

# Eat Smart!® Workplace Program

## POLICY STANDARD 2011

### Guiding Principles

- Creating an environment that is supportive of healthier choices, makes the healthier choice the easier choice and increases the likelihood that employees will choose healthier options.<sup>1,2,3</sup>
- Evidence suggests that multi-component workplace health promotion programs have the greatest potential to improve dietary behaviour.<sup>2,4,5</sup>
- A comprehensive approach to workplace nutrition programming is encouraged and includes the following health promotion strategies for encouraging and promoting health: awareness raising, environmental support, education and skill building, and policy development.
- The Healthy Eating Policy standard is required in order to achieve the Gold Level Eat Smart!® Award of Excellence.

#### Eat Smart!® Healthy Eating Policy

*Policy* refers to both formal policies that have been officially adopted by the organization as well as less formal policies (e.g., guidelines), as long as the following criteria are met.

1. The workplace has in place a food or nutrition policy that is:
  - Endorsed by senior management
  - Publicized and communicated to staff
  - Understood by staff
  - Monitored
2. The policy was developed with representation from all stakeholders (management, employees, and food service personnel), and included input from a registered dietitian.
3. The food or nutrition policy should include\*:
  - An emphasis on healthier foods and beverages at work-related events, including meetings, workshops, and social functions as well as those held offsite or funded by the organization; and in all workplace venues (cafeteria, café, vending machines)
  - A definition of healthier and less healthy food and beverage choices

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<sup>1</sup> Engbers LH, van Poppel MN, Chin A, Paw MJ, and van Mechelen W. Worksite Health Promotion Programs with Environment Changes A Systematic Review. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 2005 Jul;29(1):61-70.

<sup>2</sup> Steyn NP, Parker W, Lambert EV and Mchiza Z. Nutrition Interventions in the workplace: Evidence of best practice. *South African Journal of Clinical Nutrition* 2009; 22(3)

<sup>3</sup> Sorensen, G, Linnan L, and Hunt MK. Worksite-based research and initiatives to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. *Preventative Medicine* 2004;39 Suppl 2:S94-100

<sup>4</sup> Ni Mhurchu Ni Mhurchu C, Aston LM, and Jebb SA. Effects of worksite health promotion interventions on employee diets: a systematic review. *BMC Public Health* 2010, 10:62

<sup>5</sup> Anderson LM, Quinn TA, Glanz K, Ramirez G, et al. Effectiveness of Worksite Nutrition and Physical Activity Interventions for Controlling Employee Overweight and Obesity A Systematic Review. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine* 2009; 37(4)

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The food or nutrition policy could also include\*, but is not limited to

- Ensuring healthier foods are competitively priced and readily available in some/all workplace venues (cafeteria, café, vending)
- Ensuring meals served in workplace venues contain foods from at least 3 of the 4 food groups
- Reducing the promotion of less healthy food choices in workplace venues
- Not including the sale of less healthy foods in workplace fundraising
- Practicing safe food handling guidelines in workplace venues
- Providing staff with adequate time for meals and snacks away from their desks
- Providing staff with adequate, clean lunch room facilities to allow them to bring meals from home (fridge, microwave, sink)
- Reflecting the cultural diversity of staff
- Reimbursing/subsidizing staff for nutritional counseling (i.e., workplace benefits plan)
- Offering Ontario or locally grown food whenever possible in workplace venues and at work related events
- Minimizing food waste and disposable packaging in the workplace

\*The specific language used in the workplace healthy eating policy does not need to exactly match the language used here. Workplaces are encouraged to tailor the messages in their healthy eating policy to meet the needs of their specific workplace, while maintaining the intention of the standard.

### **Eat Smart!® Education and Skill Building Activities**

The following is a recommendation and not required to achieve the Eat Smart!® Gold level award of Excellence.

1. During the award year, the workplace agrees to collaborate with a registered dietitian from the public health unit to implement an activity that educates employees about how to become actively involved in improving their eating behaviours. Activities may include:

- Deliver interactive presentations or workshops (e.g., “lunch and learn” sessions) on nutrition, health and wellness topics
- Direct employees to interactive learning websites e.g., [eaTracker](#), [Eat Right Ontario](#), [Healthy Eating is in Store for You](#), [My Food Guide](#).
- Engage employees in fun and interactive workplace challenges such as a vegetable and fruit challenge or a recipe contest where employees’ own recipes are judged for nutritional content and taste.
- Provide grocery store tours to demonstrate how to make healthier food choices when shopping for food
- Provide workers with healthy recipes; offer cooking classes or put together a workplace cookbook.
- Coordinate monthly pot luck lunches where each employee cooks a recipe from a heart healthy cookbook.
- Email blast messages with tips and information on healthy eating topics (e.g., eating higher fibre foods, eating more vegetables and fruit, cutting back on sodium, etc.)