



Nutrition standards for food and beverage provision



for staff and visitors in healthcare settings



Healthy Eating
Active Living
Programme





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Foreword

The health and wellbeing of everyone living in Ireland is the most valuable asset we possess as a country.

Our population is consuming unhealthy food and is struggling to meet fruit and vegetable intake targets. Our obesity rates remain high in all age groups and demographics. In this context, we in the Health Services have identified promoting health and wellbeing as one of our five corporate goals. Creating supportive environments for staff and visitors to make healthier choices is a strategic priority for the HSE. There is strong evidence that much can be done to improve the health and wellbeing of our employees. As the largest public body in the state, the HSE must lead the way in making healthy food choices easily accessible to its staff and visitors.

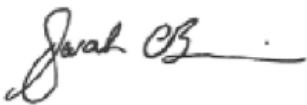
The Healthy Eating Active Living Programme of the HSE, along with **safefood** has developed these nutrition standards for food and beverage provision for staff and visitors. These standards have been adapted from the 'Minimum nutritional standards for catering in health and social care' in Northern Ireland and we are grateful to colleagues who facilitated that.

Along with the HSE Healthier Vending Policy and HSE Calorie Posting Policy,

“These standards will support those employed and contracted by the health service to offer staff and visitors a choice of healthier food.”

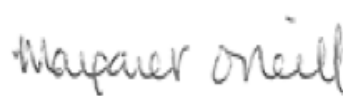
We acknowledge that many HSE facilities have been working for several years to provide good quality, healthy food for staff and visitors. Many have received the Happy Heart Healthy Eating award from the Irish Heart Foundation. These standards will strengthen their work as well as supporting other facilities to improve their choices for staff and visitors.

The publication of these standards is the next step in creating a healthier food environment in the health services. The approach to implementation of these standards will now be considered. It will include support for implementation and training for staff. We look forward to the next stage of implementation of these standards across the health service, and to working with Hospital Groups and Community Healthcare Organisations throughout the country to achieve this.



Ms. Sarah O'Brien

National Lead
Healthy Eating Active Living Programme
Health Service Executive



Ms. Margaret O'Neill

National Dietetic Lead
Strategic Planning and Transformation
Health Service Executive

Acknowledgements

These standards have been adapted from the 'Minimum nutritional standards for catering in health and social care' for Northern Ireland (2017) and we are grateful to colleagues in Northern Ireland who facilitated that.

The Healthy Eating Active Living Programme in the Health Service Executive (HSE) would like to thank **safefood** for their collaboration in developing these standards. We would also like to acknowledge the input of the technical working group who adapted the standards for the healthcare setting.

Barbara Gillman, Clinical Specialist Dietitian, Project Lead, National Food, Nutrition and Hydration Policy For Adult Patients in Acute Hospitals and Implementation Toolkit.

Dr. Edel McNamara, Senior Community Dietitian, Department of Health Promotion and Improvement, Health and Wellbeing Division, HSE.

Joana Caldeira Fernandes da Silva, Technical Executive Human Health and Nutrition **safefood**.

Margaret O'Neill, National Dietetic Lead, Strategic Planning and Transformation, HSE.

Final thanks to the members of the Healthier Food Environment Advisory Group convened by the Healthy Eating Active Living Programme who progressed the work of the technical working group and finalised the document for publication (Appendix 1).



Executive Summary

The purpose of this document is to provide nutrition standards for food and beverages for staff and visitors in healthcare settings (they do not apply to patient food and beverage provision). The standards are a combination of nutrient and food-based standards and they specify the minimum levels to be attained when providing food and beverages. By implementing these standards, staff involved with the preparation and provision of food and beverages can ensure that a range of healthier food options are available. In addition, the workplace will be supporting staff and visitors to make the healthier choice the easier choice.

These standards have been adapted from the 'Minimum nutritional standards for catering in health and social care' in Northern Ireland 2017 and incorporated the Irish Healthy Food for Life Healthy Eating Guidelines and Food Pyramid. The nutrition standards are presented under each of the six food shelves as described in the Food Pyramid: Vegetables, salad and fruit; Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice; Milk, yogurt and cheese; Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts; Fats, oils and spreads; and Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt. The food standards also describe what foods are included and information on portion size. The Guidance for Caterers section includes specific points for caterers to consider when buying preparing and displaying foods to improve the nutritional quality of foods provided.

These standards apply to all facilities providing food or beverages within healthcare settings and should be applied when planning menus. The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) now manages the tendering processes across all Government Departments and Agencies. This includes the HSE and all healthcare agencies and institutions which are in receipt of government funding. The HSE will work with the OGP to include these nutrition standards when food contracts are being progressed through the procurement processes (the sourcing, buying and provision or tendering process).

By developing these standards, the HSE aims to move from the current "obesogenic" environment, where unhealthy foods are readily available in most places, to one that actively promotes the consumption of healthier food and drink.



