

“Treating” your Co-Workers Well



Have you ever brought treats for your co-workers either for a meeting, a birthday, or just because? While it may be a very thoughtful gesture, you may want to reconsider if you are truly “treating” your co-workers well with those treats.

Bottom line: Adequate nutrition is essential for the overall health and vitality of employees (OSNPPH, 2012).

What’s so bad about timbits or cookies for the office?

Researchers believe that foods high in fat, sugar, or white flour **act in a similar fashion in the brain as addictive drugs**, making it very tempting and difficult for people to resist. It can motivate people to eat even when not hungry, as well as **change the brain to promote overeating when people gain weight from added fat and sugar** (Lin et al., 2010; Stice et al., 2010).



Food choices affect the brain

The part of the brain that helps people resist tempting food is also responsible for **problem solving, learning, and dealing with stress** (Miguel, & Alvaro, 2007). Thus, you might be doing your co-workers a favour by selecting nutrient-dense foods (e.g., fruit, cheese and crackers). Since the demands of a typical workday require much mental energy, your co-workers’ ability to resist tempting food will most likely be drained since that part of the brain has been used for other tasks.

What does healthy eating have to do with job performance?

Healthy eating in the workplace can help prevent workplace costs related to:

- ✓ absenteeism
- ✓ reduced productivity
- ✓ increased insurance premiums
- ✓ medical costs
- ✓ prescription drug costs
- ✓ higher rates of injury, disability and early retirement.

Importantly, it can reduce the risk of **nutrition related chronic diseases** (i.e., heart disease, stroke, obesity, type 2 diabetes, certain types of cancers and depression). This has **huge implications for the workforce – the more people eat poorly, the more likely people will get chronic diseases, which means fewer employees in the workplace** (Public Health Ontario, 2012).

What snacks should I bring for the office then?

- ✓ Larabars
- ✓ Kashi bars
- ✓ Fruit trays
- ✓ Nuts
- ✓ Low-fat cheese with high-fiber, low-fat crackers
- ✓ Homemade healthy muffins or healthy banana bread (recipe below)
- ✓ Green or peppermint tea instead of pop or juice



Healthier Banana Bread Yields 1 loaf



- 1 cup all-purpose flour + 1 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/8 cup non-fat plain yogurt
- 3/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 1/3 cup mashed overripe bananas
- 1/4 cup walnuts or craisins (optional)

1. Preheat oven 350 °F. Lightly grease 9x5 loaf pan or line a muffin tray with muffin tins.
2. Combine flour, baking soda, salt in a bowl. Beat butter, yogurt, brown sugar, and vanilla until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time. Stir in mashed bananas until well blended. Pour banana mixture into flour mixture. Stir just to moisten (do not overmix). Transfer to loaf pan or muffin tray.
3. Bake loaf for 60-65 minutes or 25-35 minutes if making muffins (or until toothpick comes out clean when inserted). Let it cool completely.

Nutritional Information

(per serving)

Calories: 196
Total Fat: 5g
Sat. Fat: 2.8g
Carbs: 35g
Fiber: 1.7g
Protein: 3.8g

Source: <http://www.allrecipes.com>

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