

# Frequently asked questions

## 1. Why has the healthy food and drink choices policy been introduced ?

SA is the fourth state in Australia to introduce such a policy and it is designed to ensure that healthy food and drink choices are provided and promoted to staff, visitors and the general public throughout the South Australian government health sector. Healthy eating is an essential factor in encouraging a healthy lifestyle and healthy weight as well as preventing chronic disease.

## 2. Where and when does the policy apply ?

[The Healthy Food and Drink Choices for Staff and Visitors in SA Health Facilities Policy](#) applies to all SA Health facilities including hospitals, central and Local Health Network offices, community health services, GP Plus Centres, and statewide services such as Pathology SA and the South Australian Ambulance Service.

The policy applies to all situations where food and drinks are provided to staff, visitors and the general public including cafeterias, cafes, kiosk, canteens, shops, mobile trolleys, vending machines, catering at meetings, events and functions, fundraising and catering for patient or client education programs.

The policy does not apply to food or drinks that staff bring from home for personal consumption. It also does not apply to food prepared by a SA Health facility for the aged care sector, client groups such as Meals on Wheels or Nursing home recipients or clients attending day activity centres for the frail aged.

## 3. Does the policy apply to inpatient meals?

No, the policy does not apply to food and drinks supplied to inpatients, irrespective of whether they are on a special diet or not. Inpatient menus are guided by specific nutritional standards and guidelines.

## 4. Which foods and drinks are allowed and which are restricted?

Foods and drinks are grouped into 3 categories based on their nutritional value: **GREEN** (Best choices), **AMBER** (Select carefully) or **RED** (Limit)

**GREEN** category foods and drinks are excellent sources of important nutrients and are low in saturated fat and/or sugar and/or salt. These foods should always be available and actively promoted.

**AMBER** category foods are mainly processed ones and have moderate amounts of saturated fat and/or sugar and/or salt. They should not dominate the menu and large serve sizes should be avoided.

**RED** category food and drinks are low in nutritional value and are restricted. They cannot be promoted or advertised.

For more details refer to the [Food and Drinks Guide](#)

## 5. How do you determine if a food or drink is in the RED category?

The first step is to check the [Food and Drinks Guide](#)

If the food or drink has a red dot next to it then it will need to be checked against the relevant **RED** nutrient criteria. If a product fails any one of its specified **RED** nutrient criteria, then it is a **RED** choice.

When assessing items such as a snack in a vending machine, assess the total nutritional content of the item to be dispensed (i.e. the whole tub of yoghurt or the whole packet of crisps) as this is considered to be one serve even if different to the serving size indicated on the Nutrition Information Panel of the product.

For more information refer to Fact Sheet 3 – [Summary of Nutrient Criteria](#)

## 6. How many RED category food and drinks are permitted ?

The amount of **RED** category foods and drinks permitted are outlined in the policy's Nutrition Standards (refer to section 5.6 in the [Healthy Food and Drink Choices for Staff and Visitors in SA Health Facilities Policy](#) and varies on the different situations. For example there is to be:

- No more than 20% **RED** category foods/drinks displayed in food outlets including cafeterias, kiosks and vending machines.
- No **RED** category foods and drinks supplied at work-related meetings, training and education sessions, functions, events or patient education programs whether purchased in-house or externally.

For further information refer to:

Fact Sheet 2 - [Recommended supply of food and drinks](#)

Fact Sheet 4 - [Healthy Catering Ideas for meetings, functions and events](#)

## 7. Are there nutrient criteria for **AMBER** and **GREEN** category foods?

No. The nutrient criteria are only for the **RED** category foods and drinks. The comments column in the Food and Drinks Guide offers suggestions for 'GREENING' up (i.e. make healthier) a product. Recommended and maximum allowable serve sizes for some drinks are also included in the comments column of the guide.

## 8. How often can foods and drinks from the **AMBER** category be served?

**AMBER** category food and drinks are not specifically restricted. However, these foods and drinks should not dominate the menu or the choices displayed and large sizes should be avoided. The aim is to maximise the **GREEN** category foods and drinks.

