



HEALTHY CHOICES

Food and Drinks Guide



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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This document will assist those supplying food and drinks at Council activities to ensure catering meets the recommendations of the Australian Dietary Guidelines.

We have compiled a comprehensive list of suggested food and drink options to ensure your next catered event or meeting is healthy, balanced and tasty! We have also included a number of foods and drinks that you must avoid where possible.

While we have compiled as comprehensive list as possible, it is not a definitive list and you may use other foods or drinks that would fit within the 'healthy suggestions'.

This guide will assist those supplying catering at Council activities to:

- Provide food and drink options that are nutritious and delicious.
- Reduce the supply of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods and drinks at community events, programs and activities, and meetings.
- Quickly and easily identify and select healthy choices when ordering catering for their next event or activity.
- Facilitate Council's commitment to support members of the community, staff and volunteers to make food and drink choices that positively impact their health and wellbeing.
- Support environmental sustainability by providing suggestions to manage and minimise food wastage and single use, catering utensils and equipment.

WHEN TO USE THIS GUIDE?

This document is to be used by anyone providing catering for public Council activities such as community programs, community events, award ceremonies and community advisory meetings.



WHY DO WE NEED THIS GUIDE?

City of Darwin is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of the community through the provision of healthy food and drink choices that encourage healthy behaviours. This is consistent with the messages promoted by Council's Healthy Darwin program, the Heart Foundation and NT Government Department of Health.

The evidence shows Cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death and disease burden in Australia, resulting in 30% of all deaths in 2014 (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare [AIHW], 2014)¹. According to the AIHW (2014), \$8 billion was spent on healthcare related to cardiovascular disease. Type 2 Diabetes is the fastest growing chronic condition in Australia. In 2014, 100,000 Australians developed Type 2 Diabetes, and it is expected to be the leading burden of disease in less than 5 years, over-taking cardiovascular disease (AIHW, 2014).

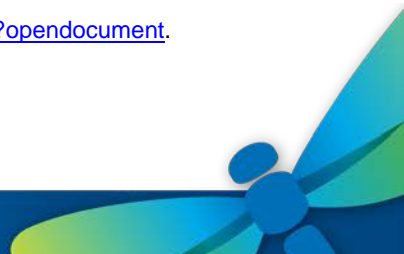
Prevalence of diet-related diseases is higher in regional and remote areas of Australia than urban, and statistics for the Darwin region support this. The age-standardised rate per 100,000 for deaths from diabetes is 17.0 for Darwin and 7.3 for Australia. Deaths from cardiovascular disease are 70.0 per 100,000 in Darwin compared to 59.2 for Australia-wide (Australian Health Policy Collaboration [AHPC], 2016)². Furthermore, statistics are even higher for Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander populations, with hospitalisation rates for cardiovascular disease being twice as high as non-Indigenous Australians, and deaths 30% higher.

Obesity or being overweight are major contributors to these and other chronic conditions, and can be modified through a eating healthy and drinks and physical activity. In Australia, over half of the population is either overweight or obese (62.8%), increasing by 5% from 1995 to 2007-08 (Australian Bureau of Statistics

¹ AIHW 2014, 'Leading types of ill health', AIHW, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/australias-health/2014/ill-health/#t10>

² AHPC 2016, 'Australia's Health Tracker by Area, 2016', AHPC, <http://www.atlasesaustralia.com.au/ahpc/aust-health-tracker-area.html>.

³ ABS 2013, 'Overweight and Obesity', ABS, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/lookup/33C64022ABB5ECD5CA257B8200179437?opendocument>.



[ABS], 2013)³. In the Darwin region in 2016, the age standardised rate per 100 people is 61.7; meaning over half of the population is either overweight or obese.

Eating healthy, nutritious foods and being physically active are essential to prevent, and manage lifestyle related diseases.



You must provide healthy food and drinks options at all public Council functions, activities, events and meetings.

The following tips and catering menu options will guide you to achieve this.

GETTING STARTED

Determine the need to provide catering.