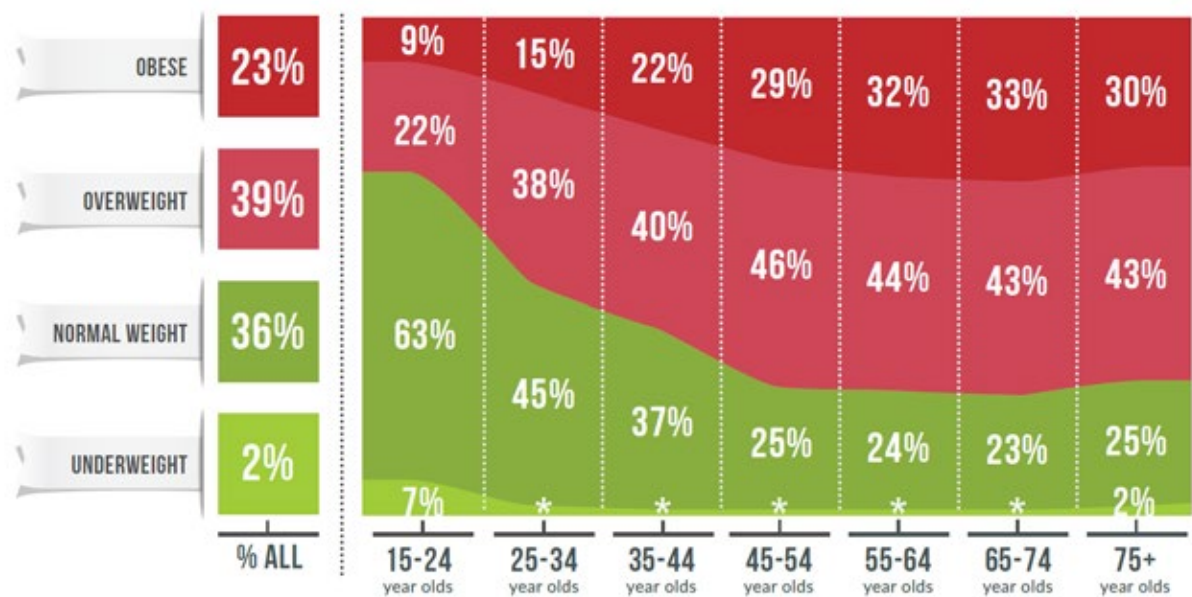
Introduction

The Health Service Executive (HSE) has identified promoting health and wellbeing as one of its five corporate goals. In this context, it is taking steps to create environments that support our staff and visitors to make healthier choices. The Healthy Eating Active Living Programme of the HSE with **safefood** has developed the nutrition standards for food and beverage provision outlined in this document. Along with the HSE Healthier Vending Policy¹ and HSE Calorie Posting Policy², these standards will support food and beverage providers employed and contracted by the health service to offer staff and visitors a choice of healthier food. The standards were developed by the HSE in response to actions outlined in A Healthy Weight for Ireland-Obesity Policy and Action Plan 2016-2025³ and the Healthy Ireland in the Health Service National Implementation Plan 2015-2017⁴.

“A healthy and balanced diet in conjunction with adequate amounts of physical activity is known to help in maintaining a healthy body weight but also helps reduce the risk of chronic conditions, such as type 2 diabetes, some cancers and coronary heart disease⁵”.

The Healthy Ireland Surveys (2015⁶, 2016⁷, and 2017⁸) have demonstrated that the overall population is consuming unhealthy food, is struggling to meet the fruit and vegetable intake targets, is not sufficiently active and is not meeting the minimum amounts of recommended physical activity. The 2017 survey finds that 39% of the individuals surveyed are overweight and a further 23% are obese (Figure 1).

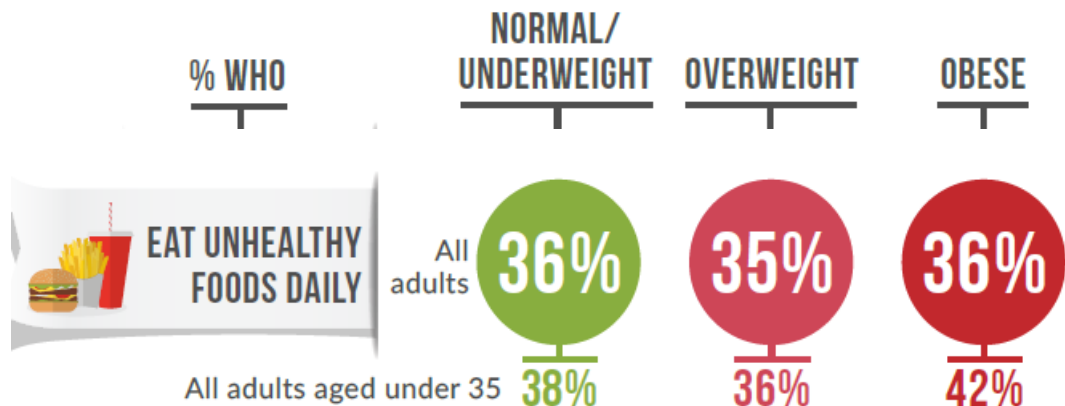
Figure 1: Healthy Ireland Survey 2017: Body Weight



Consumption of unhealthy foods is broadly similar regardless of body weight. 36% of those with a normal weight eat one form of unhealthy food at least once a day. This compares with 35% and 36% respectively among those who are overweight or obese (Figure 2).

Source: Healthy Ireland Survey 2017. Summary of Findings.

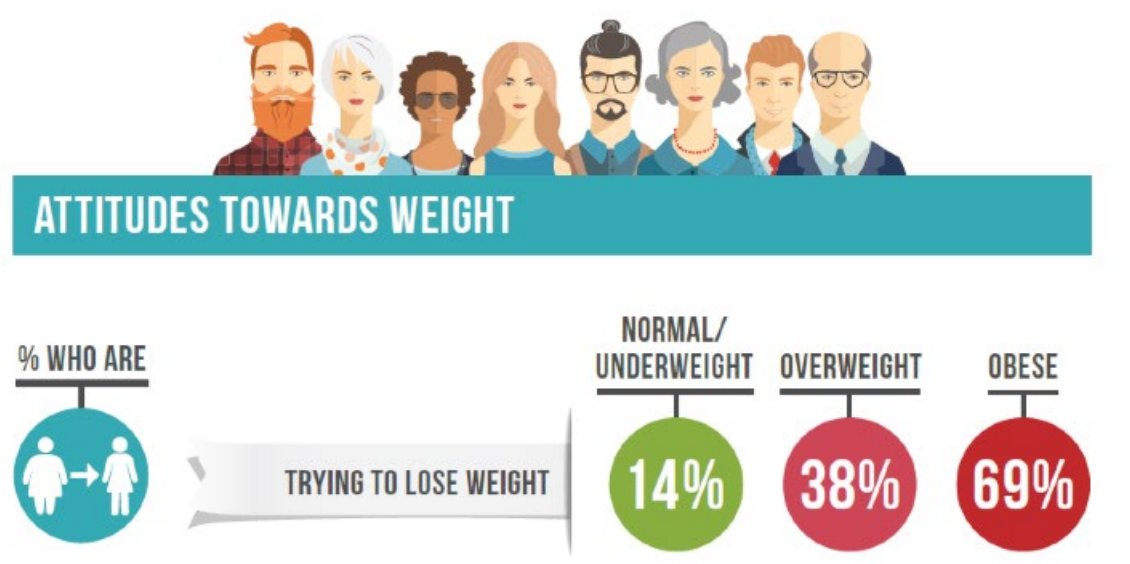
Figure 2: Healthy Ireland Survey 2017: Health behaviours



Source: Healthy Ireland Survey 2017. Summary of Findings.

