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## Guidance on Healthier Food and Drink in Leisure Centres

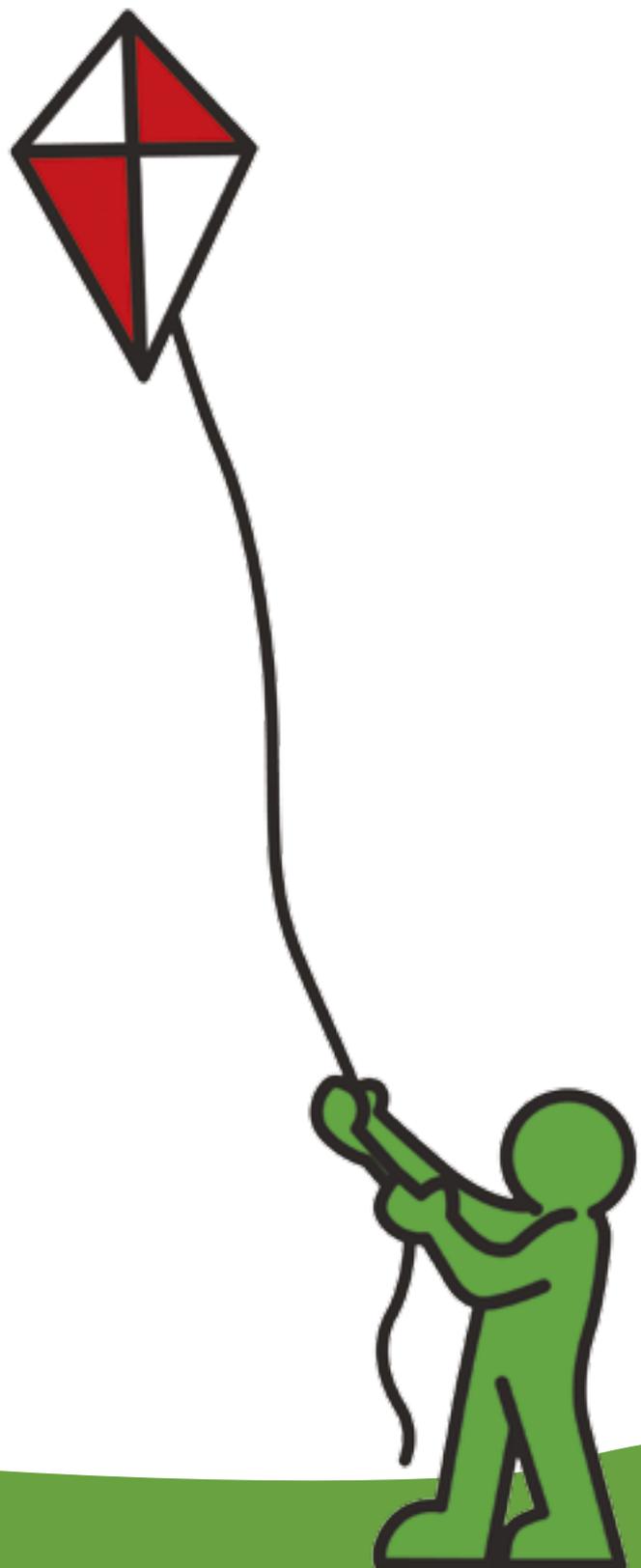


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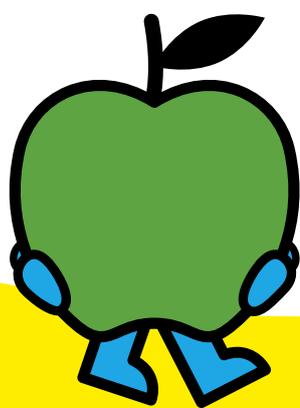
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## 1. Introduction

This guidance is designed to give practical information to leisure centre managers and their staff to help them provide and promote healthier food and drink on their premises. It supports the work being undertaken through initiatives such as the Change4Life programme and the National Exercise Referral Scheme, and is consistent with the Welsh Government's aim to ensure that our public sector settings are an exemplar of best practice in the drive to create an environment where it is easy for people to eat healthily.

This guidance is provided in an easy-to-follow, stepped approach, from provision of healthier vending to over-the-counter food services.

We hope this booklet will support and inspire you to provide healthier food and drink choices, alongside - and ultimately instead of - less healthy options. It is based on the experience of leisure centres that have already started implementing healthier eating. Their experience tells us that the preferred and most workable approach is to initially offer a wider food selection. Once accepted by the local community, the healthier food choices can be increased and extended. Leisure centres are used by all age groups, so any changes to food provision will benefit all visitors.



## Who is the guidance for? You, if you are a:

- Leisure centre manager
- Member of leisure centre staff involved in the provision of catering
- Key strategic manager for a local authority leisure department with a remit for sports and leisure centres.

## Why provide healthier eating in leisure centres?

- This is where children and adults eat and drink after being active to replenish their fluid and energy levels
- The latest information on family spending indicates that just over a quarter of all money spent on food and drink in the UK (excluding alcohol) was consumed outside the home<sup>1</sup>. Leisure centres can make an important contribution
- Healthy eating and taking part in physical activity are equally important in preventing obesity so both need to be addressed
- Leisure centres are one of the places we can positively influence people's food choices
- Leisure centres have an important part to play in reinforcing healthy eating messages and should be an integral part of implementing local food and health strategies
- Many leisure centres are on school sites so should adopt the same approach as the school for consistency.

