



# **MONASH UNIVERSITY HEALTHY CATERING GUIDE**

**CLEAR AND PRACTICAL GUIDELINES TO HELP YOU CHOOSE  
HEALTHIER FOOD AND DRINKS FOR WORKPLACE CATERING**

**May 2020**

## PREFERRED MONASH CATERERS

Monash prides itself on being a leader in workplace health and wellbeing. In response to staff feedback about the availability of healthy food in the workplace, we have created a unique, one-stop shop for healthy catering at Monash.

You'll find catering menus for our preferred catering vendors at our Clayton, Caulfield, Parkville and Peninsula campuses, as well as our Clinical Schools on the [Monash Catering website](#). All the menus on Monash Catering Website contain only **GREEN** and **AMBER** options so you can be confident that anything you order meets the Healthy Choices guidelines.



## USING THE HEALTHY CATERING GUIDE

The Healthy Catering Guide provides clear and practical guidance to help you choose healthier food and drinks for employees and visitors at workplace functions. It is based on the Victorian Government's *Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide*, which categorises foods and drinks as **GREEN**, **AMBER** or **RED** according to their nutritional value.

The guide includes healthy catering suggestions for breakfast, morning tea and afternoon tea (table 1) and main meals (table 2). In both tables, the examples in the 'Recommended' column are the healthier **GREEN** or **AMBER** options recommended for workplace catering. The options in the 'Not recommended' column fall into the **RED** category and should not be provided.

## THE TRAFFIC LIGHT CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

**GREEN** - the best choice, to be promoted to staff and encouraged when food and drinks are provided by the workplace.

Food and drinks from the **GREEN** category should be included as the main choices. These are to be encouraged where possible and made available at all catered events and functions.

Examples of **GREEN** food and drinks are:

- sandwiches on multigrain and wholemeal breads
- wholegrain cereals
- fresh and frozen fruit and vegetables
- reduced or low-fat milk and yoghurt
- vegetable frittatas
- lean meat
- roast chicken salads
- fresh and frozen fish
- eggs
- plain unsalted nuts and seeds

**AMBER** - choose carefully and avoid large serves

Look for healthier choices among food and drinks in this category. For example, provide plain un-iced fruit buns instead of iced buns or plain scones (with the jam and margarine served separately). Offer wholemeal and wholegrain foods to boost fibre intake, and order smaller serves where possible (such as mini muffins).

Examples of **AMBER** food and drinks include:

- flavoured milk, yogurt, cheeses
- processed meats such as lean ham and pastrami in small amounts
- chicken, fish or vegetable products
- un-iced fruit buns, scones, fruit based low fat muffins
- salted nuts and seeds

**RED** - avoid this category of food and drinks

Food and drinks in the **RED** category are not to be supplied through catering.

Examples of **RED** food and drinks are:

- confectionery
- pastries and cakes
- fancy sweet biscuits such as cream-filled, chocolate-coated, choc-chip or iced
- soft drinks and cordials
- energy and sports drinks
- deep-fried foods
- potato chips
- party pies and sausage rolls
- processed meats such as salami

## HOW MUCH TO ORDER?

Large portions can contribute to excess energy and weight gain, even when the food and drinks provided are healthy. Determining appropriate quantities for catering can be difficult because many food and drinks are available in a variety of sizes - a slice of bread can range from a standard sandwich slice to an extra thick 'café style' fruit toast.

We've had a lot of staff feedback about over-ordering and food waste so think about ordering a little less food and see how it goes.

Our caterers are also willing to assist with advice on serving sizes – please ask them for help if you're unsure.

As a general guide, aim to provide the following for each person:

- one sandwich or wrap
- one cup green leafy or raw salad vegetables, or a half cup of cooked vegetables
- one medium piece of fruit (like an apple, banana or pear), two small pieces (such as an apricot, plum or kiwifruit) or a cup of diced or canned fruit
- 40 grams of cheese (two slices)

All of the menus on the Monash Catering website contain only **GREEN** and **AMBER** food and drink options.

## TIPS FOR ORDERING DRINKS

A few quick tips to make ordering healthy drinks easy:

- Water and sparkling water are in the green category, so feel free to order up. You can also offer water flavoured with pieces of fruits, vegetables and herbs; e.g. sparkling water with lemon and mint.
- All 100% fruit juices and diet soft drinks are amber.
- All drinks sweetened with sugar are red. This includes full-sugar soft drinks, flavoured mineral waters, fruit drinks, fruit juices (<99% fruit juice) and alcohol.

