



# HEALTHY FOOD & BEVERAGE TOOLKIT



***Special  
Olympics***  
Washington

# Acknowledgements

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Washington



**Special Olympics Washington (SOWA) recognizes the many organizations and individuals who provided guidance and expertise while developing SOWA's Healthy Food and Beverage Guidelines.**

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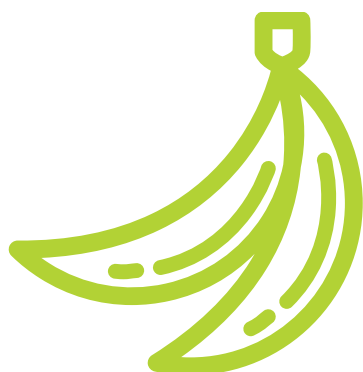
Washington State Department of  
**Health**

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# Healthy Food & Beverage Policy Statement

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



Special Olympics Washington is a catalyst for inclusion, creating a world where people with intellectual disabilities have every opportunity to be healthy. When people with intellectual disabilities have access to health services and resources, they also have more opportunities for education, employment, sports, and other pathways to reach full participation in society. In support of that goal, Special Olympics Washington prioritizes offering healthy food and beverages to all individuals who compete, volunteer, and support our organization.

A comprehensive approach to health can improve both an athlete's level of competition and their quality of life. More than half of the adults competing with Special Olympics Washington are obese, despite the fact that many factors leading to obesity are preventable. By providing access to healthy food and beverages, Special Olympics Washington strives to reduce risk for chronic disease and support the overall health of Special Olympics Washington's community.

Special Olympics Washington has developed nutrition guidelines based upon the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which promote the principles of minimizing the use of processed foods, reducing sodium, decreasing sugary beverage intake, and emphasizing fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. All Special Olympics Washington staff, volunteers, partners, and sponsors are asked to follow these guidelines for all competitions, sponsorship, events, and meetings.

This policy will help Special Olympics Washington model the health behaviors the organization is encouraging athletes to adapt in their own lives. Thank you for supporting Special Olympics Washington's initiative to provide healthful options and improve the health of athletes.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Lenox".

Dave Lenox  
President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Della Norton".

Della Norton  
Director of Health Programs



## Nutrition Guidelines for Meals and Light Refreshments

### Fruits & Vegetables

- Offer at least one fruit option with no added sugars, or one non-fried vegetable option without added fat, with all meals and light refreshments.
- Best Practice: Offer seasonal/local fresh fruits and vegetables.

### Grains

- When grains are served, make sure at least half are whole grain options.
- Best Practice: Serve only whole grain option.

### Dairy

- When dairy is served, make sure that