

Guide to *Healthy* Fellowship





The *Power* of Fellowship

The environments in which we live, work and gather influence many of the choices we make and can either support or hinder our efforts to eat healthy and be active. Places of faith have a special role to play in helping their members live healthy! Places of faith can be powerful sources of information and can provide an environment that supports healthy choices.

This guide provides an overview and instructions to adopt and implement policies, programs and environmental changes that support healthy eating and physical activity within your faith organization.

As a faith community member, you are the expert in knowing your members' needs; how

your congregation works and how to generate enthusiasm among your members for these programs. We hope these programs, policies and environmental changes can be easily combined with activities your congregation already provides.

Before you get started, consider the following:

- Are your members interested in particular health issues?
- Does your minister or leader have an interest in healthy eating and physical activity?
- Which of your current programs could you enhance by adding healthy eating and physical activity?

Step 1: Get support from leadership.

Commitment from the faith leader is key to a successful program.

Leadership can support the program by:

- Participating in the program
- Including nutrition and physical activity information in sermons or talks
- Serving as role models for healthy living
- Making announcements about the program and encouraging others to participate

Step 2: Establish a Get Healthy Committee.

The Get Healthy Committee:

- Plans activities and promotes changes to faith community practices and facilities to support healthy eating and physical activity
- Promotes participation in programs and activities among congregation members
- Advocates for policy and environmental changes to support healthy eating and physical activity
- Evaluates the success of programs, environmental changes and policy changes

Step 3: Assess the needs of your membership.

Planning a successful program requires information about the health needs and interests of the congregation. You can do this by developing a short survey, or asking people what they are interested in or what they want to know more about.

Step 4: Develop a program plan.

This plan encourages a multi-level approach, a program that targets individuals, groups and your fellowship as a whole.

A Get Healthy Fellowship Program might include:

- At least one policy change (e.g., serving healthy meals at events or promoting physical activity in monthly newsletters, etc.)
- At least one environmental change (e.g., planting a garden, marking out a walking route around your facilities, or buying healthy cooking equipment for the kitchen, etc.)
- Education and/or programs (e.g., offering nutrition education classes from Cooperative Extension staff, food tastings or demonstrations, providing handouts on healthy eating or physical activity, posting information on bulletin boards, offering physical activity classes, etc.)

As you begin to develop your plan, you will need to decide what you want to accomplish based on your needs, time, volunteers and resources available.

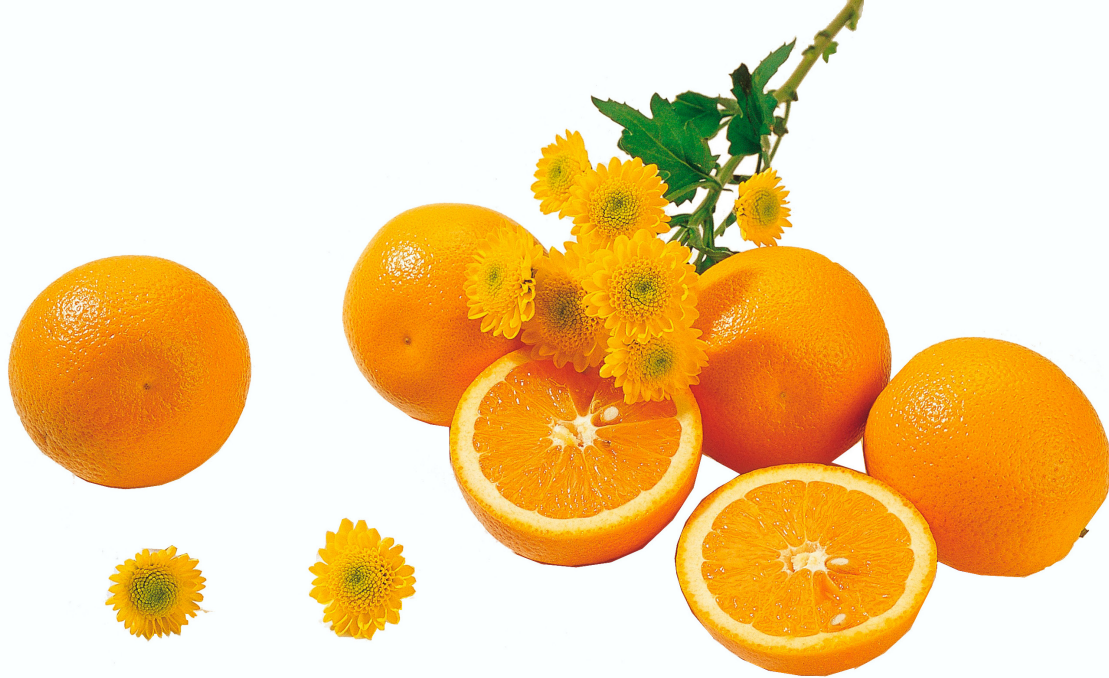
Step 5: Implement your plan.

