



UC Berkeley  
**Healthy  
Meeting &  
Event Guide**

*A tool for campus  
event planners*



**Be Well at Work**  
*Faculty/Staff Wellness*

**Berkeley**  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



## Berkeley's Commitment to Healthy Meetings

*“The staff of UC Berkeley are like the engine that keeps us going, and they are crucial to the success of our educational, research, and public mission. Like our students, I want to see our employees not merely survive, but thrive. Prioritizing your health can benefit your emotional and physical well-being, as well as the health and operations of the campus overall.”*

*- Chancellor Carol Christ*

Meetings, events, and celebrations are a major part of Berkeley's culture. Food and beverages served are often highly processed, sugary and salty, while low in fruits, vegetables and whole grains. Additionally, meetings and events involve a lot of sitting, which is not only bad for our health, but also can reduce participants' energy, concentration, and productivity.

This guide supports the University's commitment to foster healthy lifestyles and create an environment that makes the healthy choice the easy choice for faculty, staff, students and community members. It provides the tools to change this unhealthy norm with guidelines and resources addressing nutritious food and beverage options, activity breaks, and sustainable practices. These principles are in alignment with the Eat Well Berkeley (EWB) nutrition guidelines, derived from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, and UC's sustainability and zero waste goals.

The UC Berkeley Food & Beverage Choices Policy states that members of the University community should include nutritious and sustainable choices when purchasing food or beverages for University meetings and events as outlined in this guide. This policy also establishes nutrition standards for campus restaurants and retail, vending machines, and Athletic concessions to ensure that healthy options are available and accessible. This is one of the most effective strategies to improve the health outcomes of the campus population.

Campus event planners, staff tasked with organizing meetings, and all campus members can use this guide to contribute to a healthy campus culture.

### Eat Well Berkeley



The Eat Well Berkeley Catering Program works with participating caterers to label (✓) menu items that meet the nutrition guidelines. Eat Well Berkeley grocery lists are available on our website for meal and snack suggestions when not working with a caterer. [uhs.berkeley.edu/eatwellberkeley](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/eatwellberkeley)

### Acknowledgements

The UC Berkeley Healthy Meeting and Event Guide has been developed and produced by Be Well at Work - Wellness Program in University Health Services in partnership with campus experts in nutrition, physical activity, sustainability, recycling, and food safety. In addition, expert recommendations were followed from the American Heart Association, the National Alliance for Activity and Nutrition, and the Culinary Institute of America's Menu of Change.



## Guidelines for Healthy Meetings and Events

When organizing meetings and events, make the healthy choice the easy choice for participants by following these Top Ten Guidelines. If purchasing from a caterer that participates in the Eat Well Berkeley Catering Program, look for the check mark (✓) to help identify healthy menu choices.

### TOP TEN GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

1

Offer tap water rather than bottled water.

2

Offer a variety of fresh vegetables.

3

Serve small, right-sized portions.

4

Serve fresh fruit as a side or dessert.

5

Select whole grains for breads, side dishes, and baked goods.

6

Select healthy proteins and at least one plant-based, vegetarian option.

7

Serve dressings and condiments on the side.

8

Plan activity breaks into the agenda.

9

Follow green meeting and zero waste guidelines.

10

Donate leftovers to support those experiencing food insecurity.

#### TOP PRIORITIES

#### INCLUDE:

- ✓ Water
- ✓ Vegetables and/or fruit



## Essential Ingredients of a Healthy Lifestyle

### RIGHT-SIZED PORTIONS

Eat half or smaller portions since many prepared and restaurant portions are excessively large, providing more than one serving.

**Event Tip!** *Cut sandwiches and baked goods in half, provide foods on platters for self-service, and request “mini” portions of muffins and desserts.*

### PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Be physically active for at least 30 minutes most days of the week. When time is a barrier, do three 10-minute bouts of exercise. Be sure to stand and move at least once an hour.

**Event Tip!** *Provide a 5-10 minute walking or activity break, have walking meetings, and encourage participants to stand and move about.*

### VEGETABLES AND FRUIT

A healthy plate is half non-starchy vegetables (or combo of veggies and fruit). Selecting a variety of colors provides a variety of nutrients and makes a meal more appealing. Limit fruit juices and smoothies, high in calories and low in fiber, to 4 ounces or less a day.

