

# Meeting Well:

## Ideas for Healthy Meetings and Celebrations at Your Business



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## Why Meet Well?

The *Meet Well* Pledge is a tool that helps guide businesses and their employees to voluntarily align their workplace environment with the vision of *Live Well San Diego*. The *Live Well San Diego* vision is to cultivate a region that is Building Better Health, Living Safely, and Thriving. Some examples of the *Meet Well* Pledge include having healthy and sustainable meetings, events, fund-raisers, trainings, and celebrations. There are a number of benefits for employers who follow the *Meet Well* Pledge. Some of these benefits include: cost savings through decreased food and beverage waste, more productive meetings/training, better focused employees, general employee health improvement, and happier employees.





The *Meet Well* Pledge intends to assist staff in modeling healthy, sustainable, choices. The *Meet Well* Pledge applies to all internal and external meetings, trainings, and events, but does not dictate what individual staff members eat or bring into the office for personal consumption. By adhering to the *Meet Well* Pledge, employees can truly live well and improve the culture of health.

Provide **HEALTHY** food and beverage options

- Provide culturally and dietary appropriate foods and beverages.
- Provide access to water. Do not provide or offer sugar sweetened beverages. If other beverages are offered, provide only healthy options (e.g. water, seltzer water, unsweetened teas, 100% juice, unsweetened milk alternatives, non-fat and low-fat milk).
- Offer plant-based or vegetarian option(s) whenever food, including entrees, is served.
- Offer whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and other minimally processed foods.
- Avoid foods and beverages, including condiments and salad dressings, containing processed sugars, high sodium content, refined grains, and saturated/trans-fats (e.g. partially hydrogenated oils). Offer condiments and dressings on the side.
- Offer reasonable portion sizes and appropriately sized service ware.
- Label food and beverages to inform those with food sensitivities and/or allergies.

Make **FOOD SAFETY** an integral part of meetings to prevent foodborne illness

- Prevent food from contamination by washing hands before handling food.
- Provide lids and covers for open food and enough clean utensils to serve food.
- Keep perishable foods hot or refrigerated until ready to serve.
- Plan to serve only what will be eaten. Retain cold temperature (ice) for cold items and hot temperature for hot items. Consume or properly store all food items within two hours of removal from refrigeration or a heating source; discard after four hours.

Conduct **GREEN & ZERO WASTE** meetings

*Food and beverages*

- Reduce packaging waste. Provide and/or encourage attendees to bring reusable food and beverage containers/service ware. Do not provide or use polystyrene (foam) products.
- Promote the use of reusable or biodegradable silverware and dishware at potlucks, etc.

*Materials*

- Provide electronic documents ahead of meeting and display on-screen to reduce the need for paper copies.
- Host e-meetings or provide e-meeting options, when possible.
- Encourage carpooling, active transportation, and public transportation to events.

Be **ACTIVE**

- Offer a physical activity break every 90 minutes or host walking meetings.
- Incorporate wellness activities into team building days and general staff meetings.

Provide a **TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT** at all times

Provide designated, clean, secure, comfortable, and private **LACTATION ACCOMMODATIONS** (excluding restrooms) at trainings, conferences, workshops, and other events

# Introduction

**SINCE ADULTS SPEND HALF THEIR WAKING HOURS IN THE** workplace, with many of those hours spent in meetings and conferences, it is an optimal setting to promote healthy lifestyles. Oftentimes, food and beverages served at meetings are high in sodium, fat, and added sugars, and lack fresh fruits and vegetables. Additionally, they typically require employees to remain sedentary for large amounts of time, leading to reduced physical activity throughout the work day. Since there has been an established relationship between the workplace environment and health outcomes of employees, employers have a unique opportunity to influence their employees' well-being by implementing healthy meeting standards for their organization.<sup>1</sup> By promoting healthy meetings, it conveys a message that the health of their employees is important and creates an overall culture of health in the workplace.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, employees who are actively engaged in their health and health care miss less work and have better health outcomes when they do get sick.

## LIVE WELL @ WORK

The Live Well @ Work initiative supports employers in creating these healthy workplace environments to improve the health and well-being for employees throughout San Diego County. This is done by encouraging businesses to adopt evidence-based policies, systems and environmental (PSE) change strategies that promote healthy eating and active living. Live Well @ Work is a project of the County of San Diego Healthy Works program, implemented by UC San Diego Center for Community Health. This work supports the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision for a healthy, safe and thriving region.

