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Living
Well

Healthy Meeting and Event Guide

A tool for campus event planners



University of California, Los Angeles Healthy Meeting and Events Guide

Dear colleagues,

This UCLA Healthy Meeting and Event Guide supports the University's commitment to foster healthy lifestyles and create an environment that makes the healthy choice the easy choice for the UCLA Community.

Meetings, events and celebrations are a major part of UCLA's culture, and we hope you will join us in the commitment to offering healthy options at our gatherings. This guide provides tools, guidelines and resources addressing nutritious food and beverage options, activity breaks, and sustainable practices.

Acknowledgements

The UCLA Healthy Meeting and Event Guide has been developed by wellness professionals UC Systemwide and adapted from the UC Berkeley Healthy Meeting and Event Guide, produced by the UC Berkeley's Be Well at Work - Wellness Program. In addition, expert recommendations were followed from the American Heart Association, the National Alliance for Activity and Nutrition, the Culinary Institute of America's Menus of Change, and the 2015 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

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Have focused and attentive participants at your next meeting by offering healthy meal options and short activity breaks to boost energy.

Healthy Meals and Snack Tips

- Provide fruits and/or vegetables each time food is served.
- Provide plant-based options and a variety of choices for those with special dietary needs.
- Offer whole fruits, mixed nuts, or air-popped popcorn as snacks.
- Serve healthy protein options - beans, tofu, fish, or skinless poultry.
- When providing sandwiches or wraps, offer whole grain and healthy protein options.
- Serve water instead of sugary drinks or juice.
- Provide fruit instead of traditional desserts.

Activity Tips

- For every hour of meeting, take three minutes to get out of the chair to move and stretch.
- Provide a 5-10 minute walking or activity break, have walking meetings, and encourage participants to stand and move about.
- Include items on your meeting agenda that require participants to get out of their seats (e.g. breakout groups, stand and write ideas on an easel).

Sustainability Tips

- Choose reusable, washable tablecloths, napkins, plates, serving containers and eating utensils whenever possible.
- When disposable products are the only option, use paper and compostable products.
- Order food, beverages, and condiments in bulk containers rather than single servings.
- Provide water in pitchers or jugs rather than individual water bottles.
- Provide Zero Waste Bins for Recycling, Composting and Landfill, and label bins with pictures and words.

Follow these guidelines for healthy meals:

Beverages

- Tap water, sparkling water, water infused with fruit and/or herbs, and unsweetened coffee or tea are good choices

Vegetables/Fruit

- A healthy plate is half non-starchy vegetables (or combination of veggies and fruit)
- Selecting a variety of colors provides a variety of nutrients and makes a meal more appealing.
- Choose whole fruits and vegetables over juices to get beneficial fiber.

Healthy Proteins

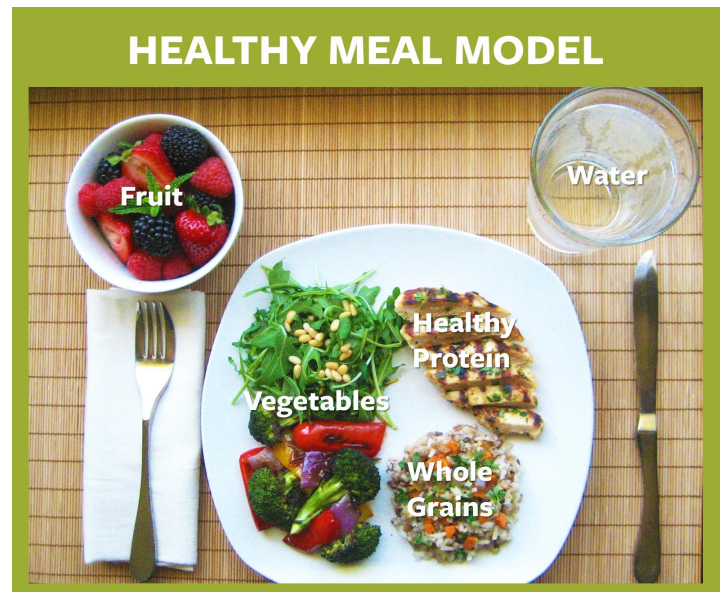
- Healthy protein options include plant-based options of tofu, beans, lentils, nuts, nut butters, and seeds, as well as skinless poultry, seafood, lean cuts of meat, eggs, and plain yogurt.