Getting members of your congregation involved in a Get Healthy Fellowship Program requires careful planning. The program, policy or environmental change must be clearly understood by all members, relate to their needs and interests, be convenient for them, and must be something they think can be accomplished. Your leaders, staff and committee will all need to be actively involved in implementing and publicizing your policy, environmental change or activity.

Step 6: Evaluate your program.

Taking a close look at the program and activities will provide information on what took place, how many people participated, if the program, policy or environmental change met their needs, and if your overall program changed members' health habits. This should not be considered a test of the success of the program. Instead, it should show the strengths and weaknesses so you can plan for the next program.





EAT BETTER

Although many of us know that good nutrition can improve our health, our lifestyles have changed over the past few decades. Our environment plays a big part in the choices we make and can either hinder or support our efforts to eat healthy. The following are some ideas on ways that you can increase and support healthy eating in your place of faith.

Plant a Community Garden

Creating a community garden is a great project for places of faith. In addition to providing fresh fruits and vegetables, gardens can also build community, teach life skills, promote health, and much more. Community gardens provide a place for individuals and families to grow healthy, nutritious food while enjoying the pleasures and benefits of a natural setting. For help planning and planting a community garden, contact the Cooperative Extension office. You can find the contact information at www.unce.unr.edu.

NC State and NC A&T University have developed a very detailed "how to" gardening guide: http://cals.ncsu.edu/hort_sci/extension/documents/ag-727.pdf

Offer Healthy Food Choices

In America we are surrounded by food all day and every day. This is no different at many of our places of worship. Whether it is a church potluck

or refreshments after a worship service, food and our faith often go together. Make sure at least one fruit or vegetable is offered anytime food is served. If having a meal, offer baked, roasted or grilled meats and fish. For healthier beverage options, offer water, milk or 100 percent vegetable or fruit juice.

Give Suggestions for Potlucks

You just never know what is going to show up at a potluck. To help avoid the "all dessert no main dish" problem, suggest dishes. Offer suggestions for fruit, vegetable and grain dishes on the signup sheet. If people need a little incentive to bring healthier dishes, offer prizes like "Best Use of a Healthy Grain" or "Most Creative Use of Fruits and Vegetables."

Pay Attention to Portion Sizes

Over the past few years, portion sizes have increased substantially. Larger portions of high-fat, high calorie foods have contributed to the obesity epidemic in the United States. Bigger is not always better, so offer smaller portions of foods and beverages. People tend to fill their plates, so offer smaller plates to help them reduce their portion size when hosting an event buffet-style.

Stock Vending Machines with Healthy Options

Does your place of worship have a vending machine? If it does, it is most likely stocked

with chips and candy. Instead of offering only unhealthy options, ask your vendor to stock some healthier selections such as pretzels, whole grain cereal bars or baked chips. In beverage vending machines, include water, low-fat milk and 100 percent fruit juices. For more information about standards and stocking healthier options in vending machines, go to Appendix A.

