✓ Allow kids to choose their favorite music and plan a dance-off.
- ✓ Allow kids to choose their favorite outdoor or indoor games.
- ✓ Plan a skit night.
- ✓ Have a bubble catching contest.
- ✓ Plan a splash day or splash party.
- ✓ Set up stations with different physical activities (stretches, jump rope or active video games).

Make a huge investment in the health of children who participate in your programs. A few simple changes is all it takes.

Are you in charge of buying food for your organization?

Buying food for groups can be a tough job when you are shopping on a budget and need to buy things people will like. It’s also easy to fall back on “the usual” instead of looking for new options that are healthier. At the end of this guide, you will find a simple checklist for each food type that matches the suggestions included in this guide. You can photocopy and take them with you when shopping or placing a restaurant or catering order.

Does your organization receive food or drink donations from local grocery retailers and/or restaurants?

It is common for youth organizations to seek food donations from local grocery retailers and/or restaurants. While many grocery stores and restaurants are willing to donate healthier options when they can, they usually won’t do so unless you ask. Here is a simple script you can use when calling or approaching a grocery store or restaurant about food donations:


“As always, we at (organization’s name) are grateful for your donations and the support you provide our organization and the kids and families in our community. As you may be aware, obesity is on the rise among our kids and therefore, we want to do our part in combatting this problem by providing kids and families with healthy food options. We hope you will consider joining us in our efforts by providing healthy foods and drinks when you are able. We have created a simple checklist that may help you identify healthier items you already have on hand. Would it be OK for me to share this with you?”

You can then give them a copy of the checklists found at the end this guide that match the kind of food they sell (sandwiches, Italian, Mexican or others).

Always order “the usual”? Here are some suggestions for feeding your crew in a healthier way. Each list will give you examples of tasty, healthier options for your usual go-to items.


Pizza

Instead of...	Choose...
Slices	Small squares
Deep dish	Thin crust
Pepperoni, sausage or ham	Chicken, vegetables, pineapple
White flour crust	Whole-wheat crust
Breadsticks	Salad with low-fat dressing, vegetable tray or fruit salad



1 slice of large (14" wide) regular-crust pepperoni pizza
380 calories


VS



1 slice of large (14" wide) thin-crust vegetable pizza
240 calories


Sandwiches and Subs

Instead of...	Choose...
Whole portions	Half size or quarter size portions
White bread or sub roll	Whole-wheat bread, pita or tortilla wrap
Ham, pepperoni, salami and bologna	Lean meats (turkey, chicken, roast beef) or vegetables and cheese only
Extra meat or cheese	Vegetables (tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers and green peppers)
Mayo and/or sauces	Condiments like mustard, oil and vinegar on the side
Chips	Baked chips, pretzels or baby carrots and low-fat dip
Potato salad or pasta salad	Salad with low-fat dressing, vegetable tray or fruit salad




6" tuna sub with cheese
510 calories

VS




6" turkey sub with vegetables
320 calories


American Fare/Burgers/Fast Food

Instead of...	Choose...
Whole portions	Smaller-sized portions and thinner types of rolls/bread
Burgers or hot dogs	Grilled chicken sandwiches, turkey burgers or veggie burgers or hot dogs
Chicken nuggets or fried chicken	Grilled chicken strips, baked or rotisserie chicken pieces; skinless preferred
Fried menu items	Grilled, baked or broiled
White bun or bread	Whole-wheat bun or bread
Mayo, cheese, and sauces	Condiments like ketchup, mustard, BBQ sauce or pickles on the side
French fries	Baked potato, mashed potatoes, sweet potato, salad with low-fat dressing, carrots and low-fat dip or cut up fruit
Ice cream/milkshake	Yogurt parfait
 <div> <p>Typical large (9.5 oz.) fast food cheeseburger with toppings 625 calories</p> <p>VS</p> <p>Typical fast food grilled chicken sandwich with lettuce and tomato (7 oz.) 350 calories</p> </div>	


Italian Fare

Instead of...	Choose...
Serving family-style or buffet	Pre-portioned servings served by staff
Cream, butter or cheese based sauces	Tomato or marinara sauce
Menu items with sausage, pepperoni, or fried meat or vegetables	Menu items with vegetables and grilled or baked meat
White pasta	Whole-grain pasta
Breadsticks	Salad with low-fat dressing, vegetable tray or fruit salad
 <div> <p>Typical restaurant serving (2-3 cups) of fettuccine alfredo 1000-1200 calories</p> <p>VS</p> <p>Typical restaurant serving (2-3 cups) of spaghetti with marinara sauce 550-800 calories</p> </div>	