Over a third (36%) of the individuals surveyed indicate that they are trying to lose weight, with 69% of those that are categorised as being obese trying to address the issue (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Healthy Ireland Survey 2017: Attitudes towards weight



Source: Healthy Ireland Survey 2017. Summary of Findings.

As demonstrated in Figure 4, the most common actions taken to promote weight loss are eating fewer calories (56%), eating less fat (47%) and eating/drinking fewer sugar-sweetened foods/drinks (42%).

Figure 4: Healthy Ireland Survey 2017: Actions taken to attempt to lose weight



Source: Healthy Ireland Survey 2017. Summary of Findings.

The HSE has prioritised 'improving staff health and wellbeing' as part of The Healthy Ireland in the Health Services National Implementation Plan 2015-2017⁴. The HSE is working with the Department of Health (DH) in developing a Healthy Workplace Framework, due to be launched in 2019. As the largest employer in the country the DH has tasked the HSE with becoming an exemplar of good practice and role model for other organisations by supporting HSE staff to lead a healthy lifestyle including maintaining a healthy body weight. A current example of this practice in the HSE, is the Happy Heart Healthy Eating award from the Irish Heart Foundation which is helping to create a culture of health and wellbeing within the organisation.

A 2016 survey of staff from the HSE Health and Wellbeing Division⁹ found that 64% of respondents brought their lunch to work every day, 21% bought lunch from a non HSE facility and 8% bought lunch in a staff canteen.

“Fifteen per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, “It is easy for me to follow a healthy diet at work”. Staff ranked, “having healthy food available at work” as the most useful strategy in promoting healthy eating in their workplace”.

In the same year, a **safefood** survey¹⁰ found that two-thirds of Irish people doing shift work skipped meals. It has been suggested that shift work has a negative impact on health, increasing the risk of chronic disease¹¹. We know that approximately 60% or 51,000 HSE staff (not including voluntary agencies) do shift and night work on a regular basis¹². Due to the nature of the work in the health services some staff may be required to eat breakfast, lunch and dinner in the workplace environment. It is therefore essential that workplaces promote access to healthier foods. Many Health Service facilities are already promoting the healthier food choice as the easier choice for staff and visitors. These sites will be

a valuable resource in sharing examples of their practices during the implementation phase of these standards throughout the organisation.

The Guide to the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work (General Application) Regulations 2007¹³ refer to environmental factors in relation to food consumption in the workplace

“Suitable and adequate facilities for boiling water and taking meals are provided and maintained for the use of employees, or that employees have reasonable access to other suitable and adequate facilities for the taking of meals...”

Consideration of environmental factors in relation to food consumption and provision is not within the scope of this document.

These standards do not apply to food prepared and brought into the workplace by staff for consumption. However, all staff are encouraged to follow the Healthy Food for Life Guidelines¹⁴ when preparing meals. They are also encouraged to follow guidance on the HSE Healthy Meeting Guidelines¹⁵.



Development of the Standards

The HSE Healthy Eating Active Living Programme collaborated with **safe food** and formed a technical working group to develop the first draft of the nutrition standards for food and beverage provision. To inform the development of these standards, the working group took cognisance of the recently published 'Minimum nutritional standards for catering in health and social care' for Northern Ireland (2017)¹⁶ and the 'Healthier and more sustainable catering, A toolkit for serving foods to adults' (2017)¹⁷. The draft was then further progressed by the HSE Healthier Food Environment Advisory Group. This document provides the nutrition standards that need to be applied to food and beverage provision in all healthcare settings. This is the first step in creating a healthier food environment for the health services as the standards will underpin policies relating to Hospital Food, Residential care sites, Healthier Vending and Calorie Posting.

Application of the Standards

These standards relate to food and beverage provision for staff and visitors in healthcare settings (they do not apply to patient food and beverage provision). These standards apply to all facilities providing food or beverages within healthcare settings and should be applied when planning menus.

Procurement

The health sector has been mandated to implement a single integrated procurement approach for the sector, incorporating the HSE and all healthcare agencies and institutions which are in receipt of government funding. It has been agreed at governmental level, that the Office of Government Procurement (OGP) would manage the tendering processes for all common expenditure categories across Government Departments and Agencies, including HSE Food services. The HSE must ensure that the OGP include these nutrition standards when food contracts are being specified in all procurement process (the sourcing, buying and provision or tendering process).



Nutrient and Food Based Standards

These food and beverage standards are a combination of nutrient and food-based standards that have been developed around the *Irish Healthy Food for Life - Healthy Eating Guidelines (HEG)* and Food Pyramid (2016)¹⁴. *Healthy Food for Life* is a toolkit which includes the Food Pyramid and guidance materials to help people make choices to maintain a healthy, balanced diet. The toolkit was developed by the Department of Health and the HSE with key stakeholders and aims to help reduce the intake of high fat, salt and sugar foods and drinks from the top shelf of the Food Pyramid. The Healthy Eating Guidelines and Food Pyramid (2016) are based on:

- a review of the previous HEG conducted by the HRB (2014)¹⁸.
- the Healthy Ireland Survey results (2015, 2016, 2017)⁶⁻⁸.
- the Food Safety Authority Ireland Scientific Recommendations for Healthy Eating in Ireland (2011)¹⁹.
- UK, EU, WHO and international recommendations (2012–2015)²⁰⁻²¹.
- focus group testing with both consumers and health professionals (Ipsos MRBI 2015, 2016)²².