Re-Think Your Drink

Everyone loves a refreshing drink, but sodas, sweet tea and other sugary drinks have a lot of calories and little nutrients. At meetings, meals and other functions, serve healthy beverages like water or skim or 1 percent milk instead of soda and other flavored or sweetened beverages. You can offer lemon, lime, cucumber slices, or fresh mint leaves to add flavor to the water.

Join the Nutrition Challenge

Encourage your members to join the Nutrition Challenge, a free 8-week online program designed to help participants increase their daily intake of fruits and vegetables. Participants can track their daily and weekly progress throughout the program. They also receive weekly tips to achieve their goals and how to prepare healthy recipes and snacks. It's easy, fun and free, so encourage your members to sign up at www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org.

Make the Most of Literature Racks and Bulletin Boards

Using literature racks and bulletin boards keeps the idea of healthy eating visible in your faith community. Use an attractive holder in an easy-

to-find location to display handouts, brochures or pamphlets about healthy eating. Encourage one of your organization's groups, such as the youth group, to work together to create a colorful bulletin board to promote healthy choices. To find useful resources, go to:

Nutrition.gov
<http://www.nutrition.gov/>

My Pyramid
<http://www.mypyramid.gov/>

Offer Educational Sessions

Organize an educational session for your members. Ask local professionals to come and speak on various nutrition topics like: reading nutrition labels, general nutrition or healthy shopping tips. For a list of speakers, visit our Partners for Healthy Nevada Speakers Bureau page on www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org.

Support Breastfeeding Mothers

More than 70 percent of new mothers now breastfeed for some amount of time. Breastfed infants are significantly less likely to suffer from illnesses and infections, and mother who breastfeed also enjoy health benefits like faster recovery from pregnancy.

Women who breastfeed their babies require a quiet, private place to nurse the baby or to express breast milk. The following websites provide more information about how to set up a comfortable area for breastfeeding mothers on site at your faith community:

www.4woman.gov/Breastfeeding
www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding
www.usbreastfeeding.org

Work with Local Restaurants

- Create and give members a list of nearby restaurants that offer healthy choices. You can also include examples of healthy menu items from each of the restaurants.
- Ask local restaurants to cater their healthy menu items at events or meetings.



Adopt a Healthy Foods Policy

Policies can support healthy behaviors and lead to increased healthy eating. If your place of faith does not already have a healthy foods policy you may want to consider developing one. Policies can produce change in our surroundings that help us eat healthy foods. For example, a faith community policy could require that water and healthy options be provided at meetings and events. We have included an example of a healthy food policy below.

Sample Healthy Food Policy

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

Whereas: _____ (organization's name) is concerned about the health of our _____ (members):

Whereas: People have become more interested in eating healthier and becoming more active.

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

Therefore: Effective _____ (today's date), it is the policy of _____ (organization's name) that all activities and

events (examples of events may include: meetings, potluck events, catered events, etc.) sponsored or supported by this organization will always include opportunities for healthy foods and beverages by:

