



Developing a Workplace Nutrition Policy

A Workplace Nutrition Policy based on the NZ Food and Nutrition Guidelines allows individuals the opportunity to make healthy food choices while they are at work. A policy may be developed by an individual or a team of employees in conjunction with management. Developing the policy in consultation with employees leads to wider acceptance when it gets implemented.

The following steps will assist you in developing a nutrition policy which meets your individual workplace needs.

A. Set a workplace nutrition goal

Example:

Company X shows a commitment to the health and wellbeing of its employees and their families by following the NZ [Food and Nutrition Guidelines](#) in any initiatives involving food.

OR

Company X will act as a role model with a commitment to the promotion and provision of healthy food choices in the workplace.

B. Identify the scope of the nutrition policy

Example:

This nutrition policy covers any provision of food to staff including work functions, the workplace cafeteria, food for nightshift employees, vending machines, snack boxes, and social functions.

C. Set strategies for policy implementation

Examples:

- Food and drink provided at catered events will be in line with the Food and Nutrition Guidelines or specifically developed catering guidelines (resource: Company catering guidelines).
- Workplace cafeteria foods will meet the Food and Nutrition Guidelines and all food will be prepared using safe food practices (resource: *Heartbeat Challenge Notes for Cafeteria*).
- Vending machines and fundraising boxes will offer a choice of foods that meet the Food and Nutrition Guidelines (resources: *Vending Machine Ideas and Snack Box Ideas*).
- If alcohol is provided at workplace social events, the workplace must adhere to the Host Responsibility guidelines produced by the Alcohol Advisory Council of NZ (ALAC). Specifically, alcohol should be served responsibly and substantial food should be provided that meets the Food and Nutrition Guidelines. (resources: *Host Responsibility Kit*, kit available from the Alcohol Advisory Council).
- If food is sold in the lunch room there will be choices available that meet the Food and Nutrition Guidelines.
- Low-fat milk varieties will be available with tea and coffee and water will be available for drinking.
- Education and information will be provided for staff to support the principles of the policy, e.g. pamphlets, posters, talks from dietitians, nutritionists or occupational health nurses.

D. Develop methods of monitoring and evaluation

Examples:

- Before implementing the policy, document the current status of each area listed in the strategies.
- Set regular dates to review and evaluate the appropriateness and success of the policy.
- Establish a small team which will meet to do the regular review and evaluation and who will look at additional healthy changes that could be made.

The team needs to ask these questions:

- Is the policy working?
- What do people think of it?
- Do any changes need to be made?

Information regarding changes may be gathered through:

- Regular staff questionnaires/surveys, e.g. ask staff if they liked the food at the last social function; sales records from the cafeteria - are the healthy choices selling well?
- Evidence of staff having increased knowledge, as noted by a health nurse or health worker; e.g. evaluate with a questionnaire or nutrition visual evaluation, e.g. fruit basket available.
- Staff suggestion box.

In the end, a policy alone does not make changes. Only individuals who take personal initiatives in the spirit of the policy can make it spring to life.