

Food and drink guidance for event stallholders

A guide to provide nourishing food and drink at events

Health New Zealand
Te Whatu Ora

Contents

Why this is important	3
Practical tips for stallholders	4
Drink guidance for stallholders	5
Make plain water the main drink choice	5
Other drink ideas	5
Food guidance for stallholders	5
Food ideas	6

Why this is important

Food and drink are often an important part of community events. This resource supports stallholders to offer more nourishing food* and drink options at community events.

Food and drink commonly available at events are often high in added sugar,* saturated fat* and salt. In Aotearoa New Zealand, these options are already widely consumed as part of everyday diets.

By offering nourishing food and drink options, stallholders can help make these choices easier to access. Nourishing options can be drawn from many cultures and traditions, reflecting the communities taking part in the event and celebrating the diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand.

How this guidance is applied will vary between stalls depending on the food or drink offered. Even small changes can help make nourishing options more accessible and support the wellbeing of whānau and communities.

For terms marked with an asterisk (*), see Explanatory Notes.

Practical tips for stallholders

Even small changes can make a difference. Food stalls do not need to change everything. One or two adjustments can help create a more balanced food environment.*

Portion size tips

- ☐ Offer a range of portion sizes at different price points to better suit varying appetites (include regular or small portion options).
- ☐ Avoid low-cost upsizing or deals that promote larger portions or additional products high in salt / saturated fat/ and sugar (a small price increase for a much larger serve or addition of hot chips or fizzy drink).

Stall presentation and set-up

- ☐ Make sure nourishing options look appealing.

Food and drink placement

- ☐ Place more nourishing food and drink options at the front of the stall or at eye level.
- ☐ List nourishing options at the top of menu.

Incorporate legumes*

- ☐ Incorporate legumes* (such as beans, lentils or chickpeas) into dishes to offer nourishing options and help manage food costs.

Incorporate vegetables

- ☐ Pack vegetables in where possible in sandwiches, curries, spring rolls, dumplings, sapasui, wraps and burgers.

Pricing and marketing

- ☐ Price nourishing options the same or cheaper than less-nourishing options.
- ☐ Offer combo deals that include fruit or side salad.

Non-food incentives and giveaways

- ☐ Avoid using lollies, sugary food or ultra-processed food* as rewards.
- ☐ Better incentive ideas include:
  - reusable drink bottles
  - movie or aquatic centre vouchers
  - sports equipment prizes
  - games such as board games, puzzles or a pickleball set.

Drink guidance for stallholders

Make plain water the main drink choice

- Make water easy to see and access and offer refill stations where possible.
- Offer water as the cheapest or free option.
- Reduce the amount of sugar-sweetened beverages available.

Other drink ideas

Category	Instead of this	Try this
Soft drink, energy drink, sports drink, cordial, juice drink	• Drinks with added sugar* • Large servings	• Offer sparkling water or drinks with no added sugar in small sizes • Keep zero-sugar fizzy drinks small and don't promote them ahead of water
Juice (packaged or fresh pressed)	• Large servings • Juice with added sugar	• Offer small serves (e.g. 200ml) of 100% juice with no added sugar • Dilute with water where possible
Flavoured milk	• Large servings • Products with added sugar	• Choose flavoured milk lower in sugar, in smaller servings
Fresh made smoothies, milkshakes, frappes, bubble tea, milk tea, iced tea/coffee	• Large servings • Items with added sugar, syrups or whipped cream	• Offer smaller servings (e.g. less than 330ml) or a range of serving sizes • Sweeten with fruit (fresh, canned, frozen) instead of sugar • Make no added sugar the default option • Make the default option without whipped cream

Food guidance for stallholders

Aim for most options to be:

- cooked, grilled, baked or steamed instead of fried
- based on vegetables, fruit, grains, lean meat, eggs, beans or dairy
- lower in fat, added sugar and salt.