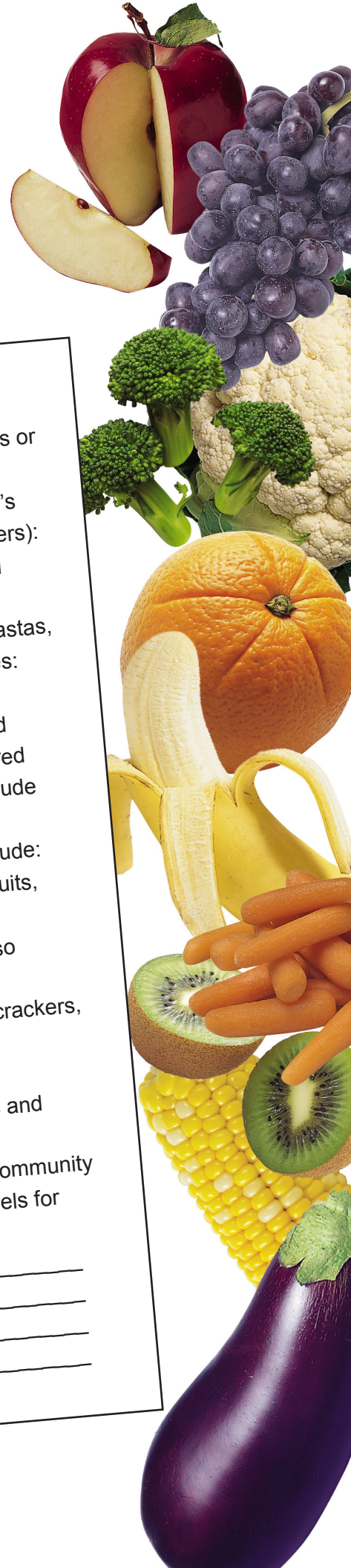
- Purchasing and serving one or more healthy choices. Examples include:
 - Fruits and vegetables, including fresh, frozen, canned or dried fruits, 100% fruit juice and fresh frozen or canned vegetables
 - Low-fat milk and dairy products, including skim/ non-fat milk (also lactose-free): low-fat and fat-free yogurt, cheese and ice cream
 - Foods made from whole grains, including low-fat whole wheat crackers, bread, pasta, cereal, low-fat baked tortilla chips or pita bread
- Always providing water
- Identifying healthy eating opportunities (e.g., restaurants, caterers and farmer's markets, wherever healthy food options are available)
- Providing encouragement for others to enjoy healthy food (e.g., community promotion of healthy lifestyles, and group leaders being role models for healthy food choices).

Signature _____

Title _____

Name of organization _____

Date _____





- Partner with local restaurants to provide members with coupons or discounts on healthy menu items.

- Create a map or flyer that lists the different walking routes that you have identified, how long they are, and provide to your members.

GET MOVING

We all know that we should be physically active, but most of us do not get the recommended amount of physical activity that we should. Our environment plays a big part in the choices we make and can either hinder or support our efforts to be physically active. The following are some ideas on ways that you can increase and support physical activity in your place of faith.

Develop Walking Routes

Identify or create walking routes near your place of faith. When identifying or creating walking routes, keep these guidelines in mind:

- Make sure the route is safe for members to walk. This could be in a parking lot, or a nearby neighborhood.
- Walking routes can be both indoors or outdoors.
- Create walking routes of different distances. The routes can form a circle bringing the walker back to the beginning, or it may be a straight route out and back.

Install Bike Racks

Bicycling is a fun and affordable way to get around. Providing bike racks at your place of faith will encourage people to bike to services, meetings or events. Bike racks are a onetime investment and can help increase physical activity among members.

Develop a Fitness Room

Create a fitness room at your place of worship. Offering an onsite fitness room makes physical activity more accessible for your members. Any size room will work; it can be a small room with a few pieces of equipment to a large room with many machines. If you do not have money to buy equipment, see if your members would be willing to donate items.

Equipment to consider putting in the fitness room:

- Free weights or exercise bands
- Exercise balls
- Yoga mats
- Treadmill
- Jump Ropes
- Elliptical Machine
- A DVD/VCR and TV to play exercise videos

Spruce Up the Stairwell

Choosing to take the stairs instead of the elevator is a quick way for people to add physical activity to their day. An important motivator in encouraging people to take the stairs is making stairwells a safer, more inviting place to be. To spruce up your stairwell, consider these improvements:

- Add carpet and rubber treading to increase safety.
- Use creative lighting (e.g., track lighting, incandescent lighting or halogen lighting).
- Paint your stairwells with inviting colors or create themed stairwells (e.g., transport stair users to a Hawaiian beach or tropical rainforest during their trip on the stairs).
- Add footsteps that lead from the elevators to the stairs and have a message spelled out along the way.
- Post arrows showing the way to the stairs.