**Event Tip!** *Be sure to offer sufficient vegetables and/or fruit selections, including fruit for dessert.*

### WATER

Plain water, sparkling water, water infused with fruit and/or herbs, and unsweetened coffee or tea are good choices. Limit or eliminate sweetened beverages such as soda, smoothies, sports drinks, energy drinks, fruit drinks, sweetened coffee drinks and teas, and even diet sodas.

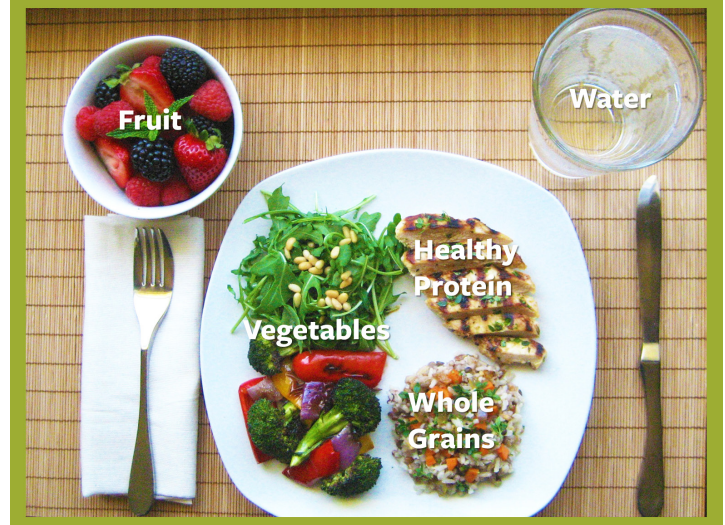
**Event Tip!** *Make it easy – serve tap water in pitchers. Remind participants to bring their refillable beverage container.*

### WHOLE GRAINS

Whole grains are more filling and nutritious than refined grains, and can positively impact weight control and energy levels. The best choices are unprocessed grains such as brown rice, buckwheat, quinoa, and steel cut oats, as well as whole grain varieties of breads, pasta, tortillas, and other baked goods.

**Event Tip!** *Request whole grains for wraps, sandwiches, and breakfast foods.*

### HEALTHY MEAL MODEL



### HEALTHY FATS AND PROTEINS

Olive and canola oils, nuts and seeds, nut butters, hummus, avocado, tuna, and salmon are sources of heart-healthy, unsaturated fats. Limit saturated fats, found in red meat, processed deli meats, butter, cheese and other high-fat dairy products. Avoid trans fats, now banned in the U.S., but may still appear in processed foods as manufacturers work to find a replacement.

Healthy protein options include plant-based options of tofu, beans, lentils, nuts, nut butters, and seeds as well as eggs, plain yogurt, skinless poultry, seafood, and lean cuts of meat.

**Event Tip!** *Choose grilled, baked, steamed, or sautéed foods. Serve dressings and condiments on the side.*

### SUGAR AND SALT LIMITS

The average person consumes more than double the recommended added sugar limit. Surprising sugar sources include fat-free salad dressings, snack bars, and flavored yogurts. Also, limit salt because we consume too much from restaurant and processed foods.

**Event Tip!** *Choose whole foods such as freshly prepared mix of nuts and seeds rather than packaged snack bars.*



## Healthy Celebrations and Potlucks

There are many reasons to celebrate at work— accomplishments, milestones, holidays, birthdays, or just Wellness Wednesdays! With good planning, these celebrations can be fun, boost morale, provide much needed relaxation breaks, and serve as an opportunity to practice healthy eating. Use these tips to make your celebrations and potlucks healthy!



» Host a Build Your Own Salad (B.Y.O.S.) potluck. Everyone brings a salad ingredient to create a bountiful meal to share together. Or, set out all the ingredients as a salad bar.



» Assign several participants to bring colorful vegetables and fruit so there is a variety of fresh produce.

