



EATING WELL AT WORK

FOR INDIVIDUALS



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A close-up photograph of a rustic wooden bowl filled with a fresh salad. The salad consists of bright green spinach leaves, small red cherry tomatoes, and pieces of cooked chicken. The bowl is set on a dark surface, and in the background, a plate with olives and other items is partially visible. The lighting is warm, highlighting the textures of the food.

While you're at work you can eat food that tastes good and energizes your body throughout the day. This toolkit provides information about how to eat healthy and make skillful food choices to eat well at work.

A HEALTHY MEAL

In general, a well-balanced healthy meal includes fruits, vegetables, lean protein, and whole grains and is limited in foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. Healthy meals should not be overly restrictive, leave you feeling hungry afterward, or be boring and bland. Healthy meals can be delicious!

EATING MINDFULLY

One way to insure that you are eating well is to pay attention to the signals your body sends you about how hungry or full you are. Before and during your meals, assess how hungry or satisfied you are and eat the amount of food that helps you feel just right. You can use the basics of mindful eating below as a guide. For more information on mindful eating, consider enrolling in the Eat for Life class offered through the university.

Try the **BASICS** of mindful eating:

- B**reathe and belly check for hunger and satiety before you eat.
- A**ssess your food
- S**low down
- I**nvestigate your hunger and satiety throughout the meal
- C**hew your food thoroughly
- S**avor your food

STRESS AND EMOTIONAL EATING

When you are stressed or experiencing difficult emotions, it is easy to use food as a way to make yourself feel better. This may cause you to eat when you are not truly hungry, eat more than you intended, or eat foods that are not healthy. When you are stressed, here are other ways to help you feel more relaxed and address the issues at hand.



*Slow down when eating
to assess hunger.*

Quick tips:

- Take a walk, stretch, or exercise instead of eating
- Use other relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, yoga, or meditation
- Talk to a friend or co-worker about your situation

FOOD AS A REWARD

Oftentimes food is used to celebrate accomplishments or to reward a team for a job well done. There may be other ways to acknowledge good work besides providing food. Giving genuine compliments, sincere thank you notes, or time at the workplace to de-stress and re-energize can promote a positive culture in a healthy way. Try alternating rewards for good work between healthy snacks or meals and non-food acknowledgements.

Quick tips:

- Give sincere compliments to co-workers for things you appreciate
- Promote self-care by encouraging time to de-stress and re-energize
- Minimize using unhealthy foods as rewards or praise for good work



A breakfast that includes proteins, fruits, and vegetables will help you make the most out of your day.

BREAKFAST

Eating a healthy and balanced breakfast in the morning provides energy that lasts through the day and can prevent overeating at other meals. Sugary breakfast foods may not give you lasting energy to get you through the morning and may cause you to be hungry more quickly.

Quick tips:

- Avoid sugary breakfast foods such as sugary cereals, doughnuts, or danishes
- Include protein and whole grains to give you energy for the day
- Don't forget fruits and vegetables in the morning (try a smoothie!)

PLANNING AHEAD

One way to make sure you have healthy food throughout your week is to plan ahead and buy foods that are good for you. Taking healthy snacks and meals to work can limit unhealthy foods you might eat due to convenience.

Quick tips:

- Create a shopping list and buy food for the week
- Prepare meals and snacks ahead of time
- Take healthy meals and snacks to work



SNACKING

Having a snack in the mid-morning or mid-afternoon can help you feel energized and prevent overeating at meals. Snacks can be easily packed ahead of time in portion sized containers to make sure you do not over eat them mindlessly.

Convenience snacking is easy to do during the workday, however many snacks that are readily available are salty or sugary foods that may not give you lasting energy. Check the lists below to see some items that you may eat, but are not as healthy, and try to replace them with foods from the list on the right which are better options during the day.