## Benefits of healthier eating and drinking

Ensuring people eat and drink well can:

- Help them achieve and maintain a healthy weight. Over one third of Welsh children are currently either overweight or obese<sup>2</sup>
- Help ensure healthy growth and development in children and young people
- Maintain energy levels throughout the day
- Establish healthy eating habits for life
- Offer long term protection against disease, including heart and circulatory diseases, some cancers, diabetes and osteoporosis
- Enhance general well-being, concentration and performance.



1. 2010 Family Food Survey <http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/foodfarm/food/familyfood/datasets/>

2. Welsh Health Survey 2010 <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/statistics/publications/healthsurvey2010/?lang=en>



## 2. Choosing a Healthy Diet

Choosing a variety of different foods every day is the key to eating well. No single food can provide the essential nutrients needed each day, so variety and balance are what count.

The 'Eatwell' plate is a healthy eating guide for adults and children over the age of 2 years. It shows the different types of food we need to eat – and in what proportions – to have a well balanced and healthy diet.



This means, for most people, choosing every day:

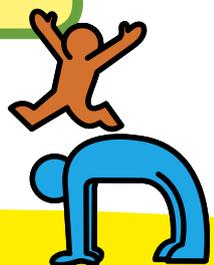
- plenty of fruit and vegetables
- plenty of potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods
- some milk and dairy products
- some meat, fish, eggs, beans, nuts and other non dairy sources of protein
- just a small amount of foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar.

The 'Eatwell' plate is a useful tool for helping people put healthy eating into practice and can be used as a basic guide by leisure centres when planning food provision.

To complement the 'Eatwell' plate, the Welsh Government promotes 8 tips for eating well. These are:

1. Base your meals on starchy foods, choosing wholegrain where possible
2. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables – at least 5 portions every day
3. Eat more fish – aim for two portions a week including one oily fish
4. Cut down on saturated fat and sugar – limit portion sizes of foods high in fat/sugar, use less in recipes and choose low/reduced versions where possible
5. Try to eat less salt – adults and children over 11 should have no more than 6g a day and younger children even less
6. Get active and try to be a healthy weight
7. Drink plenty of water
8. Don't skip breakfast

Use these tips to promote positive messages about healthier eating within your leisure centre. Posters and healthy eating leaflets based on the 'Eatwell' plate are available to download from our website at: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/food/?lang=en>



## Drinks: the importance of fluid balance

On average we need around 6-8 cups of fluids a day (about 1.2 litres), more in hot weather and after physical activity. We lose water continually throughout the day through urine, sweating and breathing and every drop needs to be replaced. All sorts of drinks and foods can contribute to this.

## Benefits of regular drinking

- Helps maintain athletic performance
- Helps maintain learning and concentration
- Contributes to protecting health and general well being
- Helps prevent dehydration which could cause tiredness, irritability, headache and stomach ache.

## Water provision

Whilst all beverages can help with hydration they are not equally healthy. Water is the perfect drink because it is refreshing, freely available and good for hydration. Providing access to free water whether it is from a water cooler, fountain or water jug can encourage people to keep their fluids topped up.

To encourage water uptake, especially by young people, water coolers are ideal.

Coolers should be:

- easily accessible
- sited near to where people are exercising
- in areas frequented by users of the leisure centre
- adjacent to food service area
- away from toilet facilities
- regularly serviced
- be regularly supplied with drinking cups.



## 3. Creating a Supportive Environment

As part of a broader strategy for creating an environment that supports health and well being in leisure centres, there are a number of other important issues to consider including:

### Sustainable food choices

Making better food choices goes beyond good nutrition. Food production, packaging, transport and waste have a significant environmental impact. Reduction of waste, particularly food waste, will become a key target for all public sector bodies in the near future. By choosing sustainable foods and minimising waste we can have a positive impact on our local and global environment as well as our health.

Where possible all public sector premises that provide catering are encouraged to identify opportunities to support and promote sustainable healthy foods.

When ordering supplies or menu planning, think about things such as:

- the amount of water and energy required to make and transport the product and its ingredients
- whether the ingredients are processed or altered
- what the minimum quantity would be to meet demand while avoiding waste from unsold items
- capacity and type of storage required to prevent spoilage, and
- how much packaging is used.

Your local authority procurement service can provide guidance. A procurement route planner for food is also available on the buy4wales website: <https://www.buy4wales.co.uk/buy4wales.aspx>

### Local food sourcing

Offering local/regional produce benefits both your customers and your business. Customers are demanding more quality, fresh, seasonal food when eating out, and you may be able to source local products at more competitive prices.

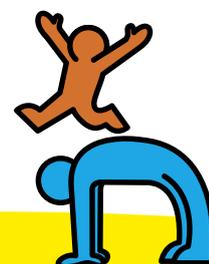
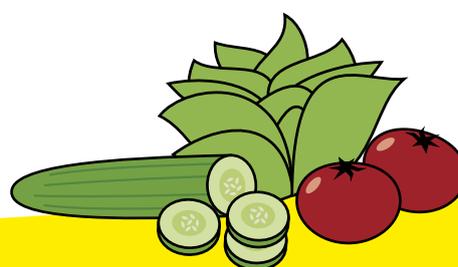
Try contacting your current supplier and ask if they stock local alternatives. Visit Wales The True Taste website for information on the True Taste Awards and to obtain copies of the Food and Drink Producers/Wholesalers Directory which lists local food and drink suppliers in Wales:

<http://www.walesthetrue taste.co.uk/?lang=en>

The Welsh Government provides funding to the Rural Regeneration Unit (RRU) to deliver the Community Food Co-operative Programme. The aims are to improve access to and consumption of fruit and vegetables amongst communities in Wales, particularly in disadvantaged areas.

