

**EAT
BETTER**
Suffolk



Canteens

Actions & top tips

For creating a more nutritious menu

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Guidance only





Welcome

Welcome to this Canteen guide, produced by Suffolk County Council. This guide aims to promote healthier eating options across our county, ultimately enhancing the well-being of our residents.

Customers are increasingly seeking nutritious, lower-calorie, and more sustainable choices when eating out.

This guidance outlines key objectives that could help to enhance your menu, providing you with helpful tips and strategies for implementing these changes.

We are thrilled to embark on this journey alongside you. Together, we can make healthier and more sustainable food accessible to our customers.

Thank you for dedicating your time to review this guidance.



Contents

<u>Fibre, fruit and vegetables</u>	4
<u>Fats</u>	5
<u>Salt</u>	7
<u>Sugar</u>	8
<u>Options/ promotions</u>	9
<u>Drinks</u>	11

Fibre, Fruit and Vegetables

Actions

- ☐ Increase the amount of fibre across your menu.
- ☐ Provide high fibre options as standard.
- ☐ Increase the amount of fruit, vegetables or salad across your menu.

Tips & tricks

- ☐ Offer wholegrain, wholemeal or other high fibre carb options as standard. Suggestion to provide white options available on request.
- ☐ Use more vegetables, beans or pulses in dishes (e.g. pasta sauce). This will save money by reducing expensive ingredients. It'll also give your customers a hearty, fibre rich meal that's packed with nutrients and flavour.
- ☐ Serve fruit, vegetables and salad in or with meals. This is a good way to make a meal look bigger for less. Can offer paid upgrade for crisps/ chips.
- ☐ Encourage customers to choose healthier toppings and sides with lower salt and fat. Try offering tuna, chicken and vegetables.
- ☐ Using tinned, dried or frozen options can be a good way to reduce costs and waste.
- ☐ Leaving skins on fruits and veg can help to reduce waste and increase fibre- [Food Savvy](#) is a great place to visit for inspiration.
- ☐ Changing fruit and vegetables in line with the seasons can help you to save money and is better for the environment and helps support the local economy.
- ☐ Use descriptive language to promote fruit and vegetables on your menu (e.g. 'crunchy' for vegetables or 'sweet' and 'juicy' for fruit).
- ☐ If using counter displays, present fruit and salads in high impact areas near the till point.

Fats

Actions

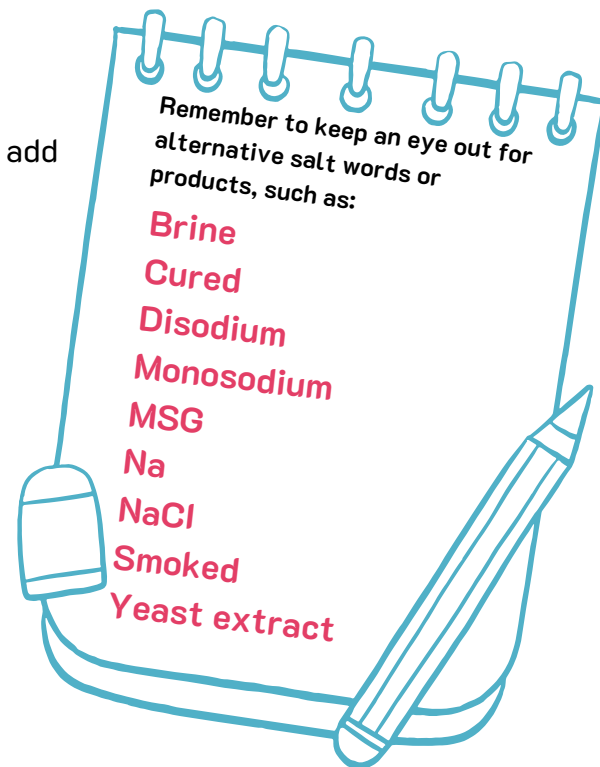
- ☐ For the preparation and serving of foods, substitute fats high in saturates (e.g. butter) with fats predominately made up of monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats (e.g. rapeseed or olive oil).
- ☐ Avoid industrially made trans-fat (partially hydrogenated vegetable oil). This can be found in added to certain foods (e.g. cakes, biscuits and pies).
- ☐ Minimise use of full fat dairy options, by:
 - Using semi-skimmed milk as default.
 - Swapping to half or low-fat dairy menu options. If unable to do so, try to change the proportions of each used (e.g. 50% full-fat cream, 50% low-fat crème fraîche).
- ☐ Reduce absorption of fat into food during preparation and cooking.
- ☐ Use cooking methods which limit need for additional oil (e.g. grill, bake, steam, air fryer).

Tips & tricks

- ☐ When making fillings, try making lower fat alternatives (e.g. fat-free yogurt and seasoning instead of full-fat mayonnaise).
- ☐ Reduce amount of high-fat spread used (e.g. skipping butter on the bread, if using a moist filling).
- ☐ Try to choose naturally lower fat or reduced fat products.
- ☐ Choose light varieties of salad dressings, such as vinegar or lemon. Also use these as an alternative to oil in home-made dressings. You can also add herbs, spices and other flavourings without adding extra fat.

- ☐ Use leaner cuts of meat and try trimming, skimming and draining excess fat.
- ☐ Aim to cook with healthier methods, such as grilling, steaming or oven baking.
- ☐ Garnish desserts with fruit instead of cream. As well as reducing fat, this also adds a great burst of colour and flavour.
- ☐ Avoid serving chips/ other deep friend sides as default. Instead offer fruit, vegetables, salad as standard with option to pay extra for crisps/ chips.
- ☐ Use thicker cuts for fried/ deep fried foods to reduce surface area absorption (e.g. medium/ thick cut chips).
- ☐ Pre-dry foods before frying to remove excess water.
- ☐ Get oil to temperature before frying foods and use highest possible temperate without spoiling oil (160-175°C) and then bang and shake to reduce excess oil.
- ☐ If using a basket for frying, try to ensure never more than half full. This stops the oil temperature dropping, reducing cooking time and providing a more consistent finish.
- ☐ Avoid frying food more than once. If needing to pre-prepare, par boil foods, drain excess water, and then flash fry.