- Consider the time of day and length of the meeting or activity.
- If a meeting or activity is under 1.5 hours you should only supply water, tea and coffee.
- If outside of meal times, only provide a healthy snack such as fruit or consider whether snacks are required at all.
- If within meal times such as lunch and dinner, consider if you need a full meal or a light meal?

Consider special dietary requirements.

- Are there gluten and/or lactose free options?
- Are there vegetarian and/or vegan options?
- Have you considered any cultural backgrounds?
- Have you asked your caterer to label the foods on the platter?

WATER IT DOWN
Always have tap water available

FOOD WASTE AND SUSTAINABILITY

“Developed nations waste over 220 billion tonnes of food annually” – (United Nations Regional Information Centre [UNRIC, 2016])². Here are some important tips to use when arranging catering.

- Determine the number of people who will be eating at the event. Confirm numbers prior to booking and only order for the expected number of attendees.
- Provide, or ask your caterer to use reusable/recyclable tableware (such as platters) and eating utensils or recycled or biodegradable products such as napkins or cups.

² UNRIC 2016, ‘One third of all food wasted!’, UNRIC, <http://www.unric.org/en/food-waste/27133-one-third-of-all-food-wasted>

- Farm animals – staff with farm or domestic animals can use leftovers to feed them. Ask around your office to see if anyone is interested.
- Contact Food Bank or a similar program to discuss if they can pick up any left-over food from events.
- Compost – utilise left-over foods in your own garden.

JUST ENOUGH FOOD

Always confirm numbers, and only order enough for the intended amount of guests.

FOOD SAFETY

Did you know food poisoning is one of the most common illnesses in Australia? If you are providing catering you must ensure you keep your food safe. For regulations, information and advice go to:

Northern Territory Government - Food Safety and Regulations

<https://nt.gov.au/industry/hospitality/food-safety-and-regulations>

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand

<http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>



How to read a Nutrition Information Panel (NIP)

If purchasing food from the supermarket, it can be confusing to decide which product is healthier. Here are some simple tips to follow when reading the (NIP) labelling on packaged products to assist you to choose the healthier option.

This example is from a 25g pack of pretzels.

Nutrition Information

	Per Serve (25g)	Per 100g
Energy	451kj	1800kj
Protein	2.5g	10.0g
Fat - Total	2.1g	8.5g
- Saturated	0.6g	2.2g
Carbohydrate - Total	19.1g	76.4g
- Sugars	2.7g	10.7g
Dietary Fibre	0.7g	2.8g
Sodium	140mg	559mg
Potassium	42mg	167mg

Ingredients: Wheat Flour, Vegetable Oil, Glucose (corn), Salt.

Ingredients are listed from largest to smallest quantity

Less than 3g per 100g saturated fat

Less than 10g total fat per 100g

Less than 10g sugar per 100g. Identify added sugar from ingredients list

More than 3g fibre per 100g

Less than 400mg sodium (salt) per 100g

Be aware of food claims such as:

No added sugar – No simple sugars have been added. However, the product may contain natural sugars (eg. fruit sugars, milk sugars). Read label carefully for sugar content and serving size.

Toasted/Oven Baked – Generally means the product has been cooked in oil or fat. Watch the fat content.

Lite/Light – May describe taste, colour or texture as well as referring to being lower in fat or salt. Read the label carefully.

Reduced Fat – The product is lower in fat than the usual product, but may still be high in fat and often has added salt and sugar for taste.

Low Fat – Products labelled low fat are a better choice and should be less than 3g fat per 100g food.

All Natural – Sugar, oil, fat and cream are all natural but not good for our health. Read labels carefully.

Salt Reduced – Have less than the usual product. Use caution, they may still be high salt.

Low Salt – Must contain less than 120mg sodium per 100g food. This is a good choice if you have high blood pressure. “No Salt” or “Salt Free” products are the best choice.

(State Government of Victoria; Federal Department of Health, 2013)

CHECKLIST

- Have you considered special dietary requirements?
- Have you ensured that you are not supplying sugary drinks or confectionary to children?
- Have you used moderate amounts of lean meats, skinless poultry and/or fish.
- Have you included fresh fruit, vegetables and legumes (local and in-season where possible)?
- Have you included a variety of grain-based foods (preferable wholemeal or wholegrain)?
- Have you used reduced-fat dairy products and only small amounts of cheese?
- Have you used unsalted, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated spread?
- Do you have drinking water available?
- Have you considered reusable or recyclable tableware and eating utensils?