» Serve veggie platters with hummus or guacamole, both sources of healthy fats.



» Buy organic ingredients, especially for animal products and produce often highest in pesticides: strawberries, spinach, nectarines, apples, grapes, peaches, cherries, pears, tomatoes, celery, potatoes, bell peppers, and hot peppers.



» Make a healthier pasta or potato salad by loading up the vegetables and using a vinegar-based dressing rather than a creamy one.

» Have a yogurt parfait social with plain Greek yogurt, fresh fruit toppings and granola or nuts.



» Offer a spa water bar with cucumber and citrus slices, or whole strawberries.

» Offer seltzer water with a splash of 100% fruit juice.



» Eliminate or minimize treats with added sugars. Plan desserts of whole fruits or make fruit kebobs.

» Swap out the cookies and cakes for these ideas:

- » Drizzle sliced apples with melted peanut butter and dark chocolate
- » Make a no-bake watermelon cake (see Resources page)
- » Purchase a fruit bouquet

» Make fresh popcorn on the stove or air pop in a paper bag in the microwave. Sprinkle lightly with paprika and salt for a healthy, delicious, and inexpensive whole food snack.

» Make food look festive! Sprinkle with sliced almonds, green onions, coconut, or herbs to garnish.

» Label potluck items with recipe name and when possible, ingredients and/or allergens.

» Share recipes online.

» Whenever possible, choose ingredients that are fair trade, local or organic.

» Reduce waste by encouraging everyone to bring their own reusable drink container and silverware, whenever possible.

» If using disposable dishes, choose compostable paper rather than plastic or styrofoam.

» Include a game or activity such as a stretch break or an ice breaker.



## Healthy Meals and Snacks

When it is your role to order or purchase food for a meeting, use these tips and selections as a guide to make the healthy choice the easy choice.

### BREAKFAST

- ✓ **Protein.** Include healthy proteins such as eggs and low-fat dairy products. Try plain Greek yogurt and serve with fresh fruit and nuts as toppings. Avoid processed meats such as bacon and sausage.
- ✓ **Fruit.** Provide fresh fruit, whole or sliced, rather than juice.
- ✓ **Whole grains.** Select whole grain breads and baked goods. For items such as bagels and muffins, choose “mini” versions or cut larger portions in half. If you include pastries, keep the portions small or cut in half.

Selections from Caterers & Restaurants	Selections from Grocery Stores
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Eggs – hard-boiled, scrambled, or egg dishes such as frittata with vegetables</li> <li>» Fruit platter, fruit salad, or whole fruit</li> <li>» Breakfast burritos with eggs, beans, salsa, and veggies</li> <li>» Whole grain baked goods such as bread, muffins, and bagels. Better accompaniments include nut butters, whipped cream cheese, and sliced vegetables</li> <li>» Oatmeal and toppings on the side</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Plain yogurt, with toppings of fresh fruit or frozen berries and nuts</li> <li>» Whole fruit</li> <li>» Pre-made fruit platter or fruit salad</li> <li>» Whole grain bread or English muffins. Better accompaniments include nut butters, whipped cream cheese, and tomato and cucumber slices</li> <li>» Plain, instant oatmeal (have hot water available) with fruit, nuts, and cinnamon on the side</li> </ul>

### LUNCH

- ✓ **Sandwiches and wraps.** Choose whole grain sandwich breads, tortillas and flatbreads; healthy proteins such as marinated tofu and grilled chicken; condiments such as mustard, hummus, or avocado on the side; and sliced tomatoes, cucumber, leafy greens or other vegetables.
- ✓ **Entree salads.** Start with colorful greens and sliced veggies, and add protein such as beans, hard-boiled eggs, tuna, or grilled chicken. Provide additional healthy toppings such as avocados and nuts, and limit toppings of cheese, bacon bits, croutons, and crispy wonton strips. Choose vinaigrette dressings over creamy ones, and serve them on the side.
- ✓ **Desserts.** Serve sliced or whole fruit, or a platter of half fruit and half small-portioned baked goods.

