



Northern  
Territory  
Government

*Healthy* **choices**  
*made easy*



## Policy

**Healthy food and drink options  
for staff, volunteers and visitors,  
in NT Health facilities**



## Acknowledgements

This policy is drawn from and acknowledges the following documents:

- Healthy Food and Drink Choices Policy, ACT Health (2014)
- Healthy Food and Drink Choices for Staff and Visitors in SA Health Facilities, SA Dept of Health (2011)
- Healthy choices: food and drink guidelines for Victorian public hospitals, Department of Health (2010)
- Live Life Well@Health: Healthier Food and Drink Choices – Staff and Visitors in NSW Health Facilities (2009)
- Healthy options WA- Food and nutrition policy for WA Health Services and Facilities (amended April 2009)
- A Better Choice: Healthy Food and Drink Supply for Queensland Health Facilities (A Better Choice) Queensland Department of Health (2007)
- NSW Department of Health and NSW Department of Education and Training, Fresh Tastes@School NSW Healthy School Canteen Strategy (2004)



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## Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure consistency between the nutrition messages NT Health promotes to the community and the foods and drinks provided to staff, volunteers and visitors in all NT Health facilities.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly this policy provides direction and practical advice as to the supply, display and advertising of foods and drinks made available to staff, volunteers and visitors in all NT Health facilities.

## Policy statement

Healthy food and drink options are available in NT Health facilities at all times.

## Expected outcomes

The expected outcomes of the policy are:

- increased supply and marketing of healthy foods and drinks items provided or available for purchase at all times
- reduced supply and marketing of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and drinks provided or available for purchase at all times.

## Rationale

Promoting healthy nutrition across the life span and preventing and managing chronic disease is core business for NT Health. Results from the National Nutrition Survey<sup>1</sup> show that while many Australians consume excess amounts of energy, they are often not meeting their nutrient requirements. Findings also reveal high consumption of fat, salt and sugar and low consumption of fruit and vegetables.

High energy intake, coupled with low levels of physical activity, increases the risk of overweight and obesity. The proportion of overweight or obese adults has increased in Australia, going from 56.3% in 1995 to 61.2% in 2007–08 and reaching 63.4% in 2011.<sup>2,3</sup>

In the NT, high body mass index is responsible for 11.1% of the total burden of disease.<sup>4</sup> Preliminary results from the Australian Health Survey 2011-2013<sup>3</sup> show that at 62.4%, the proportion of NT adults who are overweight or obese is similar to the national rate. The survey also found that 56.1% of the participants had a waist measurement that placed them at increased risk of chronic disease.

A healthy diet is critical in maintaining healthy weight. It is therefore important for NT Health to provide an environment where healthy food and drink choices are available and encouraged.

## Principles

NT Health has a responsibility to be a role model and lead by example in creating environments that support and promote healthy nutrition.

This policy is underpinned by the [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#)<sup>5</sup>, which have been developed by the National Health and Medical Research Council and are based on the best evidence available (a summary of the Guidelines is provided in Appendix A).

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<sup>1</sup> Any building, office or location, including their grounds, managed by NT Health or where health activities are conducted (e.g. hospitals, offices, community care centres, remote health centres).



The provision of healthy foods and drinks, and information about healthy eating, should be consistent across all NT Health facilities.

The health and wellbeing of staff, volunteers and visitors comes before profit.

Compliance with this policy is expected in all NT Health facilities.

## Scope

This policy applies to all situations where food and drinks are made available, within NT Health facilities, to staff, volunteers and visitors, including:

- kiosks, cafés and coffee carts, tea/lolly trolleys
- staff dining rooms or canteens
- leased premises selling foods or drinks
- vending machines
- all fundraising activities conducted either by staff/volunteers or external organisations (e.g. charity boxes). This applies whether the fundraising is held on NT Health facilities or away from these facilities ( e.g. at a function, event or education session)
- rewards, incentives, gifts, prizes and give-aways (e.g. incentives for participation in immunisation programs or surveys)
- catering for work related meetings, events and functions or health education activities.

It does not apply to:

- the supply of inpatient and aged-care meals
- food and drinks brought from outside (that have not been paid with NT Government funds), and consumed on health premises.