## THE MEET WELL PLEDGE

- 1) Consists of the following key components: healthy food and beverage options, food waste, sustainability, and physical activity.
- 2) Can be applied to all internal and external meetings, trainings, and events.
- 3) Intends to assist staff in modeling healthy and sustainable choices.
- 4) Is not intended to dictate what individual staff members eat or bring into the office for personal consumption, rather is a voluntary effort to support healthier worksites where everyone can be healthy, safe, and thrive.



*"The Northgate Store Team Leaders and Human Resources staff were very receptive to the Healthy Meeting Policy as yet another way they can support and enrich the lives of associates. They were especially thankful at the clarity and simplicity of the policy as well as the clear and helpful tips on how to execute the policy successfully."*

### EVELYN GONZALEZ

EMPLOYEE WELLNESS PROGRAM SUPERVISOR,  
NORTHGATE GONZALEZ MARKETS





## FOOD AND BEVERAGES

Provide healthy food and beverage options at events, trainings, meetings, or other activities for employees and guests. Listed below are examples you can implement to create a healthier work environment related to food and beverages.

**Please note bold text are hyper-links that will take you to an online resource.**

### Breakfast Examples

Scrambled eggs  
Breakfast meats  
Fresh fruit  
Muffins/bagels  
Oatmeal with fixings such as raisins and nuts  
Assorted fresh fruit  
Assorted low fat yogurts  
In season fruit salad  
Assorted protein/snack bars  
Assorted milks  
Bagels with low fat/low sugar spread

**Smoothies with no/low added sugar resource**

**Roasted potatoes resource**

**Breakfast burrito and wrap resource**

**More breakfast choices resource**

### Snack Examples

Fruit (Fresh or dried)  
Nuts (Variety)  
Protein bar/energy bars  
Low fat yogurt  
String cheese  
Trail mix made of nuts

**Vegetables and hummus resource**

**More snack choices resource**

### Lunch Examples

Roasted chicken (As main dish or salad topper)  
Roasted sweet potatoes  
Side salad  
Wrap buffet (Chicken Caesar, classic club, and roasted vegetable)

**Quinoa salad resource**

**More lunch choices resource**

### Desserts and Sweets Examples

All-fruit cake/display  
Carrot cake  
Whipped cream puffs  
Chocolate covered strawberries  
Fondue table with fresh fruit  
Sherbet ice cream  
100% juice popsicles

**Fruit smoothies resource**

**More desserts and sweets choices resource**

### Beverage Examples

100% fruit juice with no added sugar Coconut  
Water with no/low added sugar Fresh water Fat-free or low fat milk

**Spa water (fruit infused water) resource**

**Fruit smoothies resource**

**More beverage choices resource**



## FOOD SAFETY

Making sure employees and guests are practicing food safety is vital to avoid risk of food borne illnesses and accidents in the workplace.

**Please note bold text are hyper-links that will take you to an online resource.**

### Food Safety Examples

Never pick meat in packaging that is torn or leaking or buy food past its expiration/sell-by date  
If sharp knives are accessible promote safe cutting practices such as providing a protective knife glove, encourage staff to wash hands and surfaces often, and make sure food such as raw meat is not stored above ready to eat items like salad  
If cooking is an option, post and promote correct temperature guide for food items

Refrigerate items that are perishable

**Food safety basics resource**







## SUSTAINABILITY

When ordering food, beverages, or service ware for events, meetings, or other activities within the workplace, it is important to incorporate sustainability. Sustainable foods are those that positively support health, the environment, and the economy.