Food ideas

Instead of this	Try this
Hot savouries	
Large sausage, kransky or hot dogs (more than 150g) with white bread and butter and standard sauce	• Use sausages with a Health Star Rating* of at least 2 and less than 150g • Use wheatmeal bread with or without margarine • Include grilled onions and salad with reduced-sugar sauce options • Consider sausage and vegetable kebabs as an alternative
Pies or pastries with meat and cheesy creamy filling (bacon and egg, mince and cheese, butter chicken), sausage rolls	• Offer pies or sausage rolls with vegetable or lentil filling (chicken and vegetable), lentil pies • Offer a side salad • Offer smaller portion sizes (or a range of portion sizes)
Pizza with processed meat (bacon, salami, sausage) with no vegetables	• Offer thin-crust pizza (light on cheese) with vegetable toppings
Bread-based items	
Burgers, tacos, tortillas, pitas filled with deep-fried, heavily battered or crumbed meat/ fish or patties	• Grilled burger patties, chicken (no skin), lean steak, fish or bean patties • Add salad, pineapple or slaw
Toasted sandwiches with extra cheese, processed meat (salami, bacon, ham) or lots of standard/full-sugar sauce	• Toasted sandwiches with vegetables and lean protein-rich fillings (tomato, spinach, red onion, roast vegetables, pineapple, roast chicken or beef, edam cheese, falafel)
Large fry bread served with topping such as syrup, jam, processed meats, or cream based toppings	• Smaller fry bread with a thin layer or drizzle of sweet toppings, such as jam or golden syrup • Try sweet toppings such as berry compote, yoghurt and sliced banana • Try savoury toppings such as roast chicken, lean roast beef with gravy, pulled pork, panfried fish, mussel fritter or salad • If making creamed pāua replace some of the cream with milk, or evaporated milk. Serve with some fresh pūhā or watercress
Deep-fried food	
Large serves of deep-fried hot chips or potato products	• Offer smaller servings
Shoestring or loaded fries	• Use thicker-cut chips or wedges
Fried potato sides as the main option	• Loaded baked potatoes or kūmara with fillings (beans, mince/chicken, salad, salsa, corn reduced fat sour cream)
Deep-fried fish, chicken or meat	• Pacific-style plates with grilled fish, mussels or lean meat with fresh salads • Ika mata (raw fish salad) • Grilled chicken or meat with vegetables (onion, courgette, capsicum, mushroom) skewers
Deep-fried dumplings, spring rolls, wontons	• Steamed dumplings/buns • Fresh rice paper rolls

Instead of this	Try this
Meat and vegetable dishes	
Dishes mainly made up of processed meat (bacon, sausage, corned beef) or meat higher in saturated fat* (pork belly, mutton flaps) with limited vegetables	• Drain the fat before serving or cut visible fat off the meat • Bulk up dishes with vegetables (carrot, pumpkin, sweet corn, cabbage) • Discover delicious recipes using mutton flaps or pisupo/ canned corned beef in a healthier way • Hāngī or umu with plenty of vegetables, lean meat and smaller portions of fatty meat if offered
Large cream or coconut cream-heavy dishes (creamy pasta dishes, curries, palusami) or oversized portions	• Use less cream or coconut cream, or dilute it with water, stock, milk or plain yoghurt • Choose reduced-fat cream or coconut cream, or swap it for coconut milk or light coconut milk • Add extra vegetables, such as tomato, carrot, pumpkin, beans or legumes
Stir-fried rice/noodles or chop suey with processed meat or meats high in saturated fat*	• Bulk up with vegetables (extra cabbage, bok choy, carrots, mushrooms, broccoli, bean sprouts) • Choose lean meat, remove visible fat, drain excess fat when cooking
Sweets and baking	
Lolly bags, jelly cups or lolly and/or chocolate mixes	• Fresh fruit cups, fruit kebabs, chilled watermelon, chia seed pudding, yoghurt or custard with fruit cups, cheese and crackers, roast nuts, mini pretzels
Sugar-coated popcorn, caramel popcorn or salted snack mixes	• Popcorn (plain or lightly seasoned)
Ice cream sundaes or high-sugar desserts	• Fruit-based desserts (fruit salad with yoghurt, real fruit ice cream made with yoghurt, frozen juice, chilled pineapple or watermelon on a stick)
Large/oversized iced cakes, slices, donuts, sweet bakery items	• Smaller portions with fruit or wholegrains added (banana walnut bread, berry muffins, oat slices) – see Guidance on • improving bakery choices for catering

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