The guidelines recommend that a healthy diet should contain:

- Less than or equal 10% of daily energy from saturated fats.
- Less than 1% of daily energy from trans fats.
- Less than 10% of daily energy from added sugars progressively reducing to 5%, and preferably closer to 5% (WHO 2015)²³.
- More than 400g fruits and vegetables a day.
- Less than 5g a day of salt (6g population recommendation FSAI 2011)¹⁹.

The overall body of scientific evidence (FSAI, Public Health England, WHO European Region, US Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee) identifies that a healthy dietary pattern is:

- Higher in vegetables, fruits, whole grains;
- Moderate in low fat milk, cheese and yogurt; fish, peas, beans and lentils;
- Lower in processed meats;
- Provides very small amounts of unsaturated reduced fat spreads and oils;
- As low as possible in sugar-sweetened beverages and foods with added sugars (not every day).

The Food Pyramid infographic shows how to combine foods in a variety of flexible ways to achieve healthy dietary patterns and meet health needs, dietary preferences and cultural traditions. A tool kit¹⁴ of resources is available to support the Irish population to make choices that in total contributes to an overall healthy eating pattern, by combining healthy choices from across all food groups, while paying attention to calorie limits and physical activity daily targets too.

The Food Pyramid

For adults, teenagers and children aged five and over

Not needed for good health.

Foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt



Most people consume snacks high in fat, sugar and salt and sugar sweetened drinks up to 6 times a day (Healthy Ireland Survey 2016). There are no recommended servings for Top Shelf foods and drinks because they are not needed for good health.



Fats, spreads and oils

Use as little as possible. Choose mono or polyunsaturated reduced-fat or light spreads. Choose rapeseed, olive, canola, sunflower or corn oils. Limit mayonnaise, coleslaw and salad dressings as they also contain oil. Always cook with as little fat or oil as possible – grilling, oven-baking, steaming, boiling or stir-frying.



Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

Choose lean meat, poultry (without skin) and fish. Eat oily fish up to twice a week. Choose eggs, beans and nuts. Limit processed salty meats such as sausages, bacon and ham.



Milk, yogurt and cheese

Choose reduced-fat or low-fat varieties. Choose low-fat milk and yogurt more often than cheese. Enjoy cheese in small amounts. Women who are pregnant or breastfeeding need 3 servings a day.



Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Wholemeal and wholegrain cereals are best. Enjoy at each meal. The number of servings depends on age, size, if you are a man or a woman and on activity levels. Watch your serving size and use the Daily Servings Guide below.*



Vegetables, salad and fruit

Base your meals on these and enjoy a variety of colours. More is better. Limit fruit juice to unsweetened, once a day.



*Daily Servings Guide – wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Active	Child (5–12)	Teenager (13–18)	Adult (19–50)	Adult (51+)	Inactive	Teenager (13–18)	Adult (19–50)	Adult (51+)
	3–4	4	4–5	3–4		3	3–4	3
	3–5	5–7	5–7	4–5		4–5	4–6	4

There is no guideline for inactive children as it is essential that all children are active.

Serving size guide



Cereals, cooked rice and pasta and vegetable salad and fruit. Use a 200ml plastic cup to get serving size.



Drink at least 2 litres of fluid a day.

Average daily calorie needs for all foods and drinks for adults

Active 2000kcal **Inactive** 1800kcal

Active 2500kcal **Inactive** 2000kcal

**NOT
every
day**

Small or fun-size servings of chocolate, biscuits, cakes, sweets, crisps and other savoury snacks, ice cream and sugary drinks – **not every day, maximum once or twice a week.**

1 serving size is:

**In very
small
amounts**

1 portion pack reduced-fat or light spread for 2 slices of bread
1 teaspoon oil per person when cooking

**2
Servings
a day**

50–75g cooked lean beef, lamb, pork, mince
or poultry (half size of palm of hand)
100g cooked fish, soya or tofu
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup beans or lentils
2 eggs
40g unsalted nuts or seeds

**3
Servings
a day**

**5 for
children age
9–12 and
teenagers
age 13–18**

1 glass (200ml) milk
1 carton (125g) yogurt
1 bottle (200ml) yogurt drink
2 thumbs (25g) hard or semi-hard cheese
such as cheddar or edam
2 thumbs (25g) soft cheese such
as brie or camembert

**3-5*
Servings
a day**

**Up to 7*
for teenage
boys and
men age
19–50**

2 thin slices wholemeal bread,
1½ slices wholemeal soda bread or 1 pitta pocket
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dry porridge oats or
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup unsweetened muesli
1 cup flaked type breakfast cereal
1 cup cooked rice, pasta, noodles or cous cous
2 medium or 4 small potatoes, 1 cup yam
or plantain

**5-7
Servings
a day**

1 medium sized fruit – apple, orange, pear or banana
2 small fruits – plums, kiwis or mandarin oranges
Small fruits – 6 strawberries, 10 grapes or 16 raspberries
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked vegetables – fresh or frozen
1 bowl salad – lettuce, tomato, cucumber
1 bowl homemade vegetable soup
150ml unsweetened fruit juice



Cheese

Use two thumbs, width and depth to guide serving size.



Meat, poultry, fish

The palm of the hand, width and depth without fingers and thumbs, shows how much you need in a day.



Reduced-fat spread

Portion packs found in cafes can guide the amount you use. One pack should be enough for two slices of bread.



Oils

Use one teaspoon of oil per person when cooking or in salads.

at least 8 cups of
water is best



Get Active!

To maintain a healthy weight adults need at least 30 minutes a day of moderate activity on 5 days a week (or 150 minutes a week); children need to be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day.

Nutrient and Food Based Standards

With respect to the definitions of various nutritional claims the working group made reference to EU legislation covering the labelling of products (FSAI 2014)²⁴. See Table 1.

The working group also made reference to the targets set out by Public Health England 2017 in relation to guidance in achieving a reduction in sugar content for the food industry²⁵.