If you really want to serve a sweet drink, try ordering one jug of juice to every three jugs of sparkling water. That way people can pour their own juice and top up with sparkling water.

## SERVING ALCOHOL

Organisations that are licensed to provide alcohol may do so in accordance with organisational policies and the *Liquor Control Reform Act 1998*. Alcoholic drinks should not be provided in excessive quantities. If alcohol is provided, low-alcohol and non-alcoholic options, including free water, should be available and food should also be served.

For further information on the responsible service of alcohol, refer to the [Victorian Commission of Gaming and Liquor Regulation website](#).



## HEALTHY CATERING IDEAS

The tables below help to explain **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED** foods and give real food examples to assist you. Remember, the menus on the Monash Catering website have already done this work for you, so you can be sure that everything on the Monash Catering website is **GREEN** and **AMBER**.

**TABLE 1: HEALTHY CATERING IDEAS FOR BREAKFAST, MORNING TEA AND AFTERNOON TEA**

ITEM	RECOMMENDED FOOD AND DRINKS ( <b>GREEN</b> AND <b>AMBER</b> OPTIONS)	NOT RECOMMENDED ( <b>RED</b> OPTIONS)
<b>Drinks</b>	Offer a variety of hot and cold options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chilled plain water</li> <li>• sparkling, soda or mineral water</li> <li>• plain and decaffeinated coffee</li> <li>• plain and herbal teas</li> <li>• reduced-fat or skim milk</li> <li>• artificial sweetener for hot beverages</li> </ul>	Sugar sweetened soft drinks, fruit drinks, iced tea drinks, flavoured mineral water, sports waters, cordials, and energy and sports drinks
<b>Fruit, dried fruit and nuts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole, sliced or cut pieces of fresh fruit</li> <li>• Canned fruit in natural juice</li> <li>• Stewed fruit without added sugar</li> <li>• Small portions (30g) of dried fruit, and plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dried fruit-based confectionery (e.g. coated with sugar, chocolate, carob or yoghurt)</li> <li>• Banana chips</li> <li>• Salted, coated (e.g. honey, chocolate or savoury coating) and/or fried nuts</li> </ul>
<b>Breads and crackers</b>	Offer high-fibre wholemeal or wholegrain breads and crispbreads that are lower in salt. Top with a variety of garnishes including reduced-fat cheeses, relishes, chutneys or vegetables. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• multigrain, wholemeal, high-fibre white, rye, bagels, rolls, pita, baguette, Turkish bread, Lebanese bread or ciabatta.</li> <li>• raisin or fruit bread</li> <li>• plain or fruit-based English muffins</li> <li>• Savoury topped breads that are wholemeal or wholegrain with vegetable toppings and reduced-fat cheeses</li> <li>• reduced-fat, reduced-salt crispbreads and crackers, lavash and rice crackers. Choose wholemeal or wholegrain options that are higher in fibre</li> <li>• pita and Lebanese breads or water crackers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large serves of savoury breads such as garlic or pull-aparts topped with cheese and processed high-fat meats such as bacon or salami</li> <li>• Flavoured varieties of crackers high in fat and/or salt.</li> </ul>