The Southern Nevada Health District has developed signs to be posted by the elevator and near stairwells to encourage individuals to take the stairs versus the elevator. Download “Take the Stairs” signs at www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org.

Encourage Members to Park Far Away

Almost everyone tries to park close to the door, whether we are at the store, work or church. Encourage members to park farther away and get in those extra steps. Identify parking spaces farthest from the entrance and mark them with special signs available at www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org.

Move Around during Meeting Breaks

Instead of offering food during a meeting break, try offering a physical activity break. Meeting breaks are a great opportunity for members to get a dose of physical activity. Go for a quick walk or initiate stretching exercises.

Promote Activity Clubs and Groups

Encourage members with an interest in similar kinds of physical activity or sports to form their own clubs and be active as a group. Examples



include walking groups, basketball, volleyball, or soccer games. Your faith community can even sponsor a team in a local recreation league. Social support from group members who are interested in being physically active can also help other members be physically active.

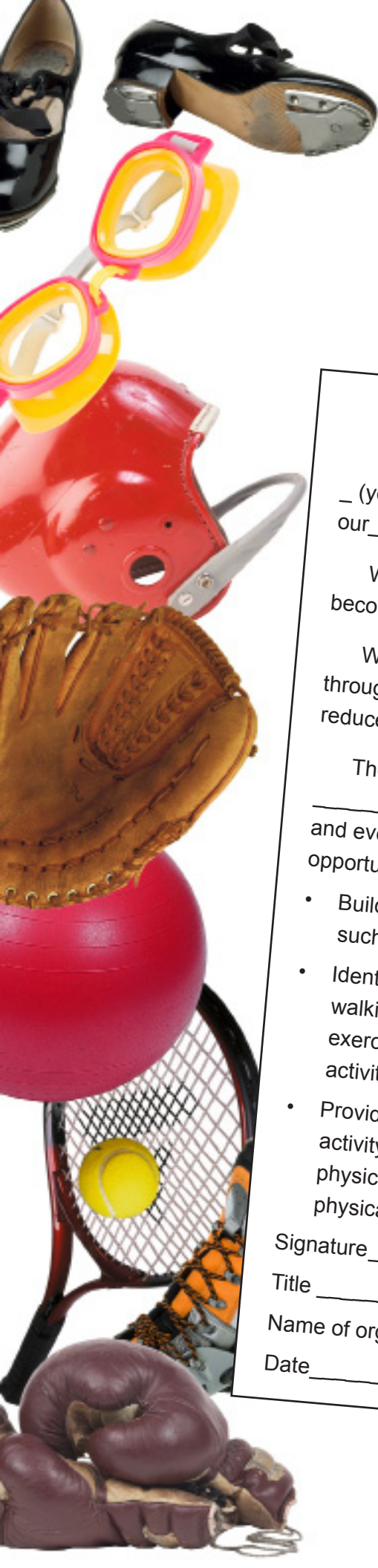
Create a Walk Around Nevada Challenge

Encourage members to sign up for Walk Around Nevada, a free online program to aid participants in reaching their fitness goals by tracking their daily physical activities. Participants enter their steps or miles online and watch as they virtually trek around Nevada. Join as a group or individually at www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org.

When the challenge ends, recognize the top five walkers or teams. Announce their names on bulletin boards, at meetings or in services, or present them with a certificate of recognition. Recognition may also be given to members who were regular walkers, even if they were not top mileage winners. Remember, the goal is to encourage members to develop healthy habits.

Offer Educational Sessions

Organize an education session for your members. Ask local professionals to come in and speak on various physical activity topics like: why physical activity is important, or ways to be physically active in your community. For a list of speakers, visit our Partners for Healthy Nevada Speakers Bureau page on www.getthehealthyclarkcounty.org.



Adopt a Physical Activity Policy

Policies can support healthy behaviors and lead to increased physical activity. If your place of faith does not already have a physical activity policy, you may want to develop one. Policies can produce change in our surroundings that can lead to more physical activity. For example, a physical activity policy could require that a physical activity break be included in all meetings or events (other than services) that last more than one hour, or mentioning physical activity messages regularly in leaders' talks or sermons.

