

The ASTHO healthy food policy is intended to help guide the healthiest possible catering and food choices at an ASTHO sponsored function or meeting. The following recommendations are not intended to act as strict guidelines, but should assist ASTHO staff in thinking more holistically about various dietary preferences when planning meals. ASTHO will only hold meetings or events at facilities that agree to abide by our healthy food policy. All events and meetings sponsored or supported by ASTHO will try to cater to a variety of dietary needs. Whenever possible, menu labeling will be employed. ASTHO will strive to meet any special dietary needs as identified by participants and will use the following seven dietary options as examples to facilitate choice.

1. Gluten Free: A gluten free diet is defined as the avoidance of foods containing gluten. Gluten is found in wheat, rye, barley, spelt, kamut, and triticale. Processed foods containing these ingredients include: breads, cereals, pastas, baked goods, convenience items, condiments, and beverages. Many foods contain hidden gluten therefore, reading labels are the most reliable way to find gluten in processed foods.

2. Vegetarian: A vegetarian diet does not include meat, fish, or poultry. For vegetarian meal options, it is important to include a source of healthy protein for vegetarians such as tofu, beans, and nuts.

3. Vegan: In addition to vegetarian restrictions (no meat, fish, or poultry), a vegan diet also excludes ALL animal products, including milk, cheese, butter, eggs, and honey.

4. Low-Fat: A low fat diet includes whole grains, fruits and vegetables, lean meats, and foods that are cooked using healthy cooking methods (broiled, baked, grilled, boiled).

5. Low/Appropriate Carbohydrate: Carbohydrate foods (carbs) consist of grains, dairy products, fruits, vegetables, legumes (beans and peas), sugars, and sweets. This diet minimizes foods that contain carbs, while proteins, such as meat, poultry, fish, cheese, nuts, eggs, and non-starchy vegetables make up the majority of the diet.

6. Low Sodium: A low sodium diet, as defined by The American Heart Association, restricts sodium intake to 1500 milligrams of sodium per day (less than 1 tablespoon of salt). Avoidance of added salt is achieved by minimizing intake of processed foods, and maximizing intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and non-processed proteins. Fresh herbs and spices are used to enhance flavor.

7. Diabetic: A diabetic diet is essentially a low fat/ low sodium diet, with the addition of portioned and patterned consumption of carbohydrate foods. Foods containing carbohydrates, including grains, fruit, dairy, and sweets, are eaten in moderation throughout the day to promote blood sugar regulation.

Religious Considerations:

If identified by meeting participations, ASTHO will make every effort to comply with religious dietary restrictions.

Beverages:

It is important to be mindful of calorie consumption when drinking beverages. Liquid calories add up quickly without satiating hunger. Water, 100% fruit juice, 100% vegetable juice, diet sodas, coffee, herbal teas, and skim milk are all healthier beverage choices.

General Guidelines for ASTHO meetings should include:

- Serve lower-calorie and lower-fat foods
- Serve low sodium foods
- Serve fruits and vegetables whenever possible
- Serve small portions (e.g. cut bagels in halves or quarters, etc.)
- Include a vegetarian option, including a vegetarian protein source, at all meals
- Eliminate high fat, high sugar, high sodium and low fiber items at meetings, such as:
 - Cakes, donuts, pastries, cookies, regular muffins
 - Sugar sweetened beverages
 - Chips
 - Fried foods
 - Cream-based sauces and soups

Additional Resources:

ASTHO staff identified the need for additional resources to help plan appropriate and healthy meals when ordering food. A sample food guide for each identified dietary type was created and is available for all staff. Additionally, tips on how to work with caterers to fit our ASTHO healthy food policy, as well as a healthy meeting checklist is available for all staff.

Rationale:

In the United States, the annual cost of obesity to business for insurance, paid sick leave and other payments is \$12.7 billion. Direct medical costs account for approximately \$51.6 billion and lost productivity approximately \$3.9 billion. Medical evidence reflects that the nation's top killers, heart disease, cancer, and stroke, are affected to a great extent by what we eat. To encourage a healthy lifestyle among their staff, many state public health agencies have implemented healthy food policies. To demonstrate alignment with these health promotion initiatives, ASTHO has adopted a healthy food policy which may be used as a model for public health organizations and others to promote healthy eating habits among their personnel and meeting participants. ASTHO is committed to the well-being of its employees and meeting attendees. By adopting a healthy food policy and following its recommendations, ASTHO will help give meeting attendees a variety of food choices that are healthy.