A food co-op is a simple system through which people can access affordable, quality fresh fruit, vegetables and salad on a weekly basis at a local community venue. The food co-ops run by local volunteers work by directly linking the local community to local suppliers, and therefore, can provide food much cheaper. There are food co-ops running across Wales from schools, community halls, church halls, drop-in centres, offices and many other different venues. To find out more, go to

<http://www.ruralregeneration.org.uk/>



The Welsh Government also provides support for local food sourcing by publishing a series of best practice case studies. The guidance Food for Thought provides advice on local supply chains: how to write contract specifications, appraise suppliers, evaluate tenders, and set conditions for contracts (see 'Further information and weblinks' at the end of this document). The aim is to provide nutritious meals using quality ingredients, look after the environment and avoid waste.

## Support for breastfeeding

Breastfeeding provides babies with the very best start in life. In Wales we have some of the lowest rates of breastfeeding in Western Europe. The Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme has been established by the Welsh Government to help support the needs of breastfeeding mothers and their babies in the community. The scheme enables mothers to feed their babies in a welcoming environment.

All leisure centres in Wales are encouraged to join the scheme and many have already done so. Centres need to make three promises:

- breastfeeding must be acceptable in all areas that are open to the public
- a mother who is breastfeeding must not be asked to move or stop breastfeeding
- all staff should be aware of the scheme and be supportive of the needs of breastfeeding mothers.

For more information, please visit:

[http://wales.gov.uk/topics/  
health/improvement/pregnancy/  
breastfeeding/?lang=en](http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/pregnancy/breastfeeding/?lang=en)

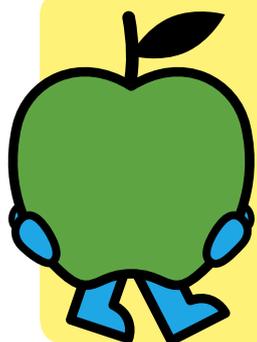


## 4. How to Identify Healthier Foods

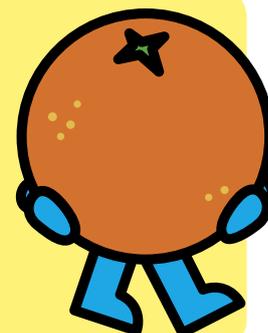
When deciding on the range of food and drinks to offer, it can be difficult to work out which are healthier, as food labels are often confusing and sometimes misleading. The Government has developed a quick guide (table 1) to help consumers make sense of food labels. It tells you whether a food is high or low in fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt.

Check the nutrition information per 100g of a product against the 'Low' and 'High' criteria outlined in the table below to assess how healthy a food is. If the amount is between these figures, then the food contains a medium amount.

**Table 1 (per 100g of food)**



	low	high
fat	3g or less	more than 20g
saturates	1.5g or less	more than 5g
sugar	5g or less	more than 15g (of added sugars <sup>3</sup> )
salt	0.3g or less (0.1g sodium)	more than 1.5g (0.6g sodium)



For example, some brands of crisps contain, per 100g: 24.9g fat (high); 3.3g saturated fat (medium); 1.2g sugars (low) and 2.2g salt (high).

When sourcing ingredients and pre-packed foods, use supplier information to choose foods that contain low or medium amounts of fat, saturates, sugars and salt where possible.

### How to assess drinks

Most drinks will be low in fat, saturated fat and salt – it's the added sugars you need to look out for. Sugary soft drinks are the main source of sugar in children aged 4-18 years' diets (National Diet and Nutrition Survey, 2011).

Drinks that contain sugars from crushed fruit, fruit juice or from milk are considered healthier than those containing added sugars. This is simply because they contribute other nutrients to the diet. Dairy-based drinks containing low fat milk and low fat yoghurt will be lower in total and saturated fat than those containing whole milk or whole yoghurt.

Though carbonated low calorie drinks are low in fat, sugar and salt, there is still some concern over their composition. Some fizzy drinks contain strong acids, which can increase the risk of dental erosion, and are no longer recommended in school vending machines or allowed in hospital vending machines. Why not move towards applying the same standards?

Water is sufficient to replenish fluids in most people; however, isotonic sports drinks containing low amounts of sugar can be useful for competitive athletes to top up fluid quickly and help maintain the body's energy levels during and after exercise.

So, try to choose:

- Water
- Drinks with no added sugars, except for flavoured milk based or yoghurt drinks, based on low fat dairy
- Fruit or vegetable juices
- Non carbonated drinks

3. 'added sugar' is generally defined as any food used for its sweetening properties. This would include, but is not exclusively limited to: sucrose, fructose, glucose, glucose syrups, fructose-glucose syrups, corn syrups, invert sugar, honey, maple syrup, malt extract, dextrose, fruit juices (added for their sweetening properties only), deionised fruit juices, lactose, maltose, high maltose syrups, Agave syrup, dextrin & maltodextrin.



## 5. Healthier Vending

Vending machines offer an extension to the normal food provision and can include a broad range of foods. Managed well they can ease the pressure on busy staff whilst extending the offer of foods outside normal service times. Pilot projects demonstrated the importance of:

- getting the product mix right
- making sure machines are fully operational and regularly restocked, and that staff take active responsibility for this
- keeping staff and user/working groups involved in changes.