Whole Grains

- Whole grains are more filling and nutritious than refined grains, and can positively impact weight control and energy levels.
- The best choices are unprocessed grains such as brown rice, buckwheat, quinoa, and steel cut oats, as well as whole grain varieties of breads, pasta, tortillas, and other baked goods.

Healthy Fats

- Olive and canola oils, nuts and seeds, nut butters, hummus, avocado, tuna, and salmon are sources of heart-healthy, unsaturated fats.
- Limit saturated fats, found in red meat, processed deli meats, butter, cheese and other high-fat dairy products.
- Avoid trans fats, found in some processed foods, fried foods, and baked goods made with “partially hydrogenated” oils.



Potluck Tips

- Offer sign-ups for fruit, vegetable, whole grains and vegetarian choices.
- Award prizes for “best vegetable dish,” “most creative vegetable and fruit platter,” or “best use of a whole grain.”
- Instead of general options such as “main dish” or “dessert,” make potluck choices specific when people register such as: “bean salad,” “green salad with dressing on the side,” or “items for a sandwich bar.”

Theme Ideas

- **Small Bites-** Skip the main course! Offer simple items such as no-mayonnaise shrimp salad in avocado “dishes,” mozzarella and tomato skewers, veggie lettuce cups and hummus with fresh veggies.
- **Signature Dish-** Challenge team members to make their favorite dish as healthy as they can by tweaking the recipe.
- **Salad Potluck-** Have the team make his or her favorite salad to share. Or, assign salad ingredients, allowing folks to create their own personalized salads from the variety of ingredients provided (and perhaps vote for the most creative!).
- **Color-Luck-** Have coworkers choose a color of the rainbow and bring a dish that is naturally rich in this color.



- **Recipe Collection-** Ask each person to provide a recipe for his or her potluck dish, and then compile the recipes into a file for an office cookbook.
- **Seasonal/Farmer’s Market-** Make your theme “seasonal foods” and include in-season fruits and vegetables from a local farmer’s market in dishes. It’s a great way to incorporate fresh, “on sale” ingredients to support local agriculture.
- **Burrito Bowls-** Each colleague brings a component for a burrito bowl (brown rice, quinoa, chicken, tofu, sautéed veggies, lettuce, beans)...healthy, fresh inside of the burrito without the tortilla!
- **Storytime-** Pick recipes that have an interesting or funny back story, like “This was the first dish that my mother made for my father”... See if it can be made healthfully, write each story on a note card, number the stories and dishes and see who can get the most correct matches.
- **Secret Ingredient-** Challenge each participant to bring a dish with a healthy “secret” ingredient. Ideas: black bean brownies, avocado chocolate mousse, cauliflower rice, spiralizer zucchini “zoodles”, vegan nacho cheese dip (made with cashews and sweet potatoes), garbanzo bean “cookie dough” dip, Greek yogurt ranch dip...



Other Tips

- Suggest items that are pre-portioned or be made “mini”. Because most people like to sample many dishes, this will lead to less overeating. And, one can always return if more is needed!
- Request that dressings and condiments be served on the side.

Follow these guidelines for more in-depth information and ideas on meals and snacks.

Breakfast

- **Protein-** Include healthy proteins such as eggs and low-fat dairy products. Try plain Greek yogurt and serve with fresh fruit and nuts as toppings. Avoid processed meats such as bacon and sausage.
- **Fruit-** Provide fresh fruit, whole or sliced, rather than juice.
- **Whole grains-** Select whole grain breads and baked goods. For items such as bagels and muffins, choose “mini” versions or cut larger portions in half. Consider serving no pastries, but if you do include them, keep the portions small or cut in half.

Selections from Caterers & Restaurants	Selections from Grocery Stores
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Eggs – hard-boiled, scrambled, or egg dishes such as frittata with vegetables ✓ Fruit platter, fruit salad, or whole fruit ✓ Breakfast burritos with eggs, beans, salsa, and veggies ✓ Whole grain baked goods such as bread, muffins, and bagels. Better accompaniments include nut butters, whipped cream cheese, and sliced vegetables ✓ Oatmeal and toppings on the side 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Plain yogurt, with toppings of fresh fruit or frozen berries and nuts ✓ Whole fruit ✓ Pre-made fruit platter or fruit salad ✓ Whole grain bread or English muffins. Better accompaniments include nut butters, whipped cream cheese, and tomato and cucumber slices ✓ Plain, instant oatmeal (have hot water available) with fruit, nuts, and cinnamon on the side