### **9. Can staff bring birthday cakes or similar to share with their colleagues?**

Yes. The policy does not apply to birthday cakes or other food that staff bring in to share with their colleagues. However, in the spirit of the policy in assisting staff and visitors to adopt and model healthy eating behaviours, the inclusion of healthy food and drink choices is encouraged.

### **10. Is it OK for visitors and staff to buy RED category food and drinks externally for their own personal consumption and consume on SA Health premises?**

Yes.

### **11. Do fundraising activities such as chocolate drives have to comply with the policy?**

Yes. SA Health premises cannot be used for fundraising activities involving RED category foods and drinks including:

- raffles
- static displays including community fundraising chocolates, snacks and confectionery (except for Lions sugar-free mints only)
- staff social club fridges
- fundraising BBQs, breakfasts or morning teas
- special events such as awareness weeks, competitions and/or give-aways
- charity boxes from external organisations (except for Lions sugar-free mints)
- schools, sports clubs and other community fundraisers

### **12. Are there any alternative healthy fundraising ideas available?**

Yes there are many great alternative ideas that promote healthy eating and well being including:

- healthier food options such as seasonal fruit drives, nuts or dried fruits and healthy barbecues
- non-food ideas including spring flower drives, toothbrushes, healthy food cookbooks, sunscreen, garden tools, physical activity, events such as walk-a-thons, fun runs or ride-to-work day, calendars, cards, stickers, and pens.

See Fact Sheet 5 - [Healthy Fundraising Ideas](#)

### **13. Are there any exemptions to the policy?**

Occasional temporary food stalls, an annual fete or a very special event (such as a staff Christmas party, annual fundraising dinners or temporary ward based fundraisers) can be granted an exemption at the discretion of the Local Health Networks' Chief Executive Officers or their delegated authority. However, in the spirit of the policy in assisting staff and visitors to adopt and model healthy eating behaviours, the inclusion of healthy food and drink choices should always be included where possible.

### **14. Will this apply to privately operated kiosks/cafes?**

Yes . The policy applies to all kiosks, cafés, shops and vending machines on SA Health premises whether SA Health, volunteer or privately run or contracted. Encourage existing contractors to implement the changes prior to expiry of their current contracts. New contracts must comply with the policy's nutrition standards and marketing practices. For further information refer to section 6.4 in the [Healthy Food and Drink Choices for Staff and Visitors in SA Health Facilities Policy](#).

### **15. How does the policy apply to staff social club fridges?**

As the prime function of social club fridges is fundraising then no **RED** category food and drinks are to be supplied. However, in the rare situation where a health service or facility where the fridge is deemed an essential source of food and/or beverages for staff, then **RED** category food and drinks can be included up to a maximum of 20% displayed as per cafeterias and shops subject to approval by the Local Health Network Chief Executive or their delegated authority. However, in the interest of staff health, organisations are encouraged wherever possible to support staff to consume water and select meals and snacks that reflect healthy eating guidelines.

### **16. Are there any healthy food ideas for catering for SA Health meetings, training/education sessions and functions?**

Yes there are many ideas available. For some practical ideas and suggestions see: Fact Sheet 4 - [Healthy Catering Ideas for meetings, functions and events](#)

### **17. When did the policy take effect in SA Health?**

The policy was released in April 2009 and after an 18 month implementation period, it came into effect (i.e. mandatory) from 1 October 2011



## 18. What information is available?

The SA policy, food and drinks guide, five fact sheets, promotional flyer and posters (A3 and A4) are all located on the Health Promotion Branch website: <http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/branches/health-promotion/hp-nutrition.htm>

For hard copies contact the Health Promotion Branch by email [hpb@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:hpb@health.sa.gov.au) or telephone (08) 8226 6329.

## 19. Who can I contact for further information and advice?

For further information and policy related advice contact the Health Promotion Branch by telephone (08) 8226 6329 or email [hpb@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:hpb@health.sa.gov.au)

Acknowledgement: Queensland Health's A Better Choice-Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Health Facilities *Frequently Asked Questions* Fact Sheet August 2008

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### For more information

Health Promotion Branch  
SA Health  
Telephone: (08) 8226 6329  
[www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/health-promotion.htm](http://www.health.sa.gov.au/pehs/health-promotion.htm)  
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