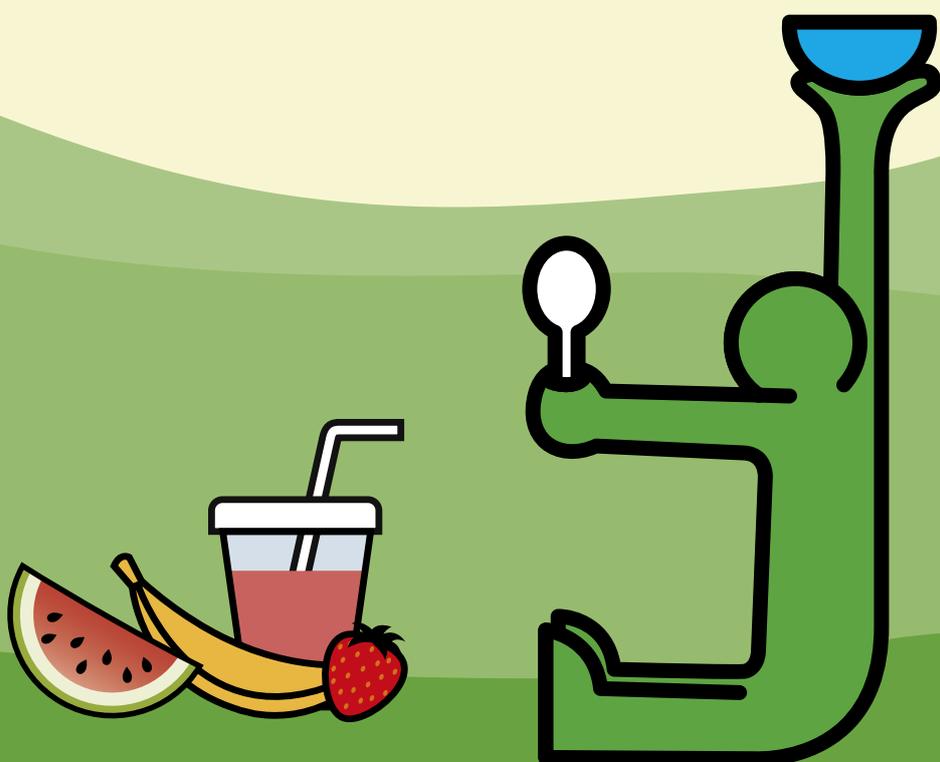
Making changes to your vending provision can be a very positive step. In some leisure centres during the pilot, healthier vending actually increased the revenue of the centre. A further example of work to increase the provision of healthier food and drinks through vending can be seen in Welsh hospitals. The Welsh Government's Health Promoting Hospital Vending Directions and Guidance can be found here: <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/vendingguidance2012/?lang=en>

### Vending machines

There are a large range of vending machines available, designed to sell chilled, fresh or ambient foods, or a combination of these. Some smaller centres may prefer to rent or lease a machine rather than buy one outright.

### Mix of foods and drinks to sell in vending machines

Aim for a broad range of foods. Monitoring sales is essential to determine the impact of these changes and help determine when a greater number of healthier alternatives can be introduced. Where possible try to gather customers' views through questionnaires or a suggestion box.



## Table 2: Ambient snack foods

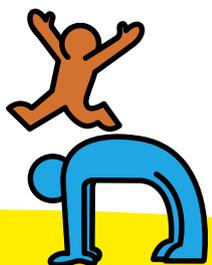
Examples of healthier foods	Examples of less healthy foods
Unsweetened dried fruit Fruit in natural juices	Processed fruit bars Fruit in syrup
Nuts and seeds without added salt or sugar Fruit nut and seed bars Baked crisps, low fat crisps* Pretzels*	Any type of confectionary Ordinary crisps Deep fried snacks Coated or salted nut and seed snacks Bombay mix
Plain biscuits (e.g. rich tea, digestive) Plain popcorn Crackers Oat cakes	Filled, chocolate or sweet biscuits

- watch the salt content – use Table 1 to help choose lower salt options

## Chilled or fresh vending

### Table 3: Drinks

Examples of healthier drinks	Examples of less healthy drinks
Plain water (still or sparkling) Skimmed, 1% or semi skimmed milk Fruit or vegetable juice Fruit smoothies Milkshakes made from skimmed, 1% or semi skimmed milk, and fruit Yoghurt drinks made from low fat yoghurt and fruit Fresh flavoured milk with less than 5% added sugar Flavoured unsweetened waters	Sugary squash and cordial Sugary and fizzy drinks Flavoured milk with more than 5% added sugar



## Table 4: Foods

Examples of healthier foods	Examples of less healthy foods
Fresh fruit Fruit salad pots Vegetable pieces with dips Salad pots	Fruit pies
Breakfast pots with skimmed, 1% or semi skimmed milk Teacakes Currant and fruit breads Bread, English muffins and crumpets Bagels Porridge Malt loaf	Breakfast cereals coated with sugar or chocolate Croissants American style muffins Danish pastries Doughnuts
Low fat yoghurts or fromage frais (plain and fruit varieties) Skimmed or semi skimmed milk Cheese and crackers	Full fat yoghurt and fromage frais
Filled sandwiches, rolls, baguettes, pitta breads and wraps e.g. tuna and sweetcorn, salmon and cucumber, chicken salad, humous and grated carrot Pasta salads and pasta mixes Pizza slice with healthier topping, e.g. chicken & mushroom	Meat pies Sausage rolls Meat or vegetable pasties Pork pie Scotch egg Spring rolls Samosa

## Location of vending machine

A central location is essential to provide good access for users and staff alike.