Lunch

- **Sandwiches and wraps-** Choose whole grain sandwich breads, tortillas and flatbreads; healthy proteins such as roasted turkey and grilled chicken; condiments such as mustard, hummus, or avocado on the side; and sliced tomatoes, cucumber, leafy greens or other vegetables.
- **Entree salads-** Start with colorful greens and sliced veggies, and add protein such as tuna, grilled chicken, hard-boiled eggs or beans. Provide additional healthy toppings such as avocados and nuts, and limit toppings of cheese, bacon bits, croutons, and crispy wonton strips. Choose vinaigrette dressings over creamy ones, and serve them on the side.
- **Desserts-** Serve sliced or whole fruit, or a platter of half fruit and half small-portioned baked goods.



Selections from Caterers & Restaurants	Selections from Grocery Stores
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Sandwich halves on platters✓ When ordering boxed lunches, choose entrée salads or sandwiches made with lots of vegetables on whole grain breads or wraps. Ask the caterer to substitute fruit for the cookie and a vegetable side dish for the chips. Serve dressings and other condiments on the side.✓ Baked or grilled chicken, turkey, fish, or tofu✓ Broth-based soups instead of creamy soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Create your own salad bar: salad greens, cherry tomatoes, shredded carrots, other sliced veggies, chopped nuts, and rinsed beans; or choose a pre-made salad.✓ Make your own sandwich or wrap: whole grain bread, pita, or tortillas; turkey, chicken, or marinated tofu; assorted vegetables; and condiments such as hummus, mustard, vinaigrette, or avocado

Sides/Snacks

Selections from Caterers & Restaurants	Selections from Grocery Stores
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Vegetable platter with hummus or guacamole✓ Roasted, steamed, grilled, or stir-fried vegetables✓ Green salad with vinaigrette dressing on the side✓ Brown rice, quinoa, beans, whole grain couscous or pasta or side salads made with these ingredients✓ Fruit platter, fruit salad, or whole fruit✓ Unsalted nuts and/or seeds <p>Note – any of these can be sides in a boxed lunch.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Raw vegetables such as baby carrots, snap peas, and cherry tomatoes with hummus or guacamole✓ Pre-made vegetable platter✓ Whole fruit✓ Pre-made fruit platter or fruit salad✓ Unsalted nuts and/or seeds✓ Trail mix made primarily with nuts and unsweetened dried fruit✓ Plain yogurt with fruit and nuts toppings

Beverages

- **Water-** Serve water, preferably tap water, in pitchers or other types of water dispensers. Encourage participants to bring their own reusable beverage containers and point out the nearest water refill station.
- **Unsweetened hot beverages-** Provide regular and decaf coffee, tea, and herbal tea. For “creamers,” offer milk and soy or almond milk instead of instead of half & half or artificial creamers.
- **Other beverages-** Consider iced teas or carbonated water, flavored or unflavored with no added sweeteners; a spa water bar with cucumber and citrus slices or whole strawberries; or spritzers made from seltzer and a splash of 100% fruit juice. Limit fruit and vegetable juices to 4-8 oz. portions, if served at all. When possible, serve in bulk and make sure to provide recycling containers with signage.



Excessive sitting can negatively impact the body’s metabolic system and harm circulation. It can contribute to decreased breathing efficiency and aches and pains from being in fixed positions. Keeping muscles active and moving can circulate fresh blood and oxygen into the brain, triggering the release of brain and mood-enhancing chemicals. Movement also increases energy, and participants with more energy helps with making a meeting more productive.

Suggestions to Make Meetings More Active

- Include items on your meeting agenda that require participants to get out of their seats (eg. breakout groups, stand and write ideas on an easel)
- Make meeting locations movement friendly: is the neighborhood walkable, close to a park, area to hike or restaurants, shopping and activities? If the meeting is at a hotel, confirm that the hotel offers an on-site gym.
- For every hour of meeting, take three minutes to get out of the chair and move about the room (see “Chair Stretches”, below)
- For half- or all-day meetings, hire a certified fitness professional to lead a 30-45-minute class (Pilates, yoga, tai chi, stretching or Zumba) before or during the meeting
- Recommend attendees take the stairs instead of the elevator. Provide signs to the meeting with options to take the stairs. Put arrows to the stairs in front of elevators.
- Organize a group walk early in the morning, at a break or before/after dinner
- If dinner is not provided, find a healthy restaurant nearby and have an option to do a group walk to dinner