Sample Physical Activity Policy

Whereas: _____
_ (your organization's name) is concerned about the health of
our _____ (members):

Whereas: People have become more interested in eating healthier and becoming more active.

Whereas: Regular physical activity provides for increased quality of life through improved endurance, strength, flexibility and balance, as well as reduced risk of chronic diseases, injury and perception of stress;

Therefore: Effective _____ (today's date), it is the policy of
_____ (your organization's name) that activities
and events sponsored or supported by this organization will always include opportunities for physical activity by:

- Building physical activity breaks into meetings (e.g., facilitated activities such as stretch breaks or icebreakers).
- Identifying physical activity opportunities (e.g., provision of map with walking routes and local attractions; identification of recreational and exercise facilities; organization of walking groups and other group activities).
- Providing encouragement from group leadership to engage in physical activity (e.g., community promotion of healthy lifestyles; promoting physical activity for members; group leadership being role models for physical activity.)

Signature _____

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APPENDIX A: VENDING MACHINES

Learn about the Federal Regulations

The Patient Protection and Affordable Health Act requires vending-machine operators owning or operating 20 or more machines to display calorie counts for all items in their machines. Section 4205 of the act states: "In the case of an article of food sold from a vending machine that ... is operated

by a person who is engaged in the business of owning or operating 20 or more vending machines, the vending machine operator shall provide a sign in close proximity to each article of food or the selection button that includes a clear and conspicuous statement describing the number of calories contained in the article."

Official guidelines are still being drafted, but should be final by March of 2011.

How to Stock Vending Machines with Healthy Food and Beverages

Vending machines are an easy way to increase access to healthy foods and beverages. Below are some guidelines to help you make sure your vending machines are stocked with healthy options. *(Note: These are recommendations and are not part of the federal law.)*

Nutrition Guidelines for Food

At least 50 percent of foods served in vending machines should meet the following nutrition standards:

1. Have no more than 35 percent of its calories from total fat (not including nuts and seeds).
2. Have no more than 10 percent of its calories from saturated fat.
3. Have no more than 35 percent sugar by weight (not including fruits and vegetables).
4. Have no more than 360 milligrams (mg) of sodium per serving.
5. Contain at least 2 grams (g) of dietary fiber per serving.
6. Low or no trans-fat.

Pricing/Placement Standards for Food

1. Food items meeting the recommended nutrition guidelines should be sold at a price that is equivalent to or lower than the price of the remaining items within the vending machine that do not meet the nutrition standards.
2. Food items meeting the recommended nutrition guidelines should be placed within the top third of the vending machine so that they are visible at eye level.



Nutrition Guidelines for Beverages

At least 50 percent of the beverage machine offerings must include:

1. Beverages that contain 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice with no added sweeteners
2. Water
3. Non-fat or low-fat milk
4. Beverages that are limited to a portion size no greater than 12 ounces (no limit on water).

Pricing/Placement Standards for Beverages

1. Beverages meeting the recommended nutrient guidelines should be sold at a price that is equivalent to or lower than a price of the remaining beverages within the vending machine that do not meet these nutrition standards.

2. Beverages meeting the recommended nutrition guidelines should be placed within the top third of the vending machine so that they are visible at eye level.

Suggested Healthier Vending Machine Options

Non-refrigerated Food

- Canned fruit cups
- Dried fruits
- Pretzels
- Baked chips
- Low fat popcorn
- Whole grain crackers
- Low fat granola bars
- Low fat whole grain cereals
- Low fat whole grain cereal bars
- Graham crackers
- Animal crackers

Refrigerated/Frozen Food & Beverages

- Vegetables
- Fresh fruit
- Fresh vegetable salads with low fat or fat free dressing
- Nonfat yogurt
- Frozen 100% fruit juice bars
- Water
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice
- Nonfat or low-fat milk



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