Mexican Fare

Instead of...	Choose...
Serving family-style or buffet	Pre-portioned servings served by staff
Loaded nachos	Quesadilla triangles that can be portioned easily
Menu items with fried chicken or beef	Grilled chicken or beans and rice
Beef burrito	Chicken, vegetable and/or bean burrito
Loaded taco or burrito	Salsa, tomatoes, onions and/or cilantro in place of sauce, sour cream and cheese
Mexican rice or refried beans	Black beans or pinto beans
Unlimited chips and salsa	Pre-portioned serving of chips and salsa
 <div> <p>1 large beef, rice and cheese burrito with sour cream on 12" tortilla 800-950 calories</p> <p>VS</p> <p>1 large bean and cheese burrito with Pico de Gallo on 12" tortilla 500-700 calories</p> </div>	

Asian Fare

Instead of...	Choose...
Serving family-style or buffet	Pre-portioned servings served by staff
Fried egg rolls or dumplings	Soups: egg drop, miso, wonton or hot and sour; steamed dumplings
Fried menu items	Stir-fried (request broth or stock instead of oil), steamed, roasted or broiled
Meat only dishes	Dishes that contain mostly vegetables; tofu is an excellent meat substitute
White rice or fried rice	Brown rice
 <div> <p>1 egg roll 180 calories</p> <p>VS</p> <p>1 cup of egg drop soup 60 calories</p> </div>	

Breakfast

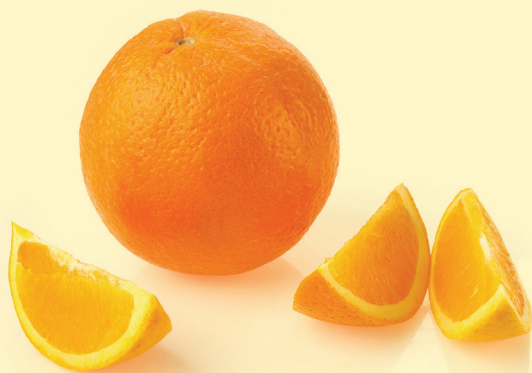
Instead of...	Choose...
Sweetened, canned fruit	Thawed frozen fruit, cut-up fresh fruit or canned fruit in its own juice or light syrup
Regular bagels	Small bagels (3.5" diameter or less) and low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter
Croissants, toaster pastries, sweet rolls, doughnuts, pastries	Mini muffins (5g fat or less each), low-fat granola bars, or toast (whole-wheat bread)
Pancakes	Low-sugar instant oatmeal packets and cut-up fruit
Sausage or bacon	Other protein sources like low-fat or fat-free yogurt, eggs, peanut butter, lean ham, Canadian bacon, vegetarian sausage or meat substitutes
Biscuits	Whole-grain English muffins or whole-wheat bread
Sweetened cereals (chocolate-flavored or fruit-flavored puffed cereal, cereal with marshmallows, or frosted cereal)	Low-sugar cereals (oat cereal, puffed rice crisps or bran flakes with raisins)



1 bagel
with cream cheese
450 calories



1 serving of cereal
with skim milk
250 calories



Snacks/Desserts/Beverages

Instead of...	Choose...
Potato chips	Baked chips, pretzels or low-fat popcorn
Pre-packaged crackers with cheese spread or peanut butter	Whole-grain crackers with peanut butter or low-fat cheese; peanut butter and jelly on whole-wheat bread
Pre-packaged honey buns, brownies, cakes and cream-filled pastries	Trail mix (buy or have kids mix their own with ½ cup low-sugar cereal, ¼ cup dried fruit, and 1 oz nuts/seeds)
Chocolate chip or peanut butter cookies	Animal crackers, vanilla wafers, graham crackers or fig bars
Ice cream	Frozen yogurt, sorbet, sherbet, frozen fudge bars or low-fat pudding, yogurt cups
Ice pops or freezer pops	Frozen grapes or blueberries
Cake with icing	Angel food cake with fruit and fat-free whipped topping
Pies, cobbler, donuts or other baked goods	Fruit with yogurt dip, fruit kabobs, fruit and yogurt parfait
Candy or chocolate bars	100% fruit snacks
Soda, fruit flavored drinks, sports drinks or sweet tea	Carbonated or flavored water, 100% fruit juice (limit serving size to 4-6 oz.), unsweetened tea, diet drinks
Whole, 2% milk or chocolate milk	Skim or 1% white milk



1 bag (1 ounce) potato chips
160 calories



1 bag (1 ounce) pretzels
110 calories

Cola
(20 fl. oz.)
250 calories



Bottled
water
(any size)
0 calories



Healthier Foods and Drinks CheckLists

Photocopy and bring these lists along with you as you shop, place a catering order or talk with a grocery store or restaurant manager about food donations.