Ensure machines:

- are sited in an area that is frequented by users
- are more prominent than other less healthy vending machines
- have space around them to enable easy access and purchasing
- are accessible when other catering facilities have closed.

## Barriers to healthy vending

Existing vending contracts may limit the progress that can be made in phasing out less healthy options completely, but should not prevent the expansion of healthier ones. Consult the vending operator to see what changes can be made. Short term, it may be worth considering trialing a second machine. Check with the local council's procurement services for more information on local vending contractors that supply healthier options.



## 6. Healthier Food and Drink in Leisure Centres: An Action Plan for Change

Use the step-by-step approach below to increase your offering of healthier food and drinks in leisure centres. Whatever your ambitions – e.g. healthier vending, healthier cafe food, improving children’s party food – each step is a necessary part of your plan.

### Template for an action plan: a step-by-step approach

What you will need to do:

- generate a desire and willingness to set up healthier catering
- set up a working group
- audit current food service
- set aims and objectives
- agree a plan for implementation
- monitor, evaluate and review.

### Generate a desire and willingness to change

Making changes to your service provision requires effort and commitment, but the potential benefits to both customers and staff make it worthwhile. Having your staff on side is essential to success, so it’s a good idea to talk to them about your ideas and identify any concerns early on.

### Set up a working group

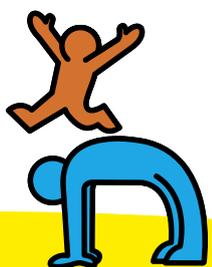
Agree a project manager initially and the size of your team. The group should meet regularly to discuss progress and agree next steps. You could include fitness and catering staff, users of the service, your local community dietitian and an experienced caterer from the local school or another leisure centre.

### Audit current food service

Whatever stage you are at in introducing new and healthier food and drink, it is worth spending time auditing your current food provisions. This will help set a base line from which you can set aims and objectives and evaluate project outcomes.

In its simplest terms, an audit tells you what you currently offer, and of this, what is sold. As this is your starting point, it is important to determine what your current split of healthier to less healthy foods is. The more information you are able to gather as part of your audit process the better. You may want to gather the views of staff and local users, or check other local food outlets to help you remain competitive.

Only when you know what you are currently offering, its uptake and the views of your customers towards change, can you start to identify where you might make some positive changes. Ongoing monitoring of food sales is particularly important in helping to gauge demand for healthier options.



## Set aims and objectives

Agreeing an overall aim is important and may be as simple as “increasing the uptake of healthier foods from vending machines”. Objectives are more specific steps to achieve the overall aim. Setting S.M.A.R.T. objectives is a useful way to direct activity and allows you to see how your project is developing against the initial plan:



- S** - Specific
- M** - Measurable
- A** - Achievable, Attainable
- R** - Realistic, Relevant
- T** - Timed

Your objectives might be:

- to increase the proportion of healthy vending to around 50% of all vending
- to increase the vending of non carbonated drinks free from added sugars and sweeteners by 50%
- to offer at least one healthier main course option at each meal occasion
- to offer a fruit based dessert every day
- to purchase a baked potato oven
- use reduced or low fats (oil / fat / spread) for all cooking purposes
- to switch from whole milk to semi skimmed milk.

The above are just some examples but don't forget to set a timeline to make them SMART. Agree your own objectives and check that they follow the SMART guide, as this will make it easier to evaluate success.

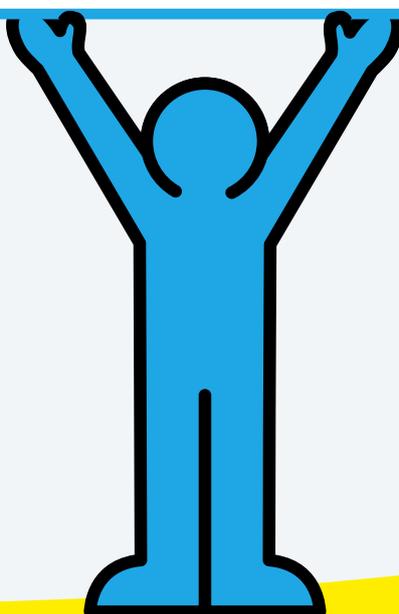


## Agree a written plan for implementation

Don't be over ambitious - it's best to start with a few quick wins that are easy and straight forward to implement and for which you have the resources. This will help enthuse staff and the local community for further changes. Don't forget to consult widely on your plan – this is key to getting buy-in from those people you need on your side.

