



Planning healthy and sustainable meetings At a glance

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide a summary of guidance and tips to plan healthier meetings and events. For more detailed information, please consult the full report *Planning Healthy and Sustainable Meetings: a practical guide*.

To create a culture of health, well-being and sustainability, a meeting should:

- Offer a variety of healthy foods and beverages
- Provide and promote sufficient physical activity opportunities
- Be held in 100% smoke-free venues
- Avoid offering alcoholic beverages
- Ensure sustainable practices that protect the environment

Food and beverages

- Consider if it is necessary to serve food in the meeting. For short meetings, beverages might be sufficient.
- Reduce portion sizes and provide smaller plates or paper napkins, instead of large plates to reduce both overeating and food waste.
- Do not place salt on the tables and request that caterers reduce the amount of sugar, salt and high sodium sauces in the food preparation.
- Consider including nutrition labels for foods served, indicating total calories and serving size, so participants can make informed food choices.
- Avoid serving any alcoholic beverages in the meeting. If under exceptional circumstances alcohol is served, limit the number of drinks to no more than one per person, serve in small containers and ensure these are served with sufficient food.



To offer a variety of healthy foods and beverages throughout the meeting, consider the following principles:

Prefer	Limit or avoid
Fresh, local and seasonal fruit and vegetables as the basis of any snacks and as the main component of starters, side dishes and desserts	Processed foods as they tend to be high in salt, sugar and unhealthy fats
Wholegrain foods (bread, wraps, rice), oats and low-fat and low-sugar granola	Products made with refined grains
Vegetable sources of protein and small portions of fish or lean cuts of meat or poultry	Large amounts of meat and other animal products with high fat content
Fresh water from the tap (when possible) or water fountains, potentially with added herbs or fresh fruits	Sugar-sweetened beverages (soda, juice drinks, energy drinks etc.) and beverages served in plastic bottles
Raw or toasted, unsalted nuts as snacks	Salted snacks
Mocktails, homemade ice-tea with low sugar content, small servings of 100% fruit juice or smoothies or unsweetened coffee or tea with low-fat milk on the side	Alcoholic beverages, particularly with high alcohol concentration, such as spirits.

Physical activity

Before and after the meeting

- Choose venues that are easily accessible by foot, bicycle or public transport and with access to fitness facilities.
- Encourage active transport to and from venues and inform participants of safe routes for walking or cycling.
- Avoid a very early start of the day (e.g. before 9 am) and schedule and promote physical activity sessions before and after the meeting.
- Organize active social activities before and/or after the meeting, such as walking or cycling tours, skating, dancing etc.

During the meeting

- Schedule at least two active breaks in the meeting programme. Identify a facilitator to guide the break or play a video.
- Consider planning the meeting in a more active format, such as standing or walking. If this is not possible, make high tables available and encourage participants to stand up during the meeting.
- Allow sufficient time for meeting breaks and organize (ideally manned) activity stations where participants can be active for some minutes when they desire.
- Encourage the use of stairs instead of lifts and post signs directing them to stairwells outside meeting rooms and near lifts.

Dress code and incentives

- Notify participants about the physical activity opportunities in advance.
- Choose a business casual dress code.

- Encourage participants to use technology for tracking their activity levels during the meeting.
- Propose activity goals, such as 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity each day and consider offering prizes to those who reach the goal.

Sustainability

- Consider holding the meeting virtually to limit travel.
- Choose venues and caterers that have adopted environmental policies such as energy-saving practices and advanced systems of waste collection and recycling.
- Avoid unnecessary printouts and send meeting materials electronically before and during the meeting. If printing is unavoidable, use recycled paper, print on both sides, make as few copies as possible and encourage participants to share them.
- Give preference to sustainable conference materials, produced according to ethical standards. Offer the option of returning the materials once the meeting is finished and aim to reuse them in other events.
- Choose to avoid the use of single use plastic and other waste. If disposable products are the only option, make sure that they are recyclable or compostable.
- Collaborate with local organizations to distribute edible leftovers, if country regulations allow.
- Turn off electrical and electronic equipment, including lights, when not in use.
- Provide recycling containers with proper signage around the meeting space.