Salt



- ☐ Encourage customers to reduce the amount of salt they add to foods.
- ☐ Use salt sparingly when preparing dishes.
- ☐ Try to source lower salt varieties of products.
 - Low salt = <0.3g salt /100g.
 - Low sodium = <0.1g sodium/ 100g.
- ☐ Remove salt from service counters/tables and only make available upon request.
- ☐ Provide saltshakers with fewer holes (e.g. no more than 5 holes in the shaker).
- ☐ Cut down on ultra processed foods. Many are high in salt, so try to use fresh, whole ingredients as much as possible.
- ☐ Avoid adding salt when cooking vegetables and boiled starchy foods (e.g. pasta).
- ☐ Avoid adding salt to batters and sauce mixes.
- ☐ If using store bought batters and readymade mixes, prioritise ones without added salt.
- ☐ Use low salt/sodium in sauces, spreads, stock, seasoning etc.
 - Low salt = <0.3g salt /100g.
 - Low sodium = <0.1g sodium/ 100g.
- ☐ As well as your standard meals, why not try promoting new combinations that offer less salty, high fat options and more exciting vegetables? (e.g. a chicken salad sandwich instead of egg and mayonnaise).

Sugar

Actions

- ☐ Encourage customers to reduce the amount of sugar they add to foods.
- ☐ Put in place measures to reduce added sugar within recipes and meals.

Tips & tricks

- ☐ Remove sugar from counters/ tables, provide upon request.
- ☐ If providing sweetener, ensure natural variety used (e.g. stevia, monk fruit).
- ☐ Remove confectionary, cakes, pastries, biscuits etc from till point and counter displays.
- ☐ Where possible display fruit alongside till point to encourage healthier choices.
- ☐ Limit addition of sugar within savoury dishes (e.g. added sugar within tomato sauce).
- ☐ Offer standardised smaller portion sizes (e.g. each slice of cake to be maximum two inches in width).
- ☐ Offer mini dessert options (e.g. a quarter sized brownie)
- ☐ If you offer speciality hot drinks, try and limit the toppings such as chocolate and marshmallows.
- ☐ Using sugar free syrup means customers can enjoy a tasty drink without the added calories.



Options and Promotions

Actions

- ☐ Review menu to try reduce calorie content, for overall and individual dishes.
- ☐ Where possible serve all additional sauce and dressing on the side to allow customer to determine amount used.
- ☐ Limit free products given.
- ☐ Product placement and nudge techniques to promote nutrient dense options.

Tips & tricks

- ☐ Offer child sized portions, half or reduced portion sizes.
- ☐ Train your staff to prepare and serve smaller standardised portions. This will help reduce food waste. Tell your staff about the correct use of equipment and recipes. Explain why these are important.
- ☐ Limit offerings to only smaller-sized packs (e.g. 30g or less of crisps, chocolate bar less than 45g).
- ☐ If pre-cutting food, increase number of cuts, to make each portion smaller (e.g. a whole pizza serving 12 slices instead of).
- ☐ For takeaway, reduce container size and/or underfill container.
- ☐ Promotions and upselling for healthy options (e.g. soup, wholemeal bread and fruit meal deal instead of sausage bap, chips and a fizzy drink).

- ☐ More nutrient dense foods listed in right or left top corner of menu or as top option if a limited menu (e.g. use space to market salads).
- ☐ Use descriptive language to promote fruit and vegetables on your menu (e.g. 'crunchy' for vegetables or 'sweet' and 'juicy' for fruit).
- ☐ Your staff and your social media are great assets. Ask them to promote the healthier options. This is also a great way to make sure that fresh food does not get wasted.
- ☐ Provide customers with healthier alternative as standard with option to change (e.g. low sugar and salt ketchup instead of regular ketchup).
- ☐ Serve dressings on the side where possible (e.g. for salads).
- ☐ Share the stories behind the ingredients and suppliers with your customers. Highlight any local farmers, producers and sustainable practices. Customers often enjoy knowing the origins of their food.

Drinks

Actions

- ☐ When serving milk use lower fat and calorie options and increase range of alternative milk choices whilst being conscious of added ingredients.
- ☐ If serving alcohol, ensure availability of non-alcoholic and low sugar alternatives.
- ☐ Use promotion techniques to encourage purchase of lower calorie drinks.

Tips & tricks

- ☐ Use semi-skimmed milk as standard instead of full-fat milk.
- ☐ Offer a variety of alternative plant based milk choices (e.g. almond milk, soya milk, coconut milk etc).
- ☐ Prioritise the use of milk(s) with no added oil or sugar.
- ☐ Offer at least one no added sugar or sweetener soft drink (e.g. kombucha).
- ☐ Sugar sweetened beverages only available in 330ml or less.
- ☐ Fruit juices/ smoothies of maximum 150ml serving size.
- ☐ Place “healthier” drinks at eye level, if on display at fridge, relevant to target audience (e.g. milk for children and sparkling water for adults).
- ☐ If selling alcohol, also try to offer non-alcoholic options (e.g. alcohol free beer).

Thank you for taking time to read this guidance.

Together we can put healthier and more sustainable
food in reach for customers.

For more information contact the Public Health &
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