



# Healthy Food and Drink Choices at Community Events

## Background

Everyone in our community has the right to access the environments necessary for a long and healthy life. Local Government, community organisations, businesses and community groups all have a role to play in supporting community health and wellbeing. One way to do this is by increasing healthy food and drink options at events.

Increasing the variety of food and drink options at events can encourage people to make healthier choices. There are many barriers to healthy eating such as time, cost, and preferences. Increasing healthy food and drink options while decreasing unhealthy options will make healthy eating easier.

This guide is a tool to help event organisers to understand what healthy food and drink options are available to them and how they can make easy and effective food and drink changes when organising events. This document will help event organisers consider community health and wellbeing.

## Healthy Food and Drinks

Providing, promoting and displaying healthy options can encourage the community to eat them. Some ways to do this include:

- Hiring vendors that sell food and drinks according to the Healthy Choices Guidelines
- Encouraging vendors to limit the sale of sugary drinks by displaying GREEN drinks such as water, 99% fruit juice, and artificially sweetened drinks
- Providing free drinking water at events. Include clear signage to direct community to water stations.

Coliban Water provides water stations. To find out more, visit their website: <https://coliban.com.au/community/supporting-community-events>

## Healthy Choices Guidelines

The Healthy Choices Guidelines is a Victorian Government initiative which classifies food and drinks using a traffic light system.

<https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/healthy-choices/guidelines>

### THE GREEN CATEGORY

#### best choices

These foods and drinks are the healthiest choices.

- Fruit platter
- Salads
- Sushi and rice paper rolls
- Wraps and sandwiches
- Still/sparkling water
- Plain/herbal teas
- Reduced fat/skim milk



- ✓ Ensure GREEN foods and drinks are always available
- ✓ Offer a wide variety of GREEN choices
- ✓ Actively promote and encourage GREEN foods and drinks
- ✓ Ensure GREEN choices are attractively presented and competitively priced
- ✓ Display GREEN foods and drinks in prominent areas
- ✓ Place GREEN choices at eye level or in the front of bain-maries





## THE AMBER CATEGORY

*choose carefully*

These foods and drinks should be selected carefully and consumed in moderation.

- Fried rice
  - Steamed dim sims
  - Cake with fresh fruit and no icing
  - Fruit or savoury muffins
  - Bars made with oats, nuts and dried fruits
  - 99% fruit juice, no added sugar
  - Reduced-fat flavoured milk
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- ✓ Reduce the amount and variety of AMBER foods and drinks offered
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- ✓ Provide AMBER items in smaller serving sizes
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- ✓ Do not promote AMBER foods and drinks at the expense of GREEN choices



## THE RED CATEGORY

*limit*

These foods and drinks should be consumed sometimes and in small amounts.

- Soft drinks
  - Fried foods
  - Lollies/chocolate
  - Ice cream
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- ✓ Limit the range of RED choices offered
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- ✓ If RED choices are provided, offer the smallest portion available
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- ✓ Avoid meal or point of sale promotions which include RED choices, for example meal deals, two for one deals, upsizing and supersizing
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- ✓ Limit the display of RED foods and drinks
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- ✓ RED choices should not be displayed in excessive quantities or in prominent areas



## Sustainability in food packaging

Single-use plastics are disposable plastic products designed to be used once or for a short period of time before disposal. The Victorian Government has banned the sale and supply of many single-use plastics, including, but not limited to:

- straws
- cutlery
- plates
- drink stirrers

Single use coffee cups, including biocups, are a single use plastic and should be placed in the general waste bin.

It is recommended to source compostable food packaging, ensuring that the material is in line with industry standards.



## Biodegradable vs Compostable Materials

- Biodegradable material is still plastic. It breaks down into smaller pieces and is still harmful towards the environment
- Compostable material is made up of organic plant materials which are not toxic to the environment and can be disposed of in an organic compost bin

## More sustainable practices might look like this:

- Encouraging the public to bring their own, including a reusable drink bottle, a reusable straw and a keep cup
- Using compostable products such as Biopak for food packaging, plates, trays and cutlery  
<https://www.biopak.com>

For more information about sustainability at community events please contact [rr.education@bendigo.vic.gov.au](mailto:rr.education@bendigo.vic.gov.au)