CHOOSING DRINKS FOR YOUR EVENT

Start with a basic selection such as tea, coffee and water.

You can add variety by providing a wider range of tea, coffee and sparkling water.

If you feel that the event is long, or involves physical exercise, you may consider adding 100% fruit juice and smoothies to the beverage selection.

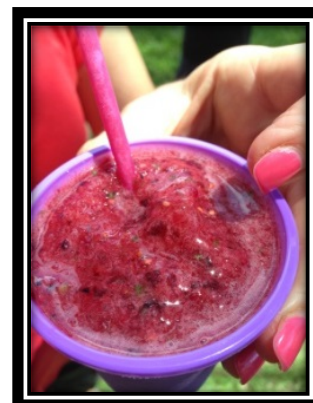


DRINKS	
HEALTHY SUGGESTIONS	AVOID WHERE POSSIBLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Water (tap and sparkling) ✓ Tea (including herbal and decaffeinated) ✓ Coffee (including decaffeinated) ✓ 100% fruit juice (150ml per person) ✓ Low fat milk (full cream milk for children under 2yrs) ✓ Fruit smoothies – low fat milk and yoghurt preferred (unless children under 2yrs) ✓ Fruit slushy – fruit blended with ice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Soft drinks (including diet soft drinks if catering for children) ✗ Flavoured water – eg. vitamin water ✗ Cordial ✗ Sports waters ✗ Energy drinks ✗ Fruit juice with less than 99% fruit juice ✗ Fruit drinks (including poppers)

SUGAR AND CHILDREN DON'T MIX
Never supply sugary drinks or confectionary to children.

ALCOHOL (if provided)

- ✓ Serve as a [standard drink size](#)
- ✓ Provide low alcohol or alcohol-free alternatives
- ✓ Provide tap water
- ✓ Provide food
- ✓ Not to be served at events where under 18s are present.

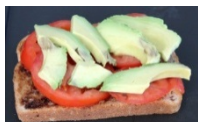




BREAKFAST

Breakfast kick-starts our metabolism and provides energy for the day! A healthy breakfast is vital to stabilising blood sugar levels, reducing over-eating later in the day and improving concentration.

BREAKFAST	
HEALTHY SUGGESTIONS	AVOID WHERE POSSIBLE
<p>Light Breakfast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wholegrain biscuits ✓ Fruit – fresh, dried, frozen ✓ Fruit smoothies – low fat milk and yoghurt ✓ Small savoury scones and muffins ✓ Wholegrain, wholemeal, multigrain or rye rolls and bagels ✓ Wholemeal or multigrain english muffins, pikelets, small pancakes ✓ Low fat milk and/or low fat natural yoghurt 	<p>Light Breakfast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Pastries - eg. croissants, danishes ✗ Crumpets ✗ Raisin and fruit breads ✗ Savoury pull-aparts and twists ✗ White bread products ✗ Cakes, sweet muffins and scrolls ✗ Hot cross buns ✗ Any icing or confectionery ✗ Full-cream milk and yoghurts, creams or custards (unless for children under 2yrs).
<p>Toppings and Spreads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 100% spreadable fruit ✓ Fruit or vegetables – eg. banana, avocado ✓ Tahini or hummus ✓ Vegemite or similar ✓ Peanut butter ✓ Chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds ✓ Baked beans – salt-reduced ✓ Ricotta cheese ✓ Unsalted, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated spread 	<p>Toppings and Spreads</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Chocolate-based spreads ✗ High sugar fruit spreads eg. jams, jellies ✗ Honey or syrups – eg. maple ✗ Full fat butter, oils and margarine
	<p align="center">HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES Choose reduced-fat dairy options, and only small amounts of cheese.</p>
<p>Sit Down Meal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wholegrain cereals - eg. puffed rice, puffed wheat, flakes ✓ Porridge (rolled oats) ✓ Natural muesli/granola ✓ Eggs – scrambled, poached, boiled or as an omelette or frittata ✓ Lean reduced-fat, reduced-salt ham or grilled bacon or sausages ✓ Grilled/baked vegetables – eg. tomato, mushroom, spinach ✓ Baked beans – salt reduced 	<p>Sit Down Meal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Flavoured or sweetened cereals with added sugars ✗ Toasted muesli and muesli bars ✗ Fried foods – eg. eggs, bacon, hash browns ✗ Full-fat meat products – eg. bacon, sausages ✗ Pancakes and crepes made with plain flour ✗ Full fat sauces eg. Hollandaise