You may wish to consider some of the following issues:

- **Catering options** - where best to effect positive change e.g. over the counter food, vending machines, snack options, party food, etc.
- **Product sourcing** - many food suppliers are responding to customer demands for healthier products, so talk to them about your plans. Use supplier information to source ingredients and pre-packed foods that are lower in fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt (see Table 1 for guidance).
- **Budget and pricing policy** - it's important that the healthier options aren't perceived as more expensive – consider how the pricing policy might be changed to encourage the uptake of healthier options, even on a temporary basis.
- **How many people will use the facilities and when?** This might have an impact on the choice of food and drinks to offer at certain times; for example, if there are a number of toddler/young classes it might be a good idea to start positively with healthier choices for this age group, where uptake may be greater.
- **Equipment needed** - do you need to purchase additional equipment to be able to offer healthier choices?
- **Overcoming barriers** - the pilot projects showed the importance of staff training in nutrition and healthy catering practices in overcoming staff concerns and improving skills. Many community dietitians in Wales are running local nutrition courses which are free of charge (see 'Further information and weblinks' at the end of this document). One of the main barriers to success was staffing problems, for example long term staff absences, due to sickness, or staff turnover. Whilst this can be difficult to predict, it may be best to consider how the roles of critical team members might be delegated/managed should this happen.
- **Targets and timing for implementation** - break down each objective into key steps to enable you to assess the work that needs to be done and set a realistic time frame.



- **Marketing and promotion** - raising awareness of the new service is vital and can be achieved in a number of ways. Here are a few ideas based on those that worked well in the pilot project:
  - Develop marketing and publicity materials e.g. posters, fliers, take home healthy recipe cards or a press release for local journalists. Why not develop your own, or link in with national initiatives such as the Change4life programme in Wales to promote consistent messages.
  - Publicise your changes in the following places:
    - on menus
    - at the staff entrance
    - on vending machines
    - on staff badges
    - in 'goody' bags
    - on notice boards.
  - Run healthy eating days linked to local festivals, sporting events or New Year resolutions etc.
  - Invite users to taste new foods.
  - Offer a healthy meal deal, such as a free portion of veg/salad with a main meal, free healthy pudding or a piece of fruit with a meal.
  - Buy one, get one free offers.
  - Loyalty offers e.g. buy a piece of fruit on three visits, get the next one free.
  - Encourage activity days and incorporate healthy eating workshops.
  - Link in with other local services and promotions e.g. local dietitians and health promotion activities such as the Community Food Co-op programme, Flying Start and Change4life Wales (see 'Further information and weblinks' at the end of this document).
  - Make sure you are not giving contradictory messages - e.g. is a fast food van in your car park in line with your plan for providing healthier food and drink in your leisure centre?

In the pilot initiative, one of the leisure centres offered a free piece of fruit for adults aged 50+ after their exercise on European Day, and another offered a free smoothie to children, during a half term holiday: just two examples of ways to increase awareness of healthier options.

**BE AWARE** - if you choose to specifically label any meal or foodstuff 'healthy/healthier/low in fat/salt/sugar' etc, there are EU laws that set out criteria for any such claim, and these will need to be met. Guidance on these laws can be found at <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/food/?lang=en>



## Monitor, evaluate and review

Leisure centres that monitored sales during the pilot were more able to accurately gauge the demand for healthier options, reduce waste and increase sales.

They found that sales records, focus groups, staff feedback and leisure centre user questionnaires helped them to periodically evaluate the progress of their project and review their objectives.

Be realistic in your evaluation; moving from a service that offered few healthier options to one where healthy eating is the norm can take time. Tell people how successful your plan has been: demonstrate your commitment and contribution to improving the health of the local population through feedback to the local strategy group or Local Public Health team.

As you achieve your aims, don't forget to revise your objectives and work towards further reducing the provision of less healthy foods and drinks. A long-term aim could be to introduce health promoting vending, similar to that in Welsh hospitals<sup>4</sup>.



4. <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/vendingguidance2012/?lang=en>

## 7. A Guide to Healthier Over the Counter Catering

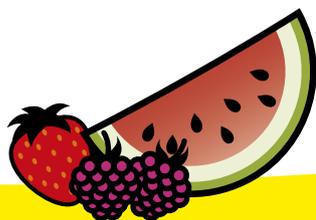
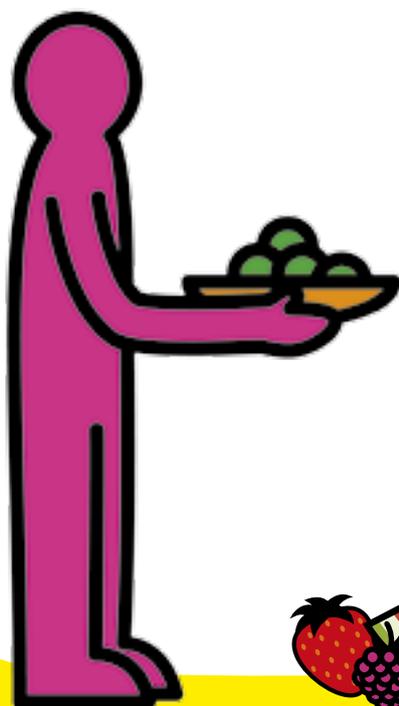
Making changes to your over the counter food provision can be as simple as making ingredient changes or modifying existing cooking methods. These small changes can make a big impact. Try some of the tips that follow to improve the health credentials of your menu.