## Definition of Food and Drink Categories

This policy uses a 'traffic light system' to categorise food and drink items according to their nutritional value. This system is similar to that used in government health facilities in other jurisdictions.

### GREEN or best choice items

**GREEN** foods and drinks provide a variety of nutrients and are generally low in saturated fat and/or added sugar and/or salt. Examples include: breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles; vegetables; fruit; reduced-fat milk, yoghurt and cheese; lean meats, fish, poultry, eggs, nuts and legumes. Water is also an important part of the **GREEN** category and should always be available free of charge (e.g. tap water, bubblers).

### AMBER or items to choose carefully

**AMBER** foods and drinks are mainly processed foods that contain considerable amounts of sugar, salt and/or saturated fat. They may still contain valuable nutrients. Examples include muesli bars, processed meat and some ready-to-serve meals.

### RED or items to limit

**RED** foods and drinks are energy-dense and lack nutritional value. They are defined by the [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#)<sup>5</sup> as foods that should be consumed 'only sometimes and in small amounts' foods. Examples include: soft drinks; high fat, high sodium (salt) snacks, such as crisps; lollies and chocolates; deep fried foods.



## Nutrition and Marketing Requirements

### Nutrition

- **GREEN** and **AMBER** foods and drinks should make up at least 80 per cent of all foods and drinks provided or available for sale at all times. Aiming for 50 per cent of **GREEN** items is strongly encouraged.
- **RED** foods and drinks should be limited to a maximum of 20 per cent of all foods and drinks provided or available for sale, at all times.<sup>2</sup>
- **RED** foods and drinks are not allowed when catering.<sup>3</sup>
- **RED** foods and drinks are not allowed in fundraising activities, rewards, incentives, gifts, prizes and give-aways (e.g. incentives for participation in immunisation programs or surveys).<sup>4</sup> Note that significant occasional fundraising events (such as the Biggest Morning Tea, or the Drover's Ball in Alice Springs) can be exempt from this requirement, at the discretion of Senior Executives.

### Marketing

- **GREEN** foods and drinks should be actively promoted at all times and displayed in prominent areas.
- **GREEN** foods and drink choices should be sold at competitive prices, where practicable.
- **AMBER** foods and drinks should be provided in the smallest serve size available.
- **AMBER** foods and drinks should not be promoted. This applies to:
  - advertising on cabinets, fridges, vending machines or menu boards
  - meal or point-of-sale promotions (i.e. 2 for 1)
  - any promotional materials that feature **AMBER** foods or drinks.
- **RED** foods and drinks should not be promoted. This applies to:
  - any advertising on cabinets, fridges, vending machines or menu boards
  - meal or point-of-sale promotions (i.e. 2 for 1)
  - any promotional materials that feature **RED** foods or drinks.
- **RED** foods and drinks should not be displayed in excessive quantities or in prominent areas:
  - beside cash registers, at eye level
  - at reception desks or counters in waiting areas
  - at the entrance or exit of an outlet.
- There should be no supersizing or 'combos' (e.g. snack and drink) of any items sold, unless they are classified as **GREEN**.

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<sup>2</sup> For ease of implementation and monitoring, it is recommended to group items under **meals** (includes salads, sandwiches, hot and cold dishes); **snacks and desserts** (includes fruit) or **drinks** (hot or cold). Thus each of these three categories should have a minimum of 80% GREEN and AMBER items, and no more than 20% of RED items.

<sup>3</sup> See the Catering guide for meetings, functions, events and health education activities.

<sup>4</sup> See the Healthy fundraising guide.



## Implementation and Monitoring

An implementation and monitoring strategy has been developed. Key implementation activities include:

- timely communication of the policy and supporting documents to all stakeholders
- establishment of facilities-based implementation committees to guide, support and monitor the implementation of the policy.
- integration of the policy into relevant activity-based funding agreements and tenders.

Performance indicators used for the monitoring will include:

- compliance with nutrition and marketing requirements (baseline versus data collected at 6 and 18 months following the implementation)
- actions undertaken to implement the policy
- feedback received from stakeholders.