### ORDER A HEALTHIER PIZZA



- ✓ **Lots of veggies**
- ✓ **Request smaller slices**
- ✓ **Light on cheese**
- ✓ **Crust - thin and/or whole wheat**
- ✓ **Add a side salad**
- ✓ **Limit processed meats**



## Healthy Meals and Snacks

### LUNCH (continued)

Selections from Caterers & Restaurants	Selections from Grocery Stores
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Sandwich halves on platters</li> <li>» When ordering boxed lunches, choose entrée salads or sandwiches made with lots of vegetables on whole grain breads or wraps. Ask the caterer to substitute fruit for the cookie and a vegetable side dish for the chips. Serve dressings and other condiments on the side.</li> <li>» Baked or grilled chicken, turkey, fish, or tofu</li> <li>» Broth-based soups instead of creamy soups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Create your own salad bar: salad greens, cherry tomatoes, shredded carrots, other sliced veggies, chopped nuts, and rinsed beans; or choose a pre-made salad.</li> <li>» Make your own sandwich or wrap: whole grain bread, pita, or tortillas; turkey, chicken, or marinated tofu; assorted vegetables; and condiments such as hummus, mustard, vinaigrette, or avocado</li> </ul>

### SIDES AND SNACKS

Selections from Caterers & Restaurants	Selections from Grocery Stores
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Vegetable platter with hummus or guacamole</li> <li>» Roasted, steamed, grilled, or stir-fried vegetables</li> <li>» Green salad with vinaigrette dressing on the side</li> <li>» Brown rice, quinoa, beans, whole grain couscous or pasta or side salads made with these ingredients</li> <li>» Fruit platter, fruit salad, or whole fruit</li> <li>» Unsalted nuts and/or seeds</li> </ul> <p><i>Note – any of these can be sides in a boxed lunch.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Raw vegetables such as baby carrots, snap peas, and cherry tomatoes with hummus or guacamole</li> <li>» Pre-made vegetable platter</li> <li>» Whole fruit</li> <li>» Pre-made fruit platter or fruit salad</li> <li>» Unsalted nuts and/or seeds</li> <li>» Trail mix made primarily with nuts and unsweetened dried fruit</li> <li>» Plain yogurt with fruit and nuts toppings</li> </ul>

### BEVERAGES

- ✓ **Water.** Serve water, preferably tap water, in pitchers or other types of water dispensers. Encourage participants to bring their own reusable beverage containers and point out the nearest water refill station (see refill stations on the Berkeley Food Institute foodscape map at [food.berkeley.edu/foodscape/geographic-map](http://food.berkeley.edu/foodscape/geographic-map)).
- ✓ **Unsweetened hot beverages.** Provide regular and decaf coffee, tea, and herbal tea. For “creamers,” offer milk and unsweetened plant milk instead of instead of half & half or artificial creamers.
- ✓ **Other beverages.** Consider iced teas or carbonated water, flavored or unflavored with no added sweeteners; a spa water bar with cucumber and citrus slices or whole strawberries; or spritzers made from seltzer and a splash of 100% fruit juice. Limit fruit and vegetable juices to 4-8 oz, if served at all. When possible, serve in bulk and make sure to provide recycling containers with signage.



## Activity Breaks

Include activity breaks in meetings to help participants with improved energy, participation, and attention span. Activity breaks also help everyone sit less and fit some fitness into their day. We have provided several types of activity breaks for different types of meetings and events.

Length of Meeting/Event	Standing Breaks	Stretch Breaks	Breathing/Relaxation Breaks	Movement Breaks	Walking Breaks
50 - 60 Min	✓		✓		
2 - 4 Hours	✓	✓	✓	✓	
All Day	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

### STANDING BREAKS

- » At least once an hour, participants should be given a break to stand up to improve blood circulation, boost metabolism, and relieve physical discomfort from sitting for prolonged periods of time.
- » Energize participants by having them stand up, march in place, and raise arms overhead for 30-60 seconds to improve blood circulation, attention, and focus.
- » Announce to participants that it is fine to stand up and move around, as needed. If possible, provide raised tables for those electing to stand during the meeting.