**Please note bold text are hyper-links that will take you to an online resource.**

### Locally Sourced and In Season Food

When purchasing food, try and purchase from local companies/restaurants/farmers

Some examples include trying to use in season fruits and vegetables

**San Diego Harvest of the Month calendar resource**

### Food Packaging: Bulk Over Individual

Try to avoid purchasing individually wrapped items and instead purchase and use items that are bulk packaged or not packaged at all

### Service Ware

Reusable Service Ware: If allowable, stock your lunchroom or kitchen with reusable and washable plates, cups, utensils Compostable One Use Products Over Non-compostable: Use service ware such as plates, cups, or utensils that are labeled as compostable or biodegradable compared to traditional one use products that do not break down

Fresh Water Over Bottled: Avoid purchasing/using individual plastic bottled water and instead, provide fresh filtered water and use Live Well @ Work/ company reusable water bottles

**Compostable service ware examples resource**

### Order What You Need

Determine how many items are need by reviewing meeting attendee list or by asking employees

Try and purchase only the amount of food your employees need

Evaluate how much food is left over at each event and adjust for future events

**Tips to avoid food waste resource**

### Take What You Need

Encourage employees to only take food they will eat

If acceptable, partner with a local food bank and donate leftover food.

### Weekly Freezer Compost

Bring out during lunch time

Label allowable compostable items on top of bin

Promote and encourage compost use

Each week take the bin to a local community garden/compost

**Label allowable compostable items resource**

### Trash, Recycle, and Compost Options

Provide well labeled trash, recycle, and compost bin at events

Educate employees and attendees on how to use the bins

List acceptable items on each bin

**Labeled trash, recycle, and compost bin resource**

**Trash, compost, and recycle signs resource**



## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Incorporating activity at meetings or events is an important component to shift a sedentary culture at work and improve worker productivity.

**Please note bold text are hyper-links that will take you to an online resource.**

### Meeting Stand and Stretch Examples

Incorporate a stand and stretch routine into every meetings.

This can be as little as a 1 minute stand and stretch side to side exercise

Vary the routine by practicing a different type of stretch for each break

Try and use this type of break every 30-60 minutes

**[Sitting and Standing Stretch Break Resource](#)**

**[Standing Stretches Resource](#)**

### Meeting Walkabout Examples

Every 45-60 minutes ask meeting attendees to get up and walk around the meeting space and sit back down

### Interactive and Walking Meetings

For small to medium-sized meetings, consider an interactive meeting where attendees walk and talk

Interactive or walking meetings can take place within a meeting room or walking outside/within the building

### Moving for 5 Minutes Every 90 Minutes

Encourage leadership to communicate to employees the importance of taking a break from sitting at least every 90 minutes

### Guided Breaks for Events and Training

For medium to large-sized events/trainings, incorporate guided walking or activity breaks into the agenda

Take attendees on a guided walking route within the building or outside if weather allows for it

These breaks should be no longer than 15 minutes and should not be difficult or strenuous





## TOBACCO-FREE ENVIRONMENT

Providing a tobacco-free work environment is an important component to help reduce health risks for employees and visitors at your organization.

**Please note bold text are hyper-links that will take you to an online resource.**

### No Smoking Laws

Make sure employees and guests know the laws or policies pertaining to your organization and/or building. If employees or guests are smoking in prohibited areas, politely ask them to move to designated area. Make sure your organization's building or campus has proper signs indicating "no smoking."

**[California's Statewide Smoke-free Air Laws](#)**

**[Printable "No Smoking" signs in English and Spanish](#)**

### Helping Employees

When discussing rules, laws, or policies related to smoking, highlight any available organizational resources for helping employee quit smoking.

**[Handout 10 Tips to Quit Smoking in multiple languages](#)**

**[Refer employees to California Smokers' Helpline 1-800-No-BUTTS](#)**



## LACTATION ACCOMMODATION

Offering a designated clean, secure, comfortable, and private space (not a restroom) at trainings, conferences, workshops, and other events is important for new mothers at work.

**Please note bold text are hyper-links that will take you to an online resource.**

### Laws and Policies

Check to see if your organization has a lactation accommodation policy, and if not, create one

Make sure breastfeeding resources are available to new moms and dads

Provide training or information to managers and senior leadership on the benefits of breastfeeding moms

**Policy Example**

**Benefits of Breastfeeding**

### Meeting and Events Examples

Make sure to locate a designated lactation room for new moms who attend events or meetings

A lactation room should be a clean, secure, comfortable, and private space that is not a bathroom

Have a sign or placard that communicates a room or space is occupied

**New Mom Sign**

**Lactation Room Guide**







## References

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- 3 James, J. Health Affairs. Health Policy Briefs. Available at: [http://www.healthaffairs.org/healthpolicybriefs/brief.php?brief\\_id=86](http://www.healthaffairs.org/healthpolicybriefs/brief.php?brief_id=86).





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