**Table 5: Food groups**

Food group	Healthier catering tip
Breads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer thick sliced wholegrain, granary and seeded breads as well as white</li> <li>• Use polyunsaturated spreads, e.g. sunflower, olive and rapeseed oil spreads rather than butter or margarine</li> <li>• Look at the labels and choose breads with less than 1g salt/100g.</li> </ul>
Sandwiches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer some fillings with salad</li> <li>• Use healthier fillings such as lean meat (turkey, chicken), tuna, reduced fat cheese or less of a grated strong cheese, and some fillings without mayonnaise</li> <li>• When using mayonnaise choose reduced fat versions and use less of it.</li> </ul>
Breakfast cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include low sugar, low salt, high fibre options alongside, or instead of sugary, higher salt varieties</li> <li>• Most breakfast cereals are fortified with vitamins and minerals – an added bonus.</li> </ul>
Pastries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Try to limit pastries like croissants, pain au raisin, pain au chocolate, and offer toasted english muffins, teacakes, and fruit loaf instead. Serve with reduced fat and/or polyunsaturated spread.</li> </ul>
Potatoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Boil or bake and leave the skins on when possible, replace butter with reduced fat polyunsaturated spread, or use other lower fat fillings such as baked beans or tuna and sweetcorn -with a small amount of reduced fat mayonnaise or none at all.</li> </ul>
Chips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer oven baked chips when possible</li> <li>• If only option is to deep fry chips, use large straight-cut chips, bang the basket and shake after cooking, and allow to drain to remove excess fat</li> <li>• Don't pre-salt; allow customers to add their own if they wish.</li> </ul>



Food group	Healthier catering tip
<b>Fruit and vegetables</b> (Fresh, frozen, tinned, dried and juiced fruit and vegetables all count)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a variety of different fresh fruits and put in a prominent position, such as at the till</li> <li>• Offer fruit salad pots or prepared fruits with yoghurt, for example</li> <li>• Offer unsweetened fruit juice or smoothies based on fruit with no added sugars.</li> </ul>
<b>Meat</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use lean meat and meat products and grill rather than fry</li> <li>• Limit the amount of meat pastry dishes served, such as sausage rolls, pies and pasties.</li> </ul>
<b>Fish</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer breaded (rather than battered) fish or fish fingers.</li> </ul>
<b>Eggs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer poached, scrambled or boiled eggs as an alternative to fried</li> <li>• Avoid adding fat or salt to scrambled eggs.</li> </ul>
<b>Milk and dairy foods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use skimmed, 1% fat, or semi skimmed milk in recipes, with cereals and drinks including milkshakes, cappuccinos and lattes</li> <li>• Use strong flavour cheese - you can use less of it but still have the flavour. Grating strong cheese bulks it up, so good for sandwiches and baked potato fillings</li> <li>• Serve low fat yogurts and try offering frozen yogurt as an alternative to ice-cream.</li> </ul>



# Healthier Cooking Tips

## Cutting fat

Making small changes to the way food is cooked or prepared, or using healthier ingredients, can make a big difference to the fat content of the dish:

- cook with a minimum of oil/fat and use polyunsaturated versions like sunflower or rapeseed oil
- use lower fat salad dressings and mayonnaise, and let customers choose to have these, rather than adding automatically
- limit the number of pastry dishes served
- grill, steam, stir-fry or bake rather than fry or roast with added fat
- use lower fat dairy products in cooking or use less of a full fat product
- skim the fat off gravy and sauces.

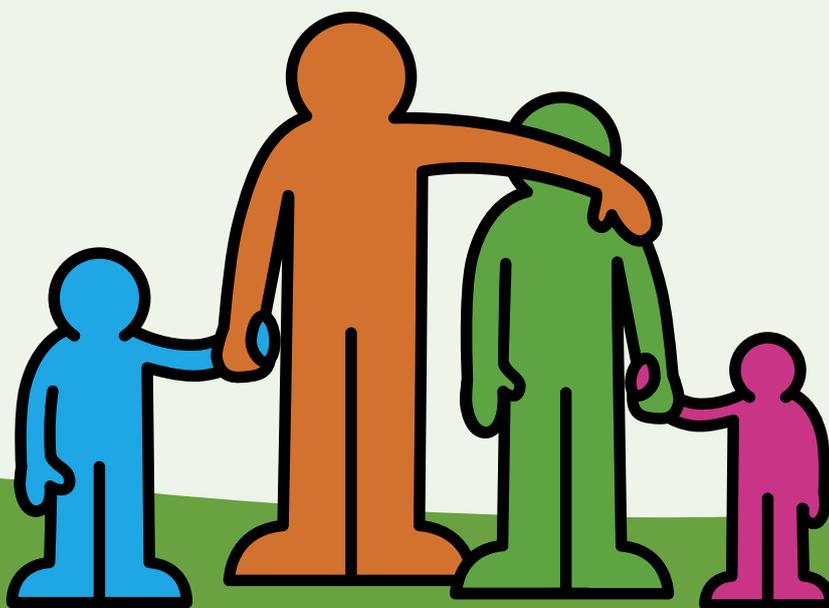
## Lowering salt

Limiting the addition of salt to recipes and replacing with fresh or dried herbs, spices or tomato paste can help lower the salt content of dishes without losing the flavour. Many processed foods are high in salt, such as canned and dried soups, sauces, pickles and dressings, so limit these foods on the menu where possible. Use supplier information to choose foods lower in salt (see Table 1 for guidance).

## Cutting sugar

Sugars such as table sugar, honey and syrups, contain 'empty' calories - in other words, they provide energy, but no other nutrients. Eating too many sugary foods and drinks can also cause tooth decay. Look for ways to cut down on sugars as part of your switch to healthier catering. Try to:

- use less sugar than the recipe suggests
- replace some sugar with fresh or dried fruit to sweeten when possible
- replace some chocolate and cream with fruit fillings in desserts
- include more dried fruit in recipes - it provides iron and extra fibre
- use fruit juice or canned fruit in juice as a base for a fruit salad, in place of a syrup
- provide sachets of sweeteners at the counter or on tables for adding to drinks and cereals.