ITEM	RECOMMENDED FOOD AND DRINKS (GREEN AND AMBER OPTIONS)	NOT RECOMMENDED (RED OPTIONS)
<b>Spreads and condiments</b>	<p>Serve spreads and condiments separately and ensure you can see the bread through the spread.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>poly or mono-unsaturated margarine</li> <li>reduced-fat cream cheese</li> <li>fruit jams without added sugar</li> <li>avocado</li> <li>ricotta</li> <li>nut butters with no added sugar, salt or fat</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cream, butter or dairy-blend spreads</li> <li>High-fat, cream or oil-based dips</li> <li>Jam, fruit pastes or coulis with added sugar</li> </ul>
<b>Loaves, buns, scones, muffins, cakes, slices and pastries</b>	<p>Plain, un-coated, un-iced varieties that are higher in fibre (wholemeal or wholegrain) and lower in fat and sugar:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fruit or vegetable-based mini muffins</li> <li>plain or fruit-based pikelets</li> <li>plain, fruit or vegetable-based (e.g. pumpkin) scones</li> <li>banana or date loaf</li> <li>plain hot cross buns</li> <li>plain cakes and scrolls that contain wholemeal flour, fruit, vegetables or nuts in a small to medium serve size (a small finger or slice of cake 50–60g per person)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Options that are in larger serve sizes, higher in fat and sugar and lower in fibre, including those that are iced, coated or filled (e.g. with chocolate, confectionery or cream)</li> <li>Danishes, doughnuts, croissants, tarts, cakes, slices, scrolls, sweet pastries, puddings, soufflés, some scones, buns, loaves and muffins</li> </ul>
<b>Sweet biscuits</b>	<p>Plain or wholemeal sweet biscuits without icing or coating.</p> <p>Offer small to medium serves (30 g or two/three small biscuits per person).</p> <p>Try reduced-fat and/or reduced-sugar varieties with wholemeal flour, fruit, vegetables and/or nuts.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fancy sweet biscuits such as cream-filled, chocolate-coated, choc-chip or iced</li> <li>Jumbo cookies and biscuits</li> </ul>
<b>Muesli or fruit-filled bars</b>	<p>Un-iced, un-coated cereal, muesli or fruit-filled bars, of a small to medium serve size (30–40g)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Yoghurt or chocolate-coated cereal or muesli bars or those containing confectionery such as chocolate chips</li> <li>Large serve sizes of cereal, muesli or fruit-filled bars greater than 40g</li> </ul>

ITEM	RECOMMENDED FOOD AND DRINKS ( <b>GREEN</b> AND <b>AMBER</b> OPTIONS)	NOT RECOMMENDED ( <b>RED</b> OPTIONS)
<b>Toppings, dips and antipasto</b>	Low-fat, low or reduced-salt varieties. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• tomato, basil and cheese</li> <li>• cherry tomato, onion and avocado</li> <li>• low-fat vegetable-based salsas or relishes such as tomato, capsicum, bean or corn</li> <li>• reduced-fat versions of dips including tzatziki or hummus</li> <li>• vegetable-based dip varieties including beetroot, capsicum or eggplant</li> <li>• chargrilled vegetables, such as zucchini, eggplant and capsicum</li> </ul>	Oil, cream and or cheese-based dips such as aioli, sour cream and tapenades
<b>Cheese and cheese platters</b>	Small serves of cheese such as cottage, ricotta, fetta or hard cheeses, reduced-fat where possible, with a variety of accompaniments such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different bread varieties, including wholemeal, salt-reduced crispbreads and crackers, pita bread, lavash or water crackers</li> <li>• fresh fruit and small amounts of dried fruit</li> <li>• fresh cut vegetable sticks with reduced-fat dips</li> <li>• roasted or grilled vegetables (drain oil)</li> <li>• plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large portions or blocks of cheese, double/triple cream soft cheeses such as brie and camembert</li> <li>• Chocolate almond bread, high-fat and high-salt crackers</li> <li>• Salted, coated and/or fried nuts</li> </ul>
<b>Yoghurt</b>	Reduced fat yoghurt (plain or flavoured)	
<b>Breakfast cereals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereals that are lower in added sugar, higher in fibre and without added confectionery (e.g. wholegrain cereals, whole wheat biscuits and flakes)</li> <li>• Untoasted muesli</li> <li>• Porridge/oats</li> </ul>	

