

HEALTHY NUTRITION GUIDELINES — SODIUM REDUCTIONWASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Million Hearts in Action

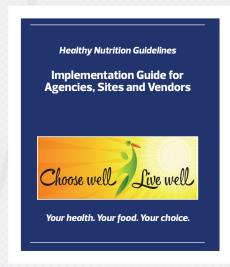
[Strategies for Achieving Million Hearts Goals]



In October 2013, Washington's governor signed an executive order to improve access to healthy foods by requiring agencies to adopt and follow set nutrition guidelines to increase "the health and productivity of state employees." It was the culmination of four years of collaboration among the American Heart Association, Childhood Obesity Prevention Coalition, the state Department of Health (DOH) and other health advocates. The DOH and a multi-agency, public-private work group, with funding from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), wrote the Healthy Nutrition Guidelines criteria for state cafeterias, cafés, on-site retail venues, vending machines, meetings and events, and institutional food service. Thanks to the work group, the guidelines were nearly complete when the executive order was signed. A critical element in the criteria is minimizing the number of processed foods, which are often high in sodium, and reducing salt in available foods. The guidelines are expected to be fully implemented by December 2016.

Fast Facts

- Based on CDC telephone health surveys from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), 28.5 percent of Washington's population has high blood pressure. Hypertension rates in Thurston County, at 32.3 percent, are higher than the state average. The county is home to Olympia, the capitol of Washington and to the majority of state agencies.
- About 75 percent of the sodium we eat comes from restaurants and processed foods. Sodium holds excess fluid in the body, creating an added burden to the heart and also increasing risk for high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke.
- Washington's guidelines have the potential to directly affect nearly 40
 executive state agencies that employ 51,230 people. The guidelines also could
 impact the hundreds of visitors a year to state facilities.
- Here is a link to the state executive order to improve access to healthy food: http://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/exe_order/eo_13-06.pdf



What We Did

- We brought together a large cross-section of representatives, from the American Heart Association to the state Department of Corrections, to help guide the creation of the guidelines.
- The DOH is working with six cafeteria operators who run 9 on-site food service operations, including cafeterias and coffee stands. We also will work with about 30 or more vending machine operators to create healthier food choices and work language into renegotiated contracts that support the Healthy Nutrition Guidelines.
- We contracted with the Washington State University extension service to help train cafeteria operators about behavioral economic strategies the basics of how to place food and organize eating areas to make healthier food the easier and more noticeable and attractive choice. That could mean, for example, placing fresh fruit in several places around the cafeteria and making salad or soup a default side item instead of fries.

• In the area of vending machines, the guidelines set parameters on the amounts of different types of foods that should be available. At least 50 percent of vending options must meet the nutrition criteria such as fat and sugar listed in the Healthier and Healthiest categories. For sodium, the "healthiest" choices should have no more than 150 mg per package, while "healthier" have no more than 360 mg per package. A final "limited" category of least healthy foods included those high in sodium, sugar, fat and refined grains. The guidelines encouraged vendors to put the two healthier categories at consumer eye-level.

$\left[ight.$ What We Accomplished ight]

- The state Department of Health has a strong online presence with a toolkit of resources for state agencies and the public.
- As of summer 2015, 24 out of 39 state agencies have adopted policies to support the guidelines and executive order.
- The guidelines are a detailed primer, containing model policies, checklists, examples and contracts to help them get started. Here is a link: http://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/Pubs/340-224-HealthyNutritionGuidelines.pdf
- Case study success: Thurston County Public Health and Social Services worked with Bienvenue Café, in the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries.
 - The café removed the soup base from the biscuits and sausage gravy main entrée. The change reduced sodium by 220 mg, from 1,550 mg to 1,330. Based on sales after the change, a total of 926,640 mg of sodium have been removed from food purchased at the café.
 - "People don't realize their salt intake; in the kitchen we were not aware either."
 - Bienvenue Café Owner/operator

This is all about helping to make the healthy choice the easy choice. We have learned that people don't like the idea of being limited or told what they can or cannot eat, but we are making sure people have the choice of healthy foods."

- Alyssa Auvinen, Healthy Eating Coordinator

[What We Learned]

- Before we knew an executive order was a possibility, we worked with our partners to figure out their goals and to find the common ground.
- Investing time and energy in healthier food for onsite retail could reap a return on investment. When employees are investing in healthier food that also potentially changes their choices in a personal setting, such as the home environment.
- A big partner in change has been the state Department of Services for the Blind, the agency that holds the vendor contracts.



What We Are Doing now

The next challenge is to help the state's institutions. The Department of Health also will continue to update the guidelines as necessary to ensure that they reflect the latest science. In the meantime, it continues to work with agencies, vendors and cafeteria operators on education, food placement and adherence.

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