## 8. A Guide to Healthier Party Foods

Children look forward to birthday parties as a time to celebrate with friends. What better way to do this than have an activity party at a Leisure Centre followed by a party tea? It is possible to include healthier options and still guarantee empty plates every time. It's also an opportunity to demonstrate that healthy eating doesn't have to be boring and tasteless!

Try introducing a selection of the following items:

- small sandwiches or mini bread rolls (mixture of brown, half & half, and white bread) filled with: grated cheese, ham or tuna and cucumber or sweetcorn (in reduced fat mayonnaise)
- cheese and pineapple cubes or grapes on sticks (don't use cocktail sticks with younger children)
- cheese and tomato pizza slices (hot or cold)
- grilled or oven baked cocktail sausages (hot or cold)
- pasta pots / pasta salads
- cherry tomatoes
- pretzels\*
- baked crisps\*
- plain popcorn
- breadsticks
- medium fat soft cheese or humous for dipping
- vegetable crudites especially carrot, cucumber and pepper sticks.

\*watch the salt content - use Table 1 to help choose lower-salt options.



### Hot food party selection

Try some of the following as healthier alternatives to the traditional hot savoury items. Serve them with salad garnish or vegetables in season:

- small baked potatoes with various fillings (tuna and sweetcorn, grated cheese, baked beans, chilli or vegetable chilli/curry)
- oven baked sausages
- breaded chicken or fish goujons (oven baked) with salsa dip
- warm pizza slices
- potato wedges with salsa dip
- mini grilled beef or veggie burger in a bun.

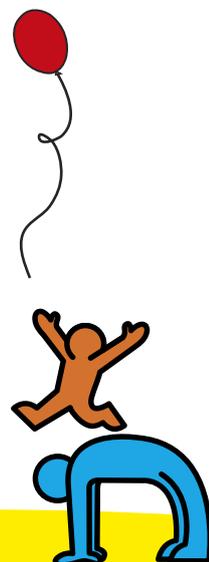


### Sweet foods

- Fruit kebabs or bowls of cut up fruit pieces/wedges
- Sugar-free jelly
- A small selection of mini cakes and muffins.

### Drinks

- Water
- No added sugar squash
- Flavoured milks with less than 5% added sugars
- Fruit crush/slush (pureed fruit and fruit juice served with crushed ice e.g. pureed pineapple and juice with ice, or pineapple and orange juice with ice).



## 9. Further Information and Weblinks

### Policy

Welsh Government (2010), **All Wales Obesity Pathway** - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/pathway/?lang=en>

Welsh Government (2007), **Appetite for Life Action Plan** - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/foodanddrink/appetiteforlife/?lang=en>

Welsh Government (2007), **Young People, Youth Work, Youth Service: National Youth Service Strategy for Wales** - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childreneyoungpeople/publications/youthservice/?lang=en>

Welsh Government (2012), **Health Promoting Hospital Vending Guidance** - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/vendingguidance2012/?lang=en>

Flying Start - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/childreneyoungpeople/parenting/help/flyingstart/?lang=en>

### Assessment tool for auditing

Primary & Secondary School Food Standard Assessment Tool (due to be published shortly) - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/foodanddrink/appetiteforlife/supportingdocuments/?lang=en>

### Healthy lifestyles

The 'Eatwell plate' resources (leaflet, poster and postcards) are available to download and print from the Welsh Government website - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/?lang=en>

Food labelling guidance (see nutrition legislation guidance) - <http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/?lang=en>

Fruit and vegetables: serving sizes - [www.nhs.uk/livewell/5aday/pages/5adayhome.aspx/](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/5aday/pages/5adayhome.aspx/)

Healthy weight: Change 4 Life - [www.wales.gov.uk/change4life](http://www.wales.gov.uk/change4life)

Healthy weight - [www.teenweightwise.com](http://www.teenweightwise.com)

Breastfeeding Welcome Scheme - [www.wales.gov.uk/breastfeeding](http://www.wales.gov.uk/breastfeeding)

### Healthy recipes

A range of healthy recipes that appeal to young people and adults - <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/>



## Food allergies

For more information about common allergies and guidance for caterers visit the following website links -  
<http://www.allergyuk.org/>  
<http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthissues/foodintolerance/>

## Healthy vending

Think Healthy Vending: Welsh Government guidance on vending machines in schools -  
<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/health/improvement/index/?lang=en>

A fresh look at vending in schools - <http://www.schoolfoodtrust.org.uk/index.asp>

A Fit choice? A campaign report on the provision of children's food in leisure venues -  
[www.bhf.org.uk/publications](http://www.bhf.org.uk/publications)

## Local food sourcing

Wales The True Taste - [www.walesthetruetaste.co.uk](http://www.walesthetruetaste.co.uk)

Food for Thought Case Studies -

<http://www.physicalactivityandnutritionwales.org.uk/docmetadata.cfm?orgid=740&id=99827>

## Water and hydration

Welsh Water – Living and Learning with Water - [www.livingandlearningwithwater.com](http://www.livingandlearningwithwater.com)

Water is Cool in Schools - <http://www.wateriscoolinschool.org.uk/>

Welsh Assembly Government (2006) Think Water: Guidance on water in schools -  
<http://wales.gov.uk/hcwsite/healthchallenge/organisations/media/water/?lang=en>

## Community nutrition courses in healthy eating and catering

Physical Activity and Nutrition Networks Wales - <http://www.physicalactivityandnutritionwales.org.uk>