March in Place



Neck Stretch



Chair Twist

### STRETCH BREAKS

- » Stretch breaks help participants wake up their bodies and minds.
- » Encourage people to stand up and stretch in place. Select 3-4 different stretches from these examples provided to the right.
- » Most of the exercises to the right can be done seated (as needed).



Hip Circle



Chest Stretch



Side Stretch





# Activity Breaks

## BREATHING/RELAXATION BREAKS

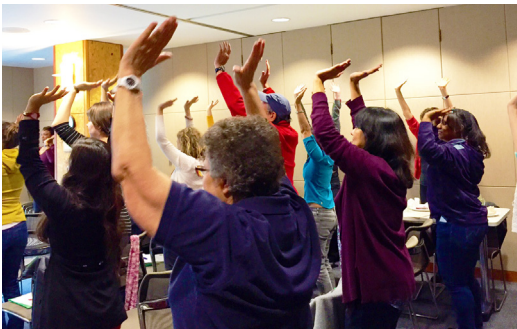
- » Deep breathing  
Start meetings by encouraging participants to take several slow, deep breaths, which can help them let go of the distracting “chatter” of what may be on their minds.
- » Abdominal Breathing Technique  
This breathing exercise can help participants feel calm, composed, renewed, and focused. With one hand on the chest and the other on the belly, participants should take a deep breath in through the nose, ensuring the diaphragm (not the chest) inflates with enough air to create a stretch in the lungs. The goal: 6-10 slow, deep breaths per minute for up to 3 minutes.



## MOVEMENT BREAKS

- » A movement break is a 3-5 minute fun, low-impact group activity that has participants moving their arms and legs to music. It is not a dance routine, but designed to be easy to follow and to accommodate all shapes, sizes and abilities. This break is guaranteed to leave people smiling, energized, and ready to give their full attention.

To include a movement break in your agenda, you can play an online Instant Recess video, or arrange for a designated leader (see Resources page).



**An Activity Break should be:**

- An opportunity to be physically active for a short stretch break, a 5-10 minute movement break, or 15-30 minute walking break.
- Completely voluntary and adaptive to fit anyone’s abilities, including those with physical disabilities.
- Done at the participant’s own pace and be comfortable and pain-free. Advise participants to do only what feels good and to stop immediately if anything hurts.
  - Do-able without breaking a sweat.
  - Fun and safe, and not require a professional leader.

## WALKING BREAKS

- » When breaking into small teams of 2-3 for brainstorming or networking, offer the option of walk ‘n talk meetings.
- » Plan adequate time for breaks into the agenda and encourage participants to take a 10-15 minute walk.
- » When there is time for a longer lunch break, encourage participants to go for a 15-30 minute walk after lunch. Identify a leader that has a pre-determined route.





# Green Meetings and Food Safety

## GREEN MEETINGS AND EVENTS

All of us can do our part to help UC accomplish our sustainability and zero waste goals by following the Green Event Certification guidelines addressing food and beverages, waste and recycling, and paper used for handouts and agendas. You can even host a Green Event Certified Meeting.

### Food and Beverages

- » Encourage participants to bring their own reusable mug and water container.
- » Serve water and beverages from reusable pitchers with reusable cups (or paper compostable cups if necessary); avoid offering single-use plastic bottles.
- » Order food and beverages in bulk or platters rather than single servings.
- » Offer plant-based, vegetarian meal selections.
- » Select foods and beverages that are local, organic, fair trade, and humane whenever possible.
- » Prevent waste by ordering only what you need. Plan ahead to donate leftovers (see Resources page).

### Zero Waste and Recycling

- » Choose reusable, washable serving containers and eating utensils whenever possible.
- » Use recyclable and compostable products when disposable is the only option.
- » Provide recycling containers with proper signage (see Resources page).
- » Choose reusable or recyclable giveaways and centerpieces.

### Paper

- » Use paper name tags with reusable holders instead of single use name tag stickers.
- » Email the agenda and handouts to participants in advance. Post the meeting agenda on a whiteboard.
- » If you must print documents, consider printing double-sided or multiple slides per page, making fewer copies, and/or encouraging participants to share.

