

Healthy Food Options for Meetings

Providing the right kinds of foods during meetings can make the difference between a distracted group and an engaged group. Not sure what foods will have the best impact on the health of your employees? We have some great options for both lunch meetings and meetings where you may only need to provide a snack.

Healthy Options for Lunch Meetings:

- Pre-cut sandwiches/wraps made with whole grain breads, cut in halves for smaller portions.
- Healthier choices for sandwich fillings = lean deli meats such as roast beef, turkey, chicken & ham.
- Salads with lots of fresh vegetables. Limit use of cheese and high-fat dressings.
- Pizza is a convenient option but be wary! Avoid pizzas that are heavy in cheese & meat options. Lighten up by choosing whole-grain, thin crust, lots of vegetables and easy on the cheese.
- Soups are a great filling option as well – avoid cream-based soups though. A better option is a low-fat, broth-based soup. Be mindful of sodium content as well!
- Chili would also make a filling meal and is a great opportunity for increased fiber & protein due to the beans. Easy to use as a vegetarian option as well – simply omit the meat. This is an easy option for a catering company to prepare as well!

Healthy Options for Snacks During Meetings:

- 100% Pure, not-from-concentrate fruit & vegetable juices, water, coffee & tea. Avoid sodas and offer skim or 1% milk instead of cream for coffee & tea.
- Fresh, whole fruit and/or cut-up veggie trays with low-fat dip.
- Low-fat yogurt cups
- Unsweetened applesauce cups
- Trail mix – avoid those that contain candy coated chocolate. Look for nuts, seeds and dried fruit to make up the bulk of the mix. Watch portion sizes as trail mix can be high in calories.
- If you would still like to serve bagels or muffins, choose whole-grain and go smaller in size. Mini-muffins, mini-bagels or simply cutting full-sized options into halves or quarters can make it easier for your staff to make the right choice.
- Energy bars (like Clif/Luna Bars) are also a great option. Low-fat granola bars also make a quick, easy & healthy option.



The Benefits of Healthy Snacking:

Snacks can provide an opportunity to improve the quality of your diet. Nutrient-dense foods (such as fruits, vegetables & also seeds) can help you meet recommended daily intake levels.

They also help to sustain energy levels throughout the day. After you eat a meal or snack, your blood sugar levels rise and then fall. If your blood sugar levels fall too low, this can result in feeling tired. The right kind of snacks prevent your blood sugar from dropping too low between meals and offer a boost of energy to get you through to your next meal.

Avoid sugary snacks as this can lead to a sugar high and subsequent energy crash when blood sugar levels drop rapidly. High-fiber, high-protein snacks (cut up carrots with a garlic bean dip) are slow to digest which helps keep your blood sugar levels stable.

Sources: www.gov.mb.ca, healthyeating.sfgate.com