The policy will be reviewed at eighteen months and three years from its implementation.

## Related Supporting Documentation

Title	Target Group
Quick guide to the <i>Healthy food and drink options in NT Health facilities policy</i>	Food outlets managers, members of the implementation committees, staff
Frequently asked questions	All staff, members of the implementation committees, food outlets managers
Catering guide for meetings, functions, events and health education activities	All staff, particularly those ordering or authorising catering
Foods and drinks guide	Food outlets managers, members of the implementation committees
Healthy fundraising guide	Food outlets managers, members of the implementation committees, staff
Healthy choices made easy (A4 posters)	Staff, volunteers and visitors

These documents are available on the Nutrition and Physical Activity internet page at

<https://health.nt.gov.au/professionals/nutrition-and-physical-activity>



## Appendix A : Australian Dietary Guidelines<sup>5</sup>

<p><b>Guideline 1</b></p>	<p>To achieve and maintain a healthy weight, be physically active and choose amounts of nutritious food and drinks to meet your energy needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Children and adolescents should eat sufficient nutritious foods to grow and develop normally. They should be physically active every day and their growth should be checked regularly.</li> <li>▪ Older people should eat nutritious foods and keep physically active to help maintain muscle strength and a healthy weight.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Guideline 2</b></p>	<p>Enjoy a wide variety of nutritious foods from these five groups every day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ plenty of vegetables, including different types and colours, and legumes/beans</li> <li>▪ fruit</li> <li>▪ grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain and/or high cereal fibre varieties, such as breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles, polenta, couscous, oats, quinoa and barley</li> <li>▪ lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu, nuts and seeds, and legumes/beans</li> <li>▪ milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or their alternatives, mostly reduced fat (reduced fat milks are not suitable for children under the age of 2 years).</li> </ul> <p>And drink plenty of water.</p>
<p><b>Guideline 3</b></p>	<p>Limit intake of foods containing saturated fat, added salt, added sugars and alcohol.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limit intake of foods high in saturated fat such as many biscuits, cakes, pastries, pies, processed meats, commercial burgers, pizza, fried foods, potato chips, crisps and other savoury snacks. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Replace high fat foods which contain predominantly saturated fats such as butter, cream, cooking margarine, coconut and palm oil with foods which contain predominantly polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats such as oils, spreads, nut butters/pastes and avocado.</li> <li>▪ Low fat diets are not suitable for children under the age of 2 years.</li> </ul> </li> <li>b. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added salt. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Read labels to choose lower sodium options among similar foods.</li> <li>▪ Do not add salt to foods in cooking or at the table.</li> </ul> </li> <li>c. Limit intake of foods and drinks containing added sugars such as confectionary, sugar-sweetened soft drinks and cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin waters, energy and sports drinks.</li> <li>d. If you choose to drink alcohol, limit intake. For women who are pregnant, planning a pregnancy or breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is the safest option.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Guideline 4</b></p>	<p>Encourage, support and promote breastfeeding.</p>
<p><b>Guideline 5</b></p>	<p>Care for your food; prepare and store it safely.</p>



## References

- (1) Australian Bureau of Statistics, Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care. National nutrition survey - Nutrient Intakes and Physical Measurements Australia 1995. [ABS Catalogue No 4805.0]. 1998. Canberra, Commonwealth of Australia.
- (2) Australian Bureau of Statistics. National Health Survey Summary of Results 2007-2008. [4362.0]. 2009. Canberra, Australian Bureau of Statistics.
- (3) ABS. Australian Health Survey: First Results, 2011-2012. [4364.0.55.001]. 2012. Canberra, ABS.
- (4) Zhao Y, You J, Guthridge S. Burden of disease and injury in the Northern Territory: 1999 - 2003. Darwin: Department of Health and Families; 2009.
- (5) National Health and Medical Research Council. Australian Dietary Guidelines. Available from: [http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/n55\\_australian\\_dietary\\_guidelines\\_0.pdf](http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/files/nhmrc/publications/attachments/n55_australian_dietary_guidelines_0.pdf). Last accessed: 25 Mar 2013