### Green Event Certification

Learn more about green recommendations and the Green Event Certification on the webpage (see Resources page).

## FOOD SAFETY

Food safety is about ensuring that people do not get sick from the food or beverages they consume. Campus event planners can use the following tips to follow basic food safety practices.

- » Keep hot food hot at 135°F or above, and cold food cold at 41°F or below.
- » Perishable foods not kept hot or cold as described above should be discarded after holding for 4 hours or more at room temperature.
- » Persons handling food—preparing, displaying, or serving—should wash their hands before doing so. People who are ill should not handle food or utensils.
- » Verify that any off-campus food vendor has a valid health permit from the issuing health jurisdiction.
- » Submit a Special Event Temporary Food Permit application to Environment, Health & Safety (EH&S) for events open to the general public or large events serving the campus community at which foods or beverages will be served. Department organized meetings and events serving food and beverages attended by faculty, staff and students or registered participants typically do not require a permit. Call EH&S at (510) 642-3073 if you are unsure whether a permit is needed.
- » For a more thorough list of safe food handling practices, please see Special Event Safe Food Handling Practices from EH&S at [ehs.berkeley.edu](https://ehs.berkeley.edu).



### HEALTHY MEETINGS AND EVENTS

[uhs.berkeley.edu/healthymeetings](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/healthymeetings)

Meeting organizers can find the following resources provided to support healthy meetings:

- » Food & Beverage Choices Policy  
Learn more about the policy that applies to all university-sponsored meetings/events where food or drink is served.
- » Eat Well Berkeley Catering  
Find caterers that offer nutritious and sustainable options in line with the Food & Beverage Choices policy.
- » Shopping Lists  
Grocery shopping ideas for breakfast, lunch, and snacks/appetizers/desserts
- » Cook Well Berkeley  
Healthy recipes, including potluck recipes such as the watermelon cake
- » Activity and Movement Breaks  
Links to Instant Recess videos, guides for planned movement breaks with music tips, and contact information to request an instructor-led activity break
- » Signage to Promote Healthy Meetings  
Eat Well Berkeley signage templates to print and display promoting your efforts at organizing a healthy meeting

### LACTATION ROOMS FOR PARTICIPANTS OR SPEAKERS

[uhs.berkeley.edu/breastfeeding](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/breastfeeding)

Meeting organizers can refer requests for use of a lactation room to the Breastfeeding Support Program for access.

### BERKELEY EVENTS NETWORK (BEN)

[stafforg.berkeley.edu/organizations/communities-practice/ben](https://stafforg.berkeley.edu/organizations/communities-practice/ben)

Professional networking group that provides training in best practices, access to resources, and networking opportunities for employees planning events on the UC Berkeley campus.

### FOOD RECOVERY

[food.berkeley.edu/programs/community-engagement-edu/food-recovery](https://food.berkeley.edu/programs/community-engagement-edu/food-recovery)

Leftover food from your meeting or event can be delivered to the campus food pantry to be redistributed to food insecure students. Volunteers are also available to pick up leftover food. Email [foodrecovery@berkeley.edu](mailto:foodrecovery@berkeley.edu) to arrange a pick-up.

### GREEN EVENTS AND GREEN EVENT CERTIFICATION

[sustainability.berkeley.edu/engage/green-certifications](https://sustainability.berkeley.edu/engage/green-certifications)

Guides for organizing a green event and obtaining certification.

### ZERO WASTE

[zerowaste.berkeley.edu](https://zerowaste.berkeley.edu)

Zero waste event guidelines, catering guidelines, and recommended product list.

Email [fs-news@berkeley.edu](mailto:fs-news@berkeley.edu) to submit a work order request for zero waste bins and signage or call 510-642-1032.

### SUSTAINABLE AND JUST CATERING

[food.berkeley.edu/foodscape/campus-facilities/sustainable-and-just-catering](https://food.berkeley.edu/foodscape/campus-facilities/sustainable-and-just-catering)

Guidelines based on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Environmental Sustainability; Food Recovery; Health and Nutrition; and Labor.



[uhs.berkeley.edu/healthymeetings](https://uhs.berkeley.edu/healthymeetings)