**TABLE 2: HEALTHY CATERING IDEAS FOR MAIN MEALS**

ITEM	RECOMMENDED FOOD AND DRINKS ( <b>GREEN</b> AND <b>AMBER</b> OPTIONS)	NOT RECOMMENDED ( <b>RED</b> OPTIONS)
<b>Drinks</b>	Offer a variety of hot and cold options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• chilled plain and sparkling water</li> <li>• plain and decaffeinated coffee</li> <li>• plain and herbal teas</li> <li>• reduced-fat or skim milk for tea and coffee</li> <li>• artificial sweetener for hot beverages</li> <li>• 99–100 per cent fruit juice with maximum recommended serve size of 250mL per person. Recommend serving in small cups.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sugar sweetened soft drinks, fruit drinks, iced tea drinks, flavoured mineral water, sports waters, cordials, and energy and sports drinks</li> <li>• Large serves of fruit juice per person (greater than 300mL)</li> </ul>
<b>Sandwiches</b>	Offer a variety of breads, sandwich types and fillings; try finger or pinwheel sandwiches, open-faced, bread rolls, pita pockets or lavash wraps  Use a wide variety of breads and rolls including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• multigrain, wholemeal, wholegrain and rye</li> <li>• high-fibre white</li> <li>• lavash and other flat breads</li> <li>• bagels or plain Turkish bread</li> <li>• small baguettes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large portions of salty, high-fat savoury breads such as garlic or pull-aparts topped with regular fat cheese and fatty, salty, processed meats such as bacon or salami</li> <li>• Large portions of breads such as long hot dog rolls, ciabatta and focaccia</li> </ul>
<b>Sandwich spreads</b>	Use spreads or condiments sparingly and try reduced-salt, reduced-fat varieties including poly or mono-unsaturated margarine, avocado, cottage cheese, ricotta, reduced-fat cream cheese, hummus or tzatziki.  Use mustards, relishes and chutneys in moderation	Butter, dairy blend spreads, mayonnaise; oil, cream and/or cheese-based dips such as aioli, sour cream, tapenade and pesto
<b>Sandwich fillings</b>	Lean cuts of meats, meat alternatives or reduced-fat cheeses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• roast beef</li> <li>• roast chicken with no skin</li> <li>• lean turkey, chicken breast or ham</li> <li>• tinned fish (canned in spring water)</li> <li>• eggs</li> <li>• ricotta or cottage cheese, reduced-fat, hard or soft cheeses</li> </ul> Use plenty of raw salad or vegetables Roasted or grilled vegetables drained of oil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-fat, salty luncheon meats such as salami, chicken loaf, kabana, devon, bacon, Strasburg or Mortadella</li> <li>• Do not add salt to sandwiches or filling ingredients</li> </ul>



ITEM	RECOMMENDED FOOD AND DRINKS (GREEN AND AMBER OPTIONS)	NOT RECOMMENDED (RED OPTIONS)
<b>Sushi and rice paper rolls</b>	<p>Try options that contain lean, un-coated and un-crumbed meats, tofu, egg or seafood and use a variety of vegetable fillings.</p> <p>Use low-fat, reduced-salt ingredients in dipping sauces such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sweet chilli sauce</li> <li>• reduced-salt soy sauce or reduced-salt fish sauce with fresh herbs, garlic, onion or shallots</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sushi or rice paper rolls containing deep-fried, coated or battered ingredients</li> <li>• Cream or oil-based sauces (e.g. regular mayonnaise)</li> </ul>
<b>Salads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer a variety of salads, such as garden, bean, pasta, rice or noodle, potato, tabouleh, couscous, coleslaw, roasted vegetables or egg salad.</li> <li>• Use balsamic vinegar/lemon juice dressings, or low-fat mayonnaise, oil or yoghurt-based dressings. Offer dressing on the side.</li> <li>• If salads include meat or poultry, use lean varieties (with visible fat trimmed and skin removed) without crumbs or coating, that have been grilled, roasted or cooked in minimal amounts of poly or mono-unsaturated oil.</li> <li>• If salads include tinned fish, use options that are canned in springwater.</li> <li>• If salads include cheese, choose reduced-fat varieties, such as ricotta or cottage cheese.</li> <li>• If salads include nuts, choose unsalted, unroasted or dry-roasted options.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salads containing deep-fried ingredients (e.g. croutons, meat or seafood), fatty meats (e.g. bacon) or coated meat and poultry</li> <li>• Avoid fatty, salty cured meats such as salami, chicken loaf, kabana, devon, bacon, Strasburg or Mortadella</li> </ul>
<b>Salad dressings</b>	<p>It is preferable to leave salads undressed or serve dressings separately.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-oil or no-oil dressings such as lemon, orange or lime juice, natural yoghurt, balsamic or wine vinegar with herbs or pepper</li> <li>• Reduced-fat, low-oil, no-oil or low-joule commercial dressings and small amounts of low-fat mayonnaise</li> <li>• If preparing dressings use small amounts of poly or mono-unsaturated oils, such as canola, sunflower, sesame, olive or peanut oils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not add salt to salads or dressings</li> <li>• Avoid excess dressing</li> <li>• Avoid cream or mayonnaise-based dressings such as Caesar or sour cream</li> </ul>