FRUIT, VEGGIES AND LEGUMES
Have plenty of in-season and local fruit, vegetables and legumes in your catering selections.



MORNING AND AFTERNOON TEA

If you are holding a meeting or activity for over 1.5hrs you may want to offer a healthy snack. Meetings or activities that last over 1.5hrs and are crossing over into lunch or dinner may instead require a light meal from the finger food selection.

CHECK FOR SALT AND SUGAR
 Canned and frozen fruit and vegetables can be nutritious and appropriate. Always check for added sodium and sugars.

MORNING AND AFTERNOON TEA	
HEALTHY SUGGESTIONS	AVOID WHERE POSSIBLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fruit platter or fruit kebabs ✓ Low fat, reduced-salt cheese (full cream for children under 2yrs) ✓ Vegetable sticks – eg carrot, celery, cucumber, capsicum ✓ Vegetable or legume based dips eg hummus, guacamole, tzatziki ✓ Fresh or dried fruit ✓ Unsalted nuts ✓ Drained olives ✓ Wholegrain, multigrain or plain water crackers, pita bread, bread sticks ✓ Small savoury scones and muffins – eg pumpkin, chia seed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Potato crisps/chips ✗ Salted, roasted nuts ✗ Cream-based dips eg. french onion/ aioli ✗ Confectionery - eg. chocolate, lollies ✗ Cakes, muffins, slices, pastries, tarts, éclairs or doughnuts ✗ Sweet biscuits – eg. plain, iced, cream-filled, chocolate-coated, fruit filled ✗ Macaroons



FINGER FOOD

FINGER FOOD – PLATTERS & SANDWICHES

HEALTHY SUGGESTIONS

- ✓ Any items from the morning and afternoon tea list
- ✓ Sushi or rice paper rolls
- ✓ Grilled vegetables – eg. zucchini, sweet potato, eggplant, capsicum, tomato, mushroom, asparagus
- ✓ Vegetable patties - eg. lentil, chickpea
- ✓ Lean meats – eg. skinless chicken, roast meats, turkey breast
- ✓ Meatballs – eg. lean pork, lamb or beef, skinless chicken or fish
- ✓ Roast vegetable frittata
- ✓ Mini quiches
- ✓ Pizza with lean meat, vegetable toppings and low-fat cheese

Wrap/Breads

- ✓ Wraps, pita breads and thin flatbreads
- ✓ Wholegrain, wholemeal, rye or high-fibre white bread, rolls and bagels

Fillings & Spreads

- ✓ Grilled vegetables – eg. zucchini, capsicum, mushrooms, eggplant, pumpkin, sweet potato
- ✓ Fish – eg. salmon, tuna, sardines.
- ✓ Lean meats – skinless chicken, lean ham, roast meats, turkey breast
- ✓ Falafel
- ✓ Egg – boiled or curried
- ✓ Salad/vegetables – eg lettuce, tomato, avocado, cucumber, carrot, cabbage, onion, beetroot
- ✓ Low fat, reduced-salt cheese (full cream for children under 2yrs)
- ✓ Vegemite
- ✓ Tahini or hummus
- ✓ Avocado or low fat guacamole
- ✓ Wholegrain or dijon mustard
- ✓ Chutney or salsa
- ✓ Ricotta or cottage cheese
- ✓ Fresh fruit – eg banana, strawberry
- ✓ Unsalted, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated spread