Quick tips:

- Use snack size bags or containers to help get the portions right
- Bring snacks for both the morning and afternoon that are easy to eat
- Pay attention to labels to avoid snacks that are high in sodium or sugar
- Try to eat snacks high in protein or fiber
- Avoid having big bags, boxes, or bowls of snacks which may promote mindless eating
- Check for healthier options in vending machines or in the cafeteria

<i>Try to avoid these</i>	<i>Try these instead</i>	
Chips	Fresh fruit (apples, bananas, grapes)	Granola bars
Cookies	Fresh vegetables (baby carrots, celery sticks, cucumbers)	Peanut butter for crackers, rice cakes, or apple slices
Candy	Nuts or seeds	Hummus for crackers or vegetables
Chocolate Bars	Dried fruits	Whole grain snacks
Sugar	Pretzels	Cottage cheese
	Rice cakes	Cheese
	Whole grain crackers with cheese	Yogurt (add fresh fruit and granola)
	Whole grain cereal	Fruit and nut bars

Fruits and vegetables are always a good choice as a snack!

Try to prepare meals the night before or the weekend ahead of time so that you can add variety, creativity, and health to your day, as well as saving time and money!

PACKING LUNCHES

Get the vegetables, fruits, and protein you need at lunch by packing it ahead of time. Having an insulated lunch box and reusable containers give you the ability to pack foods you really enjoy and may help you to avoid going out to eat. Try to prepare meals the night before or the weekend ahead of time so that you can add variety, creativity, and health to your day, as well as saving time and money!

Quick tips:

- Pack foods in microwave safe containers
- Have insulated lunch bag and ice pack if your workplace does not have a refrigerator
- Healthy leftovers make an easy lunch without extra effort

DINING OUT

Going out to eat during the workday can be a great stress reliever. You can still eat healthy meals when you go out to eat. Pay attention to portion sizes and take some home with you if you are served large portions. See if you can eat at restaurants that offer vegetables and fruits as part of their meals instead of fries.

Quick tips:

- Check the restaurant's menu online before you go to find healthy options
- Select healthy dressings and condiments such as mustards, avocado, hummus, or salsa
- Split a meal with a co-worker if there are large portion sizes or eat half of the food given to you and take home leftovers

<i>Try to avoid these</i>	<i>Try these instead</i>
Fried food	Sandwich with whole grain bread, lean meat, vegetables, and mustard, or avocado
Take-out burgers and fries	Salad loaded with vegetables and topped with lean meat or tofu, seeds, light cheese, and dressing on the side
Large sandwiches with mayo and cheese	Oil and vinegar dressing
Pizza with high fat meats	Broth based soup with whole grain roll
White sauces	Fresh fruit side dish
Salads loaded with cheese, croutons, and dressing	Fresh, steamed, or grilled vegetable side dish
High fat/low nutrient dressings or condiments	Tomato based sauces
Chips	



BEVERAGES

Drinking healthy beverages is an important part of a healthy diet that is sometimes overlooked. Many people do not get enough water during the day, which can increase the likelihood of dehydration even if you are not being physically active. Drinking plenty of water throughout the day is important and may help you cut back on drinks that are not as healthy. Drinks that are high in sugar may be affecting your energy levels and adding unnecessary calories to your diet. Try drinking more water or having unsweetened coffee or tea instead of sugary drinks.

Quick tips:

Bring a big, reusable water bottle with you to work and make sure to drink all of it

Avoid soda and energy drinks which might cause you to feel more tired after the sugar rush

Limit the amount of cream and sugar you put in coffee and tea

<i>Try to avoid these</i>	<i>Try these instead</i>
Soda	Water (sparkling, bottled, spring or calorie free flavored)
Sugary juices	Milk that is 2% or less
Sports drinks	100% fruit juice
Extra cream and sugar	Fresh lemonade
Sweetened tea	Tea (regular or decaf)
	Coffee (regular or decaf)
	Smoothie
	Diet soda or tea



Avoid soda and energy drinks which might cause you to feel more tired after the sugar rush.