ITEM	RECOMMENDED FOOD AND DRINKS (GREEN AND AMBER OPTIONS)	NOT RECOMMENDED (RED OPTIONS)
<b>Finger foods, antipasto and dips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vegetable-based salsas or relishes such as tomato, bean or capsicum</li> <li>• Reduced-fat yoghurt-based dips such as beetroot, eggplant, capsicum, avocado, tzatziki or hummus</li> <li>• Roasted or grilled vegetables served drained of oil</li> <li>• Olives served drained of oil</li> <li>• Lean cold meat such as roast beef or skinless baked chicken</li> <li>• Hot options such as lean meat and vegetable kebabs, mini frittatas or bruschetta</li> <li>• Fresh cut fruit and/or vegetables sticks</li> <li>• A variety of different breads, rice crackers, water crackers or reduced-fat/reduced-salt crispbreads or pita breads (wholemeal varieties where possible)</li> <li>• Vegetable-based frittatas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deep-fried items including savoury pastries such as dim sims, spring rolls, samosas; coated or crumbed meat or vegetable products; and potato chips, wedges, gems, scallops or hash browns</li> <li>• Hot or cold savoury pastries such as pies, sausage rolls, party pies, croissants or quiches</li> <li>• High-fat, salty cured meats such as salami, chicken loaf, kabana, devon, bacon, Strasburg or Mortadella</li> <li>• Oil, cream and/or cheese-based dips such as aioli, sour cream, tapenades and pesto</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit platters</b>	<p>Whole, sliced or cut pieces of fresh fruit.</p> <p>Try fresh fruit kebabs with low-fat or reduced-fat dipping sauces such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fruit purees</li> <li>• reduced fat vanilla yoghurt</li> <li>• whipped ricotta</li> </ul>	<p>Whipped cream or chocolate sauce</p>
<b>Cheese and cheese platters</b>	<p>Small serves of cheese such as cottage, ricotta, fetta or hard cheeses, reduced-fat where possible, with a variety of accompaniments such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• different bread varieties, wholemeal, salt-reduced crispbreads and crackers, pita bread, lavash, rice crackers or water crackers</li> <li>• fresh fruit and small amounts of dried fruit</li> <li>• fresh cut vegetable sticks with reduced-fat dips</li> <li>• roasted or grilled vegetables (served drained of oil)</li> <li>• plain and/or dry-roasted unsalted nuts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large portions or blocks of cheese, double/triple cream soft cheeses such as brie and camembert</li> <li>• Chocolate almond bread, high-fat and high-salt crackers</li> <li>• Salted, coated and/or fried nuts</li> </ul>

## SAMPLE MENU

The following sample menus include options from the 'recommended food and drinks' column in the previous tables. Remember to always provide water as the main drink at your workplace meetings, functions and events.

A bowl of whole fruit is a handy catering option for meetings as whole fruit is quicker to prepare, often costs less and will last longer than cut fruit.

Speak to your caterer regarding ordering for dietary requirements, they should be able to identify which of their menu items are vegetarian, gluten free, wheat free etc.

MORNING TEA	LUNCH
Jugs of water Low- or reduced-fat milk (if required for hot drinks) Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee Sugar and artificial sweetener Vegetable-based frittata Seasonal fresh fruit	Jugs of water Low or reduced-fat milk (if required for hot drinks) Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee Sugar and artificial sweetener Wholemeal sandwiches, wraps and wholegrain mini rolls (1 sandwich or wrap per person) with assorted fillings such as reduced-fat cheese, lean meats or alternatives such as eggs, including plenty of salad.
AFTERNOON TEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• roast beef, fruit chutney, red onion, tomato and lettuce</li> <li>• shaved lean ham, reduced-fat cream cheese, carrot, tomato and lettuce</li> <li>• roasted capsicum, hummus, sprouts and baby spinach</li> </ul> Fruit and cheese platter. A suitable serve of cheese is 40g per person. Sushi and rice paper rolls: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• order a variety of vegetable fillings</li> <li>• order lean, un-coated and un-crumbed meat, egg, tofu or seafood options</li> </ul> Fresh fruit kebabs with low fat vanilla yoghurt.
Jugs of water Low or reduced-fat milk (if required for hot drinks) Tea and coffee, including herbal teas and decaffeinated coffee Sugar and artificial sweetener 2 x low fat mixed berry and apple cinnamon mini muffins or 60g medium savoury muffin per person Bowl of whole fruit	

This document is adapted with thanks from the Victorian Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy Catering Guide, *Healthy Choices: Healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces.*