AVOID WHERE POSSIBLE

- ✗ Any item from morning and afternoon tea list
- ✗ High fat processed meats – eg. salami, strasburg, bacon, pastrami, mortadella, processed meatloaf
- ✗ Pastries – eg. pies, pasties, sausage rolls, croissants
- ✗ Hot chips
- ✗ Pizza with high fat toppings – eg. processed meats, full-fat cheese
- ✗ Deep fried or crumbed foods – eg. rice balls, spring rolls, prawn toast, calamari rings
- ✗ Full-fat cream-based sauces

Wrap/Breads

- ✗ White bread, rolls, baguettes, bagels or english muffins
- ✗ Large portions of bread

Fillings & Spreads

- ✗ High fat, processed meats – eg. salami, strasburg, bacon, pastrami, processed meatloaf
- ✗ Crumbed and deep fried meat – eg. schnitzel
- ✗ Large serves of meat, or meat and cheese together
- ✗ Spreadable meats – eg corned beef from tin
- ✗ Full-fat cheese (unless for children under 2yrs)
- ✗ Cream cheeses
- ✗ Soft cheeses
- ✗ Jams
- ✗ Honey mustard
- ✗ Mayonnaise and mayonnaise-based spreads – eg. aioli, chipotle, tartar
- ✗ Full fat butter, margarine, oils or sauces

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

Swap fried food for grilled.

HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES

Select wholegrain or wholemeal bread, crackers, pasta, noodles or rice.





MEALS

Providing a meal at meetings or events is an important opportunity to make connections, to share conversation and ideas. Here are some suggestions to make them healthier.

MEALS - SALADS AND BARBEQUES	
HEALTHY SUGGESTIONS	AVOID WHERE POSSIBLE
<p>Salads and Barbeques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Always serve salad or vegetables ✓ BBQ Vegetables – eg eggplant, zucchini, asparagus, mushroom, tomato, onion – individual or on a skewer ✓ Corn on the cob ✓ Baked potato with low-fat toppings – eg. reduced-fat cheese or yoghurt, spinach, tomato, corn, tuna, chives ✓ Green salad – eg. lettuce, tomato, onion, cucumber, capsicum, carrot ✓ Grains/legume salad – eg. couscous, lentils, rice, barley, quinoa ✓ Reduced-fat, reduced-salt sausages – (Kangaroo are lowest in fat) ✓ Lean meats – eg. steak, kangaroo, chicken breast (individual pieces or on a skewer) ✓ Lean burger patties ✓ Vegetable patties and sausages – eg. lentil, chickpea, falafel, soybean 	<p>Salads and Barbeques</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ More than half the meal is meat ✗ Full-fat sausages ✗ Full-fat Rissoles or burgers ✗ Meat with visible fat ✗ Bacon
	<p>HEALTHY ALTERNATIVES Swap salt and dressings for herbs and spices such as garlic, chilli, basil, coriander, lemon or lime juice.</p>
<p>Dressings and Sauces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Vinaigrettes or low fat olive oil-based dressings – eg. Balsamic, Italian, Catalina/French ✓ Lemon/lime juice ✓ Asian water-based dressings – soy sauce/tamari, sesame and ginger ✓ Wholegrain or Dijon mustard ✓ Fresh/dried herbs and spices eg. chilli, garlic, pepper ✓ Tahini or hummus ✓ Reduced-salt, reduced-sugar and/or reduced-fat classic sauces – eg. tomato, BBQ, mustard ✓ Low-fat sour cream based dressing ✓ Avocado or low fat guacamole ✓ Chutney or salsa 	<p>Dressings and Sauces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Full-fat dressing and sauces – eg. mayonnaise, aioli, ranch, chipotle, caesar, thousand Island, russian, louis ✗ High-sugar dressings – eg. honey mustard, sweet chilli, balsamic or maple glazes ✗ Honey mustard ✗ Mayonnaise and mayonnaise-based spreads – eg. aioli, chipotle, tartar ✗ Full fat butter, margarine, oils or sauces
	<p>DRESSING ON THE SIDE Serve dressings and sauces on the side.</p>