In addition to these standards, all premises servicing food must continue to adhere to all Food Safety and Allergan legislation.

Given the growing population of people from different ethnicities and cultures now living in Ireland, there may be a requirement for a “special diet” meaning provision of food that meets cultural or religious needs. Whilst the general food options available will be able to meet most of the requirements of cultural or religious dietary needs, there will be some that may require alternative food choices and or adaptations. Staff should discuss specific cultural or religious dietary needs with the food services/catering manager.

Table 1: Food Safety Authority of Ireland (2014) Information on nutrition and health claims booklet.

High fibre	Product contains at least 6g of fibre per 100g or at least 3g of fibre per 100kcal
Low fat	Product contains no more than 3g of fat per 100g for solids or 1.5g of fat per 100ml for liquids (1.8g of fat per 100ml for semi-skimmed milk)
Low saturated fat	The sum of saturated fatty acids and trans-fatty acids in the product does not exceed 1.5g per 100g for solids or 0.75g per 100ml for liquids and in either case, the sum of saturated fatty acids and trans-fatty acids must not provide more than 10% of energy
Low sodium/salt	Product contains no more than 0.12g of sodium, or 0.3g of salt, per 100g or per 100ml for waters other than natural mineral waters falling within the scope of Directive 80/777/EEC, this value should not exceed 2mg of sodium per 100ml
Sugar-free	Product contains no more than 0.5g of sugars per 100g or 100ml
With no added sugars	Product does not contain any added mono- or disaccharides or any other food used for its sweetening properties. If sugars are naturally present in the food, the following indication should also appear on the label: ‘Contains naturally occurring sugars’
Reduced saturated fat	Where the sum of saturated fatty acids and of trans-fatty acids in the product is at least 30% less than in a similar product; and where the content in trans-fatty acids is equal to or less than in a similar product
Reduced salt	Where the reduction in content is at least 25% compared to a similar product

Source: Food Safety Authority of Ireland (2014)²⁴.

The introduction section of this document outlines the rationale for developing nutrition standards for food and beverage provision. The standards are a combination of nutrient and food-based standards and are described under Nutrition Standards. The Guidance for Caterers section gives additional guidance to caterers on buying, preparing and displaying foods to improve the nutritional quality of foods provided. The publication of these standards is an important step toward creating a healthier food environment for everyone across the health services. To put them into practice will require changes to how we purchase, prepare and provide food across our catering and retail services as well as at individual level. Over the next three years we will be working closely with key stakeholders corporately, in Hospital Groups and Community Healthcare organisations to enable the changes to better support the health and wellbeing of our staff and visitors.



Nutrition Standards



Vegetables, salad and fruit

Nutrition standards	<p>1.1 At least five different types of fruit and vegetables must be available every day.</p> <p>1.2 The minimum portion size of fruit and vegetables served must be 80g.</p> <p>1.3 A minimum of two vegetables must be available/served at each main meal service.</p> <p>1.4 When offering fruit or vegetable juice use the smallest available pack size. This is because only one 150ml serving of fruit or vegetable juice per day can be counted as a portion of 5-7 per day.</p> <p>1.5 At least one salad option at each service must be offered without salad dressing.</p> <p>1.6 At least 50 per cent of desserts produced or procured must contain a portion of fruit, which can be fresh, tinned in fruit juice, dried or frozen.</p> <p>1.7 Fruit must be available at breakfast, lunch and evening meal.</p>
What foods are included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fresh, frozen, tinned, juiced and dried fruit. ➤ Fresh, frozen, tinned and juiced vegetables. ➤ Unsweetened 100 per cent fruit and vegetable juices (limited to one 150ml serving per day, which counts towards the recommended 5-7 per day).
Portion size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Five to seven servings of vegetables salad and fruit are recommended per day. <p>One serving size is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 80g cooked vegetables ➤ 80g salad ➤ 80g fruit ➤ 150ml unsweetened fruit juice ➤ 1 bowl homemade vegetable soup



Wholemeal cereals and breads, potatoes, pasta and rice

Nutrition standards	<p>2.1 Higher fibre starchy options must be available at all meal times (for example brown rice, wholemeal pasta, potatoes with skins).</p> <p>2.2 At least 50 per cent of breakfast cereals displayed must be higher in fibre – they must contain more than six grams of fibre per 100g and must not exceed 12.3g of total sugars per 100g.</p> <p>2.3 At least 50 per cent of breads provided must be higher fibre, such as wholegrain, brown, wholemeal, wheaten and granary options. This includes all sandwiches.</p>
What foods are included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Breads - wholemeal, wholegrain, granary, brown, white, wheaten and soda bread, potato bread, pitta bread, chapattis, tortilla wraps, paninis and bagels. ➤ Potatoes, sweet potato. ➤ Breakfast cereals. ➤ Rice, couscous, bulgar wheat (cracked wheat), semolina, tapioca, maize, cornmeal and quinoa. ➤ Pasta. ➤ Noodles (including rice, udon, soba and egg noodles). ➤ Other grains, for example oats, millet, barley, buckwheat, rye and spelt.
Portion size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3 to 5 servings a day are recommended, depending on age and activity levels. Up to 7 servings for teenage boys and men aged 19–50. Very active people will need more. <p>One serving size is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 45g flaked type cereals ➤ 2 wheaten biscuits ➤ 40g dry porridge oats ➤ 40g unsweetened muesli ➤ 2 thin slices of wholemeal bread ➤ 2 thin slices of wholemeal soda bread ➤ 1 large slice of wholemeal soda bread ➤ 1 wholemeal pitta bread ➤ 200g cooked potatoes ➤ 125g cooked rice ➤ 100g cooked pasta, noodles or cous cous ➤ 125g cooked yam ➤ 150g cooked plantain