Pizza Restaurants

- ☐ Thin crust
- ☐ Smaller slices or squares
- ☐ Vegetable toppings instead of meat
- ☐ Chicken or vegetables
- ☐ Family-style salad with low-fat dressing on the side instead of breadsticks

As an organization dedicated to serving our community's children and youth, we strive to teach them healthy eating habits by providing healthy foods and drinks. We are always thankful for your donations and support, and hope you will consider joining us in our effort to fuel our children's bodies in a healthier way. Above is a wish list of menu items that we hope you can help us with when you're able.

American Fare/ Fast Food Restaurants

- ☐ Mini burgers (sliders) or sandwiches cut in half
- ☐ Grilled, baked, rotisserie or broiled items
- ☐ Whole-wheat bread or rolls
- ☐ Condiments on the side
- ☐ Sides: baked chips, pretzels, yogurt parfait, cut-up fruit, baked potato, mashed potatoes or salad with low-fat dressing

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Asian Restaurants

- ☐ Egg drop, miso, wonton, or hot and sour soup; steamed dumplings instead of fried egg rolls or dumplings
- ☐ Stir fry with stock or broth instead of oil
- ☐ Dishes that contain mostly vegetables
- ☐ Brown rice instead of white or fried rice

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Sandwich and Sub Restaurants

- ☐ Sandwich quarters or halves
- ☐ Whole-wheat bread, rolls, wraps or pita pockets
- ☐ Low-fat cheese if possible or no cheese
- ☐ Turkey, chicken, roast beef or vegetables
- ☐ Condiments on the side
- ☐ Baked chips or pretzels

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Italian Restaurants

- ☐ Tomato or marinara sauce
- ☐ Menu items with vegetables and grilled or baked meat
- ☐ Whole-grain pasta
- ☐ Whole-wheat bread or rolls
- ☐ Family-style salad with low-fat dressing

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Mexican Restaurants

- ☐ Menu items with grilled chicken, vegetables or beans
- ☐ Salsa, tomatoes, onions and/or cilantro instead of sour cream, sauces and/or cheese
- ☐ Black or pinto beans instead of refried bean and/or Mexican rice

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Grocery Retailers

- ☐ Fruit (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ Cut-up vegetables
- ☐ Pretzels or baked chips
- ☐ Trail mix
- ☐ Animal crackers, vanilla wafers, graham crackers or fig bars
- ☐ Yogurt, gelatin or pudding cups
- ☐ 100% fruit snacks
- ☐ Granola bars with low sugar (5 grams) and calories (100 calories)
- ☐ Water bottles

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Take a Stand!

Some organizations adopt rules, guidelines or pledges to help support healthy foods and beverages being served at various functions. This helps staff, volunteers and members understand the organizational culture when it comes to serving food and beverages, and also helps define what is meant by "healthier options."

SAMPLE HEALTHY FOODS POLICY

For use within any organization or community group where foods or beverages are served.

Whereas:

_____ (organization name) is concerned about the health of our kids, youth and families;

Whereas:

People have become more and more interested in eating smart and moving more;

Whereas:

Cancer, heart disease and stroke—the top three causes of death in North Carolina—are largely affected by what we eat and how active we are; and

Whereas:

Foods such as fruits, vegetables, whole-wheat breads and pastas and low-fat dairy products are better choices for preventing many diseases.

Therefore:

Effective _____ (date), it is the policy of _____ (organization name) that all activities and events (examples of events may include: meetings, potluck events, catered events, community sponsored events such as health fairs or others) sponsored or supported by this organization will always include opportunities for healthy foods and beverages by:

- **Offering water as a beverage option and omitting sugar-sweetened beverages** (regular soda, sweet tea, other drinks with sugar)
- **Offering at least one fruit and/or vegetable option**
Examples of such items include fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits (such as baby carrots, oranges, grapes, apples, raisins) and fresh, frozen or canned vegetables.
- **Purchasing or serving fat-free/low-fat milk and dairy products**
Examples include skim, nonfat or 1% milk; low-fat and fat-free yogurt and cheese
- **Purchasing foods made from whole grains**
Examples include whole-wheat crackers, breads and pastas
- **Identifying restaurants and/or caterers where healthy choices are available**
- **Organizational leadership serve as role models for healthy food choices and encourage healthy food policies**

Signature _____

Title _____

Organization Name _____

Date _____

This guide was developed by:



Healthy Places, Active Spaces is intended to increase the capacity of community organizations to implement sustainable physical activity and healthy eating opportunities for underserved children and youth in Wake County.

With the support of:



www.EatSmartMoveMoreNC.com

