



# Overcoming Workplace Healthy Eating Challenges

Eating well at work can give you the energy you need to stay alert and productive. It can also help boost your overall health. Sometimes challenges, such as coffee breaks, meetings and workplace celebrations, can get in the way of eating well. Here are some simple solutions to those challenges so you can fuel your workday the nutritious way.

## Challenge 1: Coffee breaks

How often do you reach for a cup of coffee during work breaks? If you refill your mug a few times a day, you may be getting more caffeine than you think. Too much caffeine can lead to trouble sleeping, irritability, nervousness, rapid heart rate and headaches in some people.

Try these tips to help you sip less coffee:

- Have no more than about 3 cups (250 mL each) of coffee per day. If you use a large mug, it could count as a couple of cups.
- Try mixing half decaffeinated with half caffeinated coffee.
- Warm up with green or black tea, herbal tea or steamed low fat milk or plant-based beverage.
- Satisfy your thirst with water. Add lemon, lime or orange slices to add flavour.



Did you know? Added cream and sugar can quickly add extra calories and saturated fat. Add milk instead of cream to your coffee and try to add less sugar or none at all.

Find out how much caffeine is in your favourite drink by reading [Facts on Caffeine](#).



## Challenge 2: Eating at meetings

It can be tempting to eat food served at meetings even if the meeting is not during mealtime. Meetings with coffee, pastries and big buffet lunches can get in the way of your health goals.

Next time you head to a meeting, try these tips:

- Ask your employer or meeting coordinator to order nutritious food options. Food choices like non cream-based soups, salads and sandwiches can be nutritious options. If the meeting is not during a mealtime, consider not offering food at all.
- Choose salads made with leafy greens and lots of colourful veggies. Add protein with beans, lentils, hard-boiled eggs, grilled chicken or small amounts of nuts or cheese.
- If sandwiches or wraps are served, look for ones that are filled with plenty of veggies and ask for whole grain options.
- At breakfast, choose fruit, yogurt, eggs, whole grain cereal and small bagels instead of donuts and pastries.
- Skip desserts high in added sugar and fat. Go for yogurt, fresh fruit or a small treat such as mini biscotti.
- Refresh with water. Bring your own reusable water bottle so you have fresh water to drink.



Does your workplace have a policy about the types of foods served at meetings and events? Consider adding a policy that outlines the types of nutritious foods that can be served at work meetings at events. Having a policy helps reduce confusion about what foods to serve and when, and shows that the workplace is committed to employee health and well-being.



## Challenge 3: Workplace celebrations

Eating with others can influence what and how much you eat. Create a healthy eating environment where you work! Take these suggestions to your employer to make your celebrations into healthier events:

- Instead of celebrating individual birthdays, have just one event a month that celebrates everyone's birthday.
- Skip big platters of sweet treats at meetings and events. Serve fresh fruit instead or smaller portions of sweets. Try some of these nutritious desserts: [Apricot Coconut Bars](#), [Fiber-Power Biscotti](#), [Fun Fruit Kebabs with Maple Cinnamon Yogurt Dip](#).
- Avoid fast food lunches. Have nutritious potlucks instead. Have everyone sign up to bring a dish that includes vegetables or fruit, like a veggie stir-fry, soup, [salad](#) or a fruit tray.
- Replace holiday candy dishes with bowls of fresh fruit.



## How can a dietitian help?

A dietitian can help your workplace develop a healthy eating policy for meetings and events. They can also help you with your personal eating goals by supporting you with meal planning, label reading, and more. [Connect with a dietitian today!](#)

## Bottom line

Eating nutritiously at work is important for maintaining your overall health and wellness goals. Managing food choices at meetings, events and breaks can help you towards your goals.