

# Healthy Food and Drink Policy for the Health Sector and Other Organisations



*The Ministry of Health has worked with District Health Boards (DHBs) to develop a **National Healthy Food and Drink Policy** for the health sector. A similar policy has also been developed that other organisations can use.*



**Dr Harriette Carr**

“It’s important that our health care system shows leadership in providing healthier food and drink environments because many of the diseases that result in people needing hospital care are associated with what we eat and drink,” says Dr Harriette Carr, principal advisor – Public Health, Ministry of Health.

“The Policy aims to demonstrate commitment to the health and wellbeing of staff, visitors and the general public by providing healthy food and drink options.”

It has been developed by the DHB Healthy Food and Drink Environments Network – a group of nutrition, dietetic, food service, and/or public health representatives from all DHBs, along with the Ministry of Health, with the intent that it would be able to be implemented over a two-year period. The Network also received support from the Heart Foundation, Activity and Nutrition Aotearoa (ANA) and the University of Auckland.

“The Policy consists of overarching principles that reflect the Ministry’s Eating and Activity Guidelines for New Zealand Adults, as well as more specific criteria to support caterers to put the principles into practice,” says Dr Carr.

“The specific criteria defines the quality and quantity of food and drink options available in food services and is a practical, evidence-based tool to translate healthy eating into a food service setting. Large food and drink portion sizes are now commonplace in many cafes and eating establishments, and this trend has been linked to the growing obesity problem. Defining more appropriate portion sizes for less healthy options is an important way to re-establish moderation as the norm for both consumers and producers.”

‘Green category’ foods and drinks are the best choices and generally have no portion restrictions. Portion size criteria is used for less healthy food and drink options only (as part

of the Amber category group). Using portion size to control the amount of menu options like cakes, scones, sausage rolls and pies means these popular items are still available for consumers as part of balanced approach to healthy eating.

The Ministry of Health has adopted the Policy. The Policy is available for individual DHBs to consider adopting. Local involvement is important for DHB implementation, including from employees and their representatives.

**The Healthy Food and Drink Policy for Organisations** is a simpler version of the National Healthy Food and Drink Policy. The Network encourages people to consider adopting or adapting this policy for their organisation, and/or sharing it with other organisations or agencies so that we can all gradually improve the food and drink environment where we live, learn, work and play.



Find out more about the policies on the **Ministry of Health website.**