MEALS - SIT DOWN/HOT OPTIONS

HEALTHY SUGGESTIONS

AVOID WHERE POSSIBLE

Casseroles, stews and curries

- ✓ Vegetable-based or clear-based sauces or gravy or salt-reduced stock
- ✓ Variety of vegetables – eg. potato, carrot, sweet potato, parsnip, turnip, zucchini, broccoli, beans, tomato, onion, mushroom, lentils
- ✓ Lean meat – eg. beef, chicken, fish
- ✓ Serve with steamed brown rice or baked/mashed potato and steamed vegetables or salad

Casseroles, stews and curries

- ✗ Cream-based sauce and gravy, dairy and coconut cream, butter, ghee.
- ✗ High fat, processed meats – fat not trimmed
- ✗ More than half of the meal is meat

MODERATE AND LEAN

Use moderate amounts of lean meats, skinless poultry and/or fish.

Pasta and Pasta-Bakes

- ✓ Tomato or vegetable-based pasta sauces
- ✓ Lean meat and mince – eg. beef, veal and pork, fat-reduced bacon
- ✓ Seafood in spring water – eg. tinned tuna, sardines, salmon, mussels
- ✓ Variety of fresh vegetables
- ✓ Wholemeal or multi-coloured pasta
- ✓ Light, reduced-salt cheddar or parmesan cheese – finely grated (full cream cheese for children under 2yrs)
- ✓ Serve with steamed vegetables or salad

Pasta and Pasta-Bakes

- ✗ Cream-based sauces – eg. alfredo, carbonara, creamy pasta-bake
- ✗ Processed meats – eg. full-fat bacon, salami, processed meatloaf
- ✗ More than half of the meal is meat



Roast Dinner

- ✓ Lean meat with fat trimmed – eg. pork, beef, chicken, veal, fish
- ✓ Variety of vegetables – eg. potato, carrots, peas, corn, pumpkin, broccoli
- ✓ Serve with low sugar chutney, pickles, mustard or homemade gravy

Roast Dinner

- ✗ More than half of the meal is meat
- ✗ High-fat meats, fat not trimmed
- ✗ Cream-based sauces – eg. white sauce, hollandaise

Asian Stir-Fries or Rice/Noodle Dishes

- ✓ Lean meats and mince – eg. beef, chicken, kangaroo, pork
- ✓ Variety of Asian vegetables – eg. onions, ginger, bok choy, carrot, celery, okra, eggplant, broccoli, cabbage, capsicum, snow peas
- ✓ Low-salt soy sauce/tamari, lemon juice, stock/broth, rice wine vinegar, sesame oil, corn-starch based stir fry sauce
- ✓ Serve with steamed brown or white rice, quinoa or plain noodles

Asian Stir-Fries or Rice/Noodle Dishes

- ✗ More than half of the meal is meat
- ✗ High-fat meats, fat not trimmed
- ✗ Packet-based sauces
- ✗ Served with fried rice or fried noodles



GLOSSARY

- Falafel** - Vegetarian/vegan ball of ground chickpeas, fava beans or both
- Ghee** - Clarified butter used in Indian, Asian and Middle Eastern cooking
- Granola** – Combination of rolled oats, nuts, honey and sugars toasted till brown
- Monounsaturated Margarine** – Made from one unsaturated chemical bond
- Mortadella** – Large Italian sausage made from ground, heat-cured pork
- Okra** – Green plant of the mallow family with long ridged seed pods
- Pâté** – Spreadable meat paste made from liver and offcuts from various meats
- Pikelets** – Small, round thick pancake
- Polyunsaturated Margarine** – Made from many unsaturated chemical bonds
- Quinoa** – An ancient grain where its starchy, grain-like seeds are eaten
- Strasburg** – Spreadable meat made of ground pork and beef
- Tahini** – Toasted sesame seeds ground into a spread
- Tamari** – Japanese-style soy sauce that is lesser in salt and thicker in consistency

OTHER USEFUL RESOURCES

Healthy Catering Guides:

A Healthier Serve - The Heart Foundation's Guide to Healthier Catering

<https://www.heartfoundation.org.au/images/uploads/publications/Healthier-Serve.pdf>

Northern Territory Government - Healthy Choices Made Easy

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

Healthy Eating Advice:

Australian Government – Australian Dietary Guidelines

<https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au>

Live Lighter

<https://livelighter.com.au>