Milk, yogurt and cheese

Nutrition standards	<p>3.1 Milk and dairy foods must be offered every day and at every meal.</p> <p>3.2 Low fat and skimmed milk must be available every day.</p> <p>3.3 At least 75 per cent of milk (procured by volume) must be lower fat (low fat or skimmed).</p> <p>3.4 At least 50 per cent of hard yellow cheese (procured by volume) must have a maximum total fat content of 25g of fat per 100g.</p> <p>3.5 75 per cent of yogurts and yogurt drinks (procured by volume) must be low-fat (that is, containing less than 3g fat per 100g) AND contain less than 11g of sugar per 100g.</p> <p>3.6 Lower fat alternatives to cream must be used in cooking for example, low fat yogurt, very low fat crème fraîche and fromage frais or any similar product that has less than 10g of fat per 100g.</p> <p>3.7 Lower fat milk (low fat or skimmed) must be used in cooking where a recipe requires milk.</p> <p>3.8 Low fat milk must be used in jugs on tables for use in tea and coffee.</p> <p>3.9 Plant based drinks, if offered, must be fortified and unsweetened.</p>
What foods are included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All types of milk, including dried milk, reduced fat milk, goats and sheep's milk. ➤ Cheeses, for example cheddar, cottage cheese, cheese spreads, edam, goat's cheese, stilton and camembert. ➤ Yogurt (fruit or plain, whole milk or low fat), or fromage frais and yogurt drinks. ➤ Milk-based sauces, custard and milk puddings, fortified soya drinks and yogurts. ➤ Plant based drinks, for example, almond, hazelnut, coconut, rice or oat drinks.
Portion size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3 servings a day are recommended for adults, 5 for those aged 9 to 18. <p>One serving size is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 200ml milk ➤ 125g yogurt ➤ 200ml yogurt drink ➤ 25g hard or semi-hard cheese ➤ 25g soft cheese



Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

Nutrition standards	<p>4.1 Meat, fish or a vegetarian protein source must be offered at lunch and evening meal.</p> <p>4.2 Fish must be offered at least twice a week, one portion of which must be oily fish.</p> <p>4.3 All vegetarian meals must contain a protein source, e.g. beans, lentils, chickpeas, nuts. Cheese based vegetarian options must be offered in total not more than twice each week (where lunch only is served) and a maximum of four times each week (where both lunch and evening meal are served).</p> <p>4.4 A portion of red or processed meat must not exceed 50g on average cooked weight when consumed in a salad or sandwich and must not exceed 75g when consumed as part of a breakfast or main course.</p> <p>4.5 There must be at least two days each week when no processed meat or processed poultry or battered fish is offered. This applies to breakfast, lunch and evening meal. This also applies to salad and sandwich counters.</p> <p>4.6 Meat and meat products served must be reduced saturated fat when available.</p> <p>4.7 At least 30% of pre-prepared sandwiches are meat/fish free.</p>
What foods are included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, nuts, beans, pulses, seeds and other vegetarian alternatives. ➤ Meat includes all cuts of beef, lamb and pork. Processed meat includes ham, bacon, salami, corned beef, beef burgers, sausages and chicken goujons/nuggets. ➤ Poultry includes any fresh or frozen products. ➤ Fish includes any fresh, frozen and tinned fish, such as tuna, sardines, pilchards, mackerel and fish products such as fish cakes and fish fingers. ➤ Oily fish includes salmon, sardines, trout, mackerel, herring, pilchards and fresh tuna. ➤ Eggs – boiled, poached, scrambled or fried and omelettes. ➤ Beans and pulses, for example, baked beans, chickpeas, butter beans, kidney beans and lentils. ➤ Other protein products suitable for people following a vegetarian or vegan diet include nuts, tofu and textured protein products such as soya and Quorn.
Portion size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 2 servings a day are recommended for adults, teenagers and children aged five and over. <p>One serving size is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 50-75g cooked lean beef, lamb, pork, mince or poultry ➤ 100g cooked fish, soya or tofu ➤ 2 eggs ➤ 150g baked beans ➤ 100g cooked chick peas ➤ 100g cooked kidney beans ➤ 100g cooked lentils



Fats, oils and spreads

Nutrition standards	<p>5.1 All cooking oils must be based on mono or polyunsaturated fats.</p> <p>5.2 At least 75 per cent of spreads must be based on monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fats.</p> <p>5.3 All mayonnaise, salad dressings and salad creams (including those used in potato salads and coleslaws) must be low fat, light or reduced calorie versions.</p>
What foods are included?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated oils, spreads (maize, corn, safflower, sunflower, soya, olive and rapeseed) and low fat spreads and oil-based salad dressings containing these oils. ➤ Butter, ghee, lard, suet, cooking oils (e.g. palm oil and coconut oil), oil-based salad dressings containing these oils, mayonnaise, cream, crème fraîche.
Portion size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These foods must be eaten in very small amounts. <p>One serving size is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1 portion pack (10g) of reduced fat or light spread. ➤ 1 teaspoon (3g) oil per person when cooking.



Other foods and drinks high in fat, sugar and salt

Nutrition standards	<p>6.1 At least 75 per cent of pre-packed ready meals must contain less than 6g of saturated fat per portion and pre-prepared sandwiches (procured by volume) must contain less than 4.5g of saturated fat per portion.</p> <p>6.2 At least 50 per cent of all main course options must not be deep fried, batter-coated or bread crumb-coated, or include a creamy sauce or pastry. If chips are served, they must be thick-cut and oven-baked. There must be an alternative starchy side option available that is not deep-fried or coated in oil or butter. Do not add salt to chips before serving.</p> <p>6.3 There must be at least 3 out of 5 days or 4 out of 7 days each week when high fat starchy food such as chips, potato wedges, sausage rolls, garlic bread or roast potatoes are not served.</p> <p>6.4 Savoury snacks including crisps and nuts must be available in the smallest commercially available packet size only. Unsalted versions must be available.</p> <p>6.5 At least 50 per cent of savoury snacks must be reduced fat options.</p> <p>6.6 Baked products such as muffins and scones must weigh less than 60g per scone and 80g per muffin.</p> <p>6.7 100 per cent of beverages (procured by volume) must be sugar free, diet or have no added sugar.</p> <p>6.8 Confectionery, packet sweet/biscuit snacks must be offered only in the smallest standard single serve portion size commercially available. This must not exceed 200kcal per serving.</p> <p>6.9 Traybakes, pastries and baked products, for example, brownies and caramel squares must not exceed 200kcal per serving.</p> <p>6.10 Do not display salt or salt substitutes at tables.</p> <p>6.11 Do not display sugar sachets/cubes at tables.</p> <p>6.12 Do not provide chips or crisps as an accompaniment to sandwiches.</p> <p>6.13 Do not display chocolate bars, crisps, sweets, cereal bars at payment/cash desk areas as this increases impulse purchases.</p>
What foods are included?	<p>➤ Chocolate, crisps, biscuits, pastries, cakes, puddings, ice cream, sugary soft drinks, sweets, jams, honey and sugar, as well as rich sauces and gravies.</p>
Portion size	<p>➤ See standards for portion sizes above.</p>



Guidance for caterers

The previous section of this document outlined the nutrition standards that need to be met in healthcare settings. Caterers have an important role to play because they can positively influence the quality and nutritional content of the food served to staff and visitors. Since many staff choose to eat in canteens several times per week, small changes can make a big impact. This section gives initial guidance to caterers on improving the nutritional quality of foods provided. To avoid duplication, guidance on some food groups or some parts of food groups, such as preparation or cooking methods, may not be included in this section if already provided earlier in the nutrition standards section.

Guidance on: vegetables, salads and fruit

When buying

- Buy tinned fruit in juice rather than in syrup.
- Buy tinned vegetables and pulses in water, with no added salt or sugar.
- When procuring fruit and vegetables buy a range of different types and colours to provide a variety of nutrients.
- When buying composite dishes purchase those that contain fruit or vegetables.

When preparing or cooking

- Promote the use of fresh and seasonal fruit and vegetables.
- Steaming and cooking vegetables with minimum amounts of water (with no added salt), for as short a time as possible and serving as soon as possible will help retain vitamins.
- Add vegetables and pulses to stews, casseroles or other dishes and offer a variety of vegetables at main meals.
- Vegetables can be stir-fried, grilled and roasted in a small amount of oil.

- Incorporate fruit into other desserts and dishes, including cold starters and savoury dishes (e.g. citrus chicken, serving apple sauce with pork, dried fruits like apricots, and raisins in Moroccan style tagines and casseroles).
- Pureed stewed fruit can be offered with custard, yoghurt or ice cream as dessert.
- Do not add sugar or syrupy dressings to fruit (such as stewed apple).
- Add vegetables to rice e.g. mushrooms, peas, sweet corn and peppers.
- Use tomato and vegetable based sauces in preference to creamy, buttery sauces where appropriate.

When displaying or serving

- Offer a variety of fresh and dried fruits to add to cereal options and porridge.
- Offer a variety of salads by combining vegetables and fruits with nuts, seeds, noodles, quinoa, bulgar, rice and couscous e.g. roasted vegetables and couscous. Use reduced fat salad dressings.
- Always have appealing, blemish free, ripe fresh fruit on display at the cash desk/central area.
- Provide easy access to fresh fruit salads in take away containers. Offer a variety of chopped and whole fruit.
- Offer fruit and vegetables more prominently than other snack foods.
- If you offer any kind of 'meal deal', ensure that you include at least one portion of vegetable or a portion of fruit.
- Offer grilled vegetables every day as cooked breakfast option for example grilled mushrooms, tomatoes or baked beans.

Guidance on: wholemeal cereals and bread, potatoes, pasta and rice

When preparing or cooking

- Wholemeal flour can be used for some recipes or used to replace some of the white flour in a recipe.
- Aim for a golden yellow colour when baking, toasting, roasting or frying starchy foods to minimise the levels of acrylamide produced. (Acrylamide is a chemical that naturally forms in starchy foods when they are cooked at high temperatures. Studies carried out over the years on the effects of acrylamide in food have shown that acrylamide potentially increases the risk of developing cancer for consumers of all age groups).
- Roast potatoes in small amounts of vegetable oil. Brush the oil on to potatoes rather than pouring over to use smaller amounts.
- Do not add salt to water when cooking pasta, rice and other grains. Herbs, spices, garlic, vegetables, dried fruit, seeds and nuts can be used during or after cooking to add flavour.
- Use skimmed or semi-skimmed milk rather than butter or margarine to mash potatoes to smoothness.
- Use thick cut chips or potatoes wedges instead of thin cut chips. They absorb less oil when cooking, or use oven chips.
- Add pulses like beans and lentils to casseroles, stews and curries to increase fibre content.
- Drain/blot fried foods before serving.

When displaying or serving

- If offering a traditional Irish breakfast, use wholemeal toast rather than hash browns or waffles.
- Serve boiled or steamed rice instead of fried rice.

Guidance on: meat, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and nuts

When buying

- Buy tinned fish in spring water or brine rather than oil.
- Buy tinned beans and pulses with no added salt and sugar.
- Buy leaner cuts of meat where possible.

When preparing or cooking

- Turkey and chicken are lower fat options when the skin is removed. Remove skin where practical.
- Stand poultry and joints on racks when cooking to allow the fat to flow away.
- Boil, bake, grill or poach rather than frying or roasting where possible as this will lower the fat content.
- Add pulses to meat dishes to increase the fibre content and reduce the fat content per portion.
- When baking fish, brush with unsaturated vegetable oil rather than butter.
- Use garlic, herbs and spices to flavour foods instead of salt.
- Season food sparingly with salt or seasonings containing salt.

When displaying or serving

- Offer boiled, poached or scrambled eggs rather than fried.
- Serve foods with tomato or vegetable based sauces rather than creamy, buttery sauces to lower the fat content.
- When serving foods with gravy opt for reduced salt versions of gravy mixes, or stock/bouillon cubes/granules.

Guidance on: fats, oils and spreads

When preparing or cooking

- Consider using spreads that are soft straight from the fridge, so it is easier to spread thinly on sandwiches.
- Do not automatically garnish potatoes and vegetables with butter or fat spread prior to service.

Guidance on: other foods and drinks high in fat, salt and sugar

When preparing or cooking

- Reduce the amount of sugar used in dishes where practical and acceptable.
- Use dried or fresh fruit to sweeten dishes.

When displaying or serving

- Serve salad dressings and dessert toppings separately so that customers can decide how much they want.

HSE Calorie Posting Policy

Calories are a measure of the amount of energy in a food. Knowing how many calories are in food can help consumers to track how much energy is eaten in comparison to recommended calories per day. The Department of Health Healthy Food for Life recommend that an average man needs around 2,500 calories per day to maintain a healthy body weight, and that the average woman needs around 2,000 calories per day.

The Calorie Posting Policy and Guidance on Implementation was approved by HSE Leadership Team in September 2015 and applies to all food and beverage outlets on HSE premises (including HSE funded agencies) i.e. staff canteens, staff and visitor restaurants, coffee shops, mobile shop trolleys and includes contracted catering and vending services. It does not apply to inpatient menus.

The purpose of the policy is to promote awareness and increase consumption of healthier food and drink choices amongst HSE staff and the public using and visiting HSE facilities, by highlighting the calorie content of food and drinks provided in HSE facilities. Calorie posting has been shown to bring about modest behaviour changes and reduction in calorie intake which, as part of a package of measures contribute to overall government policy objectives to halt and reverse the overweight and obesity trends across the population.

The policy states that:

- Calorie posting is in place for all food and drink items on sale.
- Calorie information is displayed clearly at the 'point of choice' for the consumer.
- Calorie information is displayed per standard portion or per meal.
- Information on how many calories an average person needs in a day is prominently displayed to help consumers better understand calorie information.

The guidance document on implementation of calorie posting provides support to aid roll-out of the policy at a local level and was informed by pilot interventions.

Full details of the policy and guidance for calorie posting implementation can be found at **<https://www.hse.ie/healthyeatingactiveliving>**

HSE Healthier Vending Policy

The Healthier Vending Policy was approved by the HSE Leadership Team in February 2014 (reviewed in 2018) and applies to vending machines for cold soft drinks, confectionary and snacks. The policy aims to improve the health and wellbeing of staff and visitors by providing the option of choosing a healthier snack or beverage when using a vending machine on HSE premises. Full details of this policy can be found at: <https://www.hse.ie/healthyeatingactiveliving>

The majority of vending machines in current use in the HSE are suitable for vending cold soft drinks, confectionary and snacks and these products have been the focus of the Healthier Vending Policy to date. With the introduction of these Minimum Nutrition Standards and with the expiration of the HSE National Contract for Vending in 2020, the HSE intends to move to promoting the use of vending services that can provide a broader range of healthier snacks such as fresh perishable fruits, cheese snacks, sandwiches, salads, yogurt and milk.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Members of the Healthier Food Environment Advisory Group

Chair: Margaret O'Neill, National Dietetic Lead, Strategic Planning and Transformation, HSE

Project Manager: Agatha Lawless, Project Manager, Healthy Eating Active Living Programme

Adrienne Lynam, Project Manager, Staff Health and Wellbeing Programme

Ana Santos, Occupational Health Advisor representing Workplace Health & Wellbeing

Annette Collins, Catering Manager, Cork University Hospital – (March-April 2018) replaced by Anne Bodley, Head of Catering, Catering Department, Cork University Hospital

Dr. Bernadette O'Keefe, Specialist in Public Health Medicine

Dr. Marie Tuohy, Assistant National Oral Lead/Child Health, Primary Care

Dr. Edel McNamara, HSE Senior Community Dietitian, Department of Health Promotion and Improvement

Fidelma Mac Hale, Healthy Ireland Project Manager, Ireland East Hospital Group

Gerry Brennan, Category Specialist HBS Procurement, Sourcing & Contracts

Joana Caldeira Fernandes da Silva, Technical Executive in Human Health and Nutrition, **safefood**

Michael Quirey, HSE National Health Sustainability Office

Peter Byrne, Facilities Manager, Letterkenny General Hospital

Rosemary Bracken, Catering Manager, Cherry Orchard Hospital

Siobhan Fitzpatrick, Head Of Service Health & Wellbeing

Glossary

- *Composite meals:* These are multi layered dishes composed of more than one recipe combined to form a composite meal i.e. lasagne.
- *Food based standards:* These are targets relating to specific foods, rather than the nutrients they contain.
- *Main Meal:* A main meal can be defined as a serving of food which provides the greatest contribution to the energy and range of nutrients required daily. It usually consists of hot cooked dishes with accompaniments).
- *Night work* means work carried out during the night time - the period between midnight and 7am. A night worker is an employee who normally works at least 3 hours between midnight and 7am and who works at night for at least half of their working hours in a year.
- *Nutrient standards:* These are targets defined for minimum/maximum provision of a range of nutrients that should be provided in a meal/menu.
- The term 'obesogenic environment' refers to the role environmental factors may play in determining both nutrition and physical activity. Environmental factors may operate by determining the availability and consumption of different foodstuffs and the levels of physical activity undertaken by populations.
- *Shift work* means any method of organising work in shifts whereby workers succeed each other at the same work stations according to a certain pattern, including a rotating pattern, and which may be continuous or discontinuous, entailing the need to work at different times over a given period of days or weeks. For example, working 8am-4pm for one week and 4pm to midnight the following week.
- *Unhealthy Foods:* There is no universal definition of an "unhealthy food". For the purposes of the Healthy Ireland survey, the following categories of foods were used. Each category was assigned a short name (shown in brackets) for ease of reporting.
 - Foods like chocolate, sweets, and ice-cream (sweets)
 - Foods like cakes, muffins, and biscuits (cakes and biscuits)
 - Foods like popcorn, salted nuts, and crisps (salted snacks)
 - Sweet and savoury pastries (pastries)
 - Takeaways, ready meals and chips (fried foods)

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