



Nutrition Guidelines for Food Procurement and Service in Adult California Correctional Facilities

Background

These voluntary nutrition guidelines are aligned with federal nutritional standards,¹ and are intended to inform purchasing decisions by the Department of General Services and other agencies that manage large food contracts for with the general adult prison population. The guidelines were developed collaboratively a food procurement working group made up food and nutrition experts from nine California State Departments: Corrections and Rehabilitation, General Services, Aging, Rehabilitation, Education, Food and Agriculture, Developmental Services, Veterans Affairs, and Public Health. The process was facilitated by the California Department of Public Health, the Public Health Institute, and Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit Program, in response to a recommendation from the California Health in All Policies Task Force to “Leverage government spending to support healthy eating and sustainable local food systems.”

Governments can use food service and procurement policies to create a healthful food environment and can apply them anywhere food is served, sold or consumed, including work-site cafeterias, vending machines, educational institutions, correctional institutions, group homes, childcare facilities, schools, park concession stands, meetings, conferences and hospitals. Menus based on the federal nutrition standards can prevent nutrient deficiencies and reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and stroke, which are the leading causes of death in California.² Serving food of maximum nutritional value is one of the most direct ways that the State can promote the prevention of chronic disease for its custodial populations, employees, and visitors.

Because the Department of Corrections (CDCR) is the largest purchaser of food via state contracts, spends more than \$140 million annually to serve approximately 124,000 inmates, and faces contract barriers that make it difficult to meet its nutritional goals, the working group decided to focus on nutrition guidelines for this population. These targeted guidelines are not intended to be comprehensive nutrition standards, nor are they guidelines for overall menu planning, but rather are intended for use by the Department of General Services and other institutions that manage large food contracts, in order to ensure availability of healthful food items that can be used by menu planners. Menus for CDCR are planned by a registered dietician and designed to meet the federal Recommended Dietary Reference Intakes. In addition, CDCR regulations require Heart Healthy, low salt, low fat, and pork free menus.³ CDCR menus already have a goal to meet the American Heart Association Plan Menus and follow the American Heart Association's Healthy Eating plan.⁴ All inmates are served the same menu, with the exception of those who qualify for Kosher, Halal, vegetarian, or special medical meals (e.g. pregnant and lactating women, gluten-free diets, hepatic diets, or diets for renal patients). These guidelines are intended for the general adult inmate population, and do not replace special meals or diets.

The following nutrition guidelines include specific target goals and recommendations assuming cost neutrality and availability of products.

¹ These guidelines are adapted in part from federal health and sustainability standards as well as the Dietary Guidelines of America (DGA), the latter of which are the scientific and policy basis for all Federal nutrition food assistance programs. The Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations can be accessed at <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/guidelines/food-service-guidelines.htm>.

² State of California, Department of Public Health, Death Records, 2010.

³ The CDCR Heart Healthy diet stipulates a daily diet of 2,800 calories for males, with 35 grams of fiber, less than 300 milligrams of cholesterol, less than 10% of daily calories from saturated fat, and as little trans-fat as possible.

⁴ The American Heart Association's Healthy Eating plan calls for only 30% of calories from fat and no more than 2400 milligrams of sodium per day.



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FRUITS

- Aim for a variety of at least three whole or sliced fruits daily.
- Serve a variety of seasonally available fruits, locally sourced when feasible.
- Aim to serve canned or frozen fruit packaged in 100% water or unsweetened juice, with no added sweeteners.

VEGETABLES

- Serve daily, at least one raw, salad-type vegetable and at least one steamed or baked vegetable seasoned without fat or oil.
- Aim for all vegetable offerings to contain ≤ 230 mg sodium, per serving.
- Aim for mixed dishes containing vegetables (dishes consisting of 50% of vegetables or more) to contain ≤ 480 mg sodium, per serving.
- Serve a variety of seasonally available vegetables.

CEREALS AND GRAINS (Excluding Bread)

- When cereal grains are offered (e.g., rice, cereal, pasta), then aim to serve whole grain option as the standard.
- Aim for cereal and pasta offerings to contain ≤ 230 mg sodium per serving.
- Aim for at least 50% of hot or cold breakfast cereals to contain at least 3g of fiber and less than 10g total sugars per serving.
- When cereal grains are offered (e.g., rice and pasta), aim for a 100% whole grain option serve as the standard choice.

BREAD

- Aim to serve whole grain bread as the standard.
- Aim for loaf bread to contain 140 mg of sodium per 1 ounce serving.

DAIRY/YOGURT/CHEESE/FLUID MILK

- If milk is offered as a beverage, only serve non-fat or low fat (1%) fluid milk.
- If cottage cheese items are offered, only serve non-fat or low fat (1%) items.
- If yogurt is offered, only serve non-fat or low fat (1%) yogurt.
- If yogurt is offered, only serve yogurt with no added caloric sweeteners or yogurts labeled as reduced or less sugar according to FDA labeling standards.
- Aim for processed and imitation cheeses to contain ≤ 230 mg sodium per serving.

PROTEIN FOODS

- Serve lean meat, poultry, fish, or low-fat vegetarian entrée choices.
- Serve an entrée with a vegetarian protein source at least once a week, such as soy, legumes, dried peas, seeds and nuts.
- Aim for pouched or frozen seafood to contain < 290 mg sodium per serving.



BEVERAGES

- Ensure that free drinking water is available at all meals and throughout the day.
- Aim for at least 50% of available beverage choices (other than 100% juice and unsweetened milk) to contain ≤ 40 kcalories/serving.
- For beverages with more than 40 kcalories/ serving, only serve servings of 8 oz. or less (excluding unsweetened milk and 100% juice).
- Consider offering as a choice a non-dairy, calcium-fortified beverage (such as soy or almond beverage); these beverages must not provide more sugars than milk (thus be 12 g sugar/8 oz. serving or less), provide about the same amount of protein (at least 6 g/8 oz.), calcium (250 mg/8 oz.), and provide less than 5 g total fat (equivalent to 2% milk).

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Eliminate or limit deep-fried options.
- Offer desserts that use less or no added sugars. For example, offer desserts prepared with fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, apple sauces, whole grains and yogurts without added sugars.
- Aim for mixed dishes containing cheese to be < 800 mg of sodium per serving.