Length of Meeting	Standing Break	Stretch Breaks	Breathing Breaks	Movement Breaks	Walking Breaks
50 – 60 Min	✓		✓		
2 – 4 Hours	✓	✓	✓	✓	
All Day	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Standing Breaks

- At least once an hour, participants should be given a break to stand up to improve blood circulation, boost metabolism, and relieve physical discomfort from sitting for prolonged periods of time.
- Energize participants by having them stand up, march in place, and raise arms overhead for 30-60 seconds to improve blood circulation, attention, and focus.
- Announce to participants that it is fine to stand up and move around, as needed. If possible, provide raised tables for those electing to stand during the meeting.



March in Place



Neck Stretch



Focused Breathing



Hip Circle



Chest Stretch



Side Stretch

Stretch Breaks

- Stretch breaks help participants wake up their bodies and minds.
- Encourage people to stand up and stretch in place. Select 3-4 different stretches from these examples provided to the right.
- Most of the exercises above can be done seated (as needed).

Breathing Exercise

- Focused breathing is an energizing activity that can help achieve a relaxed and clear state of mind. Simply inhale for 4 seconds, hold it for 7 seconds, and exhale for 8 seconds.

UC, a national leader in sustainability, has pledged to become carbon neutral by 2025, becoming the first major university to accomplish this achievement. Each UC campus and medical center has also committed to reducing per capita potable water consumption by 20%, 20% sustainable food purchases, and sending zero waste to landfill by 2020.

At UCLA, students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to utilize reusable products and to recycle materials in order to reduce and divert campus waste from landfills. Help UCLA become sustainable by having a Sustainable Meeting.

Any event can be successful and sustainable. Here are some ideas to help you get started. Even if you only implement a few, you will make a difference! All it takes is vision and commitment.

Publicity and Registration

- Distribute 'Save the Date' information by email, listerv, websites, and other electronic means to minimize paper use.
- Consider making your meeting and announcements paper-less. Email the agenda, or display it by writing on a board or using a projector.
- Provide online registration
- Promote sustainable transportation such as walking, biking or carpooling to meetings

Event Materials

- Paper- Optimize the use of environmentally sound paper and packets by purchasing 100% post-consumer, chlorine-free or tree-free paper and print with vegetable-based ink.
- Presentations- Request copies from presenters and post them on the event website.
- Handouts- Consider which materials need to be printed and which can be provided online. If you must print documents, consider printing double-sided or multiple slides per page.
- Name tags- Use recycled paper and request participants return the holder and provide a bin at the exit for this purpose.
- Markers and White Boards- Use water-based, non-toxic markers on reusable white boards.

Food Service

- Encourage participants to bring their own reusable cups.
- Choose reusable, washable tablecloths, napkins, plates, serving containers and eating utensils whenever possible.
- When disposable products are the only option, use paper and compostable products. Styrofoam can take over a million years to decompose.
- Order food, beverages, and condiments in bulk containers rather than single servings.
- Provide water in pitchers or jugs rather than individual water bottles.
- Promote the use of water bottle refilling stations (if available).
- Choose food and beverages that are local, organic, fair trade or humane whenever possible.
- For excess food donation, consider your local Food Bank or find out if there are student groups on campus that accept food donation.
- Do not use disposable cleaning towelettes or wipes — they are not recyclable



Logistics

- Choose decorative elements that can be reused or given away such as potted plants and banners without dates.
- Announce to participants and post signs that this is a Zero Waste Event and let them know how they can participate
- Provide Zero Waste Bins for Recycling, Composting and Landfill and LABEL BINS with pictures AND words
- Contact ALL vendors prior to the event and discuss products for sale and use and post-event disposal



Looking for more information on healthy meetings? Here are additional resources:

- [American Heart Association toolkit](#)
- [California Department of Public Health Healthy Meetings Policies/Guidelines](#)
- [National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity Healthy Meeting Toolkit](#)
- [American Cancer Society Meeting Well Guide](#)
- [Center for Science in the Public Interest Healthy Meeting Hacks](#)

Here at UCLA, you may also find the following resources helpful as you plan your meetings and events. Locations may include location-specific resources, including but not limited to:

- [Fitness & Recreation](#)
- [Lactation Support Program](#)
- Nutrition ([Workshops](#), [Nutrition Resources](#))
- Recycling/Sustainability ([Zero Waste](#), [Green Events Guide](#))

