



## Health Matters Well-Being Toolkit: Healthy Meetings

*Energize long meetings with a few simple swaps!*

### WHY MAKE TRY TO PLAN A HEALTHIER MEETING?

Incorporating healthier meeting practices helps create a supportive environment by making the healthy choice, the easy choice. Prioritizing healthy initiatives sends the message that employees are valued, and their well-being is important. The tips and ideas in this toolkit can be used for meetings that range from small department breakouts to multi-day conferences. Remember that progress is better than perfection! Start with one or two simple changes and add a few more healthy techniques each time you plan a meeting.

### OFFER HEALTHY FOOD AND BEVERAGE CHOICES

Meetings that turn into junk food fest can be counterproductive and leave participants feeling lethargic. Offering nutritious food and beverages supports sustained energy and brain power.

- Offer only unsweetened beverages like water, coffee, and hot or cold tea. If you want to serve something fizzy, try unsweetened sparkling water.
- Skip the candy on the tables because it tends to be a mindless distraction for participants. If you still want to provide something, try sugarless gum or mints.
- Provide snacks like a PRO! Avoid a post-snack sugar crash by offering a snack made of PROduce and PROtein. Try apple slices and string cheese or veggie sticks with hummus.
- Less is more. Studies show that we eat more when more options are offered, even if we are not hungry. Keep food simple and healthy by offering just a couple choices.

### BUILD IN MOVEMENT

Physical activity boosts creativity and productivity. Building it into long meetings helps keep participants energized, focused, and in a good mood!

- Scout the meeting location ahead of time and identify some walking routes that participants could use during breaks and breakout sessions. Go above and beyond by creating a simple map
- If applicable, allow a casual dress code that encourages participants to wear comfortable clothes and shoes they can move in.
- Communicate from the beginning of the meeting that it is acceptable (and encouraged) for people to stand whenever they want to throughout the day.

- Have participants change seats periodically throughout the meeting. If it is an all-day meeting, they can change seats at each break time. A new seat will provide a new perspective!
- Make moving breakouts. Instead of seated breakout sessions, encourage small groups to walk and talk the topic at hand.

---

*A good rule of thumb is to schedule one, 10-minute activity break for every 2 hours of meeting time.*

---

## MINIMIZE WASTE

Healthy meeting practices can minimize the negative impact that meetings and conferences can have on the environment and save money in agency budgets – which is good for all of us!

- Encourage everyone to bring their own reusable water bottle and coffee cups to cut down on plastic bottle and cup waste. Provide water and other beverages in large dispensers or pitchers. *If you do offer plastic water bottles, encourage people to just take one and refill it throughout the day.*
- Buy larger items to avoid offering individually packaged items. For example, instead of providing individual coffee creamers buy one recyclable container of milk/cream for the group.
- Reduce or eliminate printed materials by providing handouts on a flash drive or sending a link to a shared drive.
- Have recycling bins easily available. If bins are not available in your meeting space, collect the recyclable materials throughout the day and take it somewhere it can be recycled.

## MISC. TIPS

- Be present and limit distractions by only allowing the use of cell phones (*except for emergencies*) during designated breaks.
- Start the meeting and come back together after breaks with a mindful moment. Encourage everyone to take three deep breaths and take a moment to refocus on the next topic.
- Infuse some fun into your meeting agenda by [inviting Health Matters](#) to present a wellness-related presentation that can be customized to your group!

---

*A few small changes to your meetings can result in your participants leaving energized, not drained!*

---

## RESOURCES

- [Guidance for Meetings and Events](#) – American Heart Association
- [Guidelines for Healthy and Energized Meetings](#) – State of Illinois
- [Healthy Meeting Toolkit](#) – National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity
- [Offering Healthier Options and Physical Activity at Workplace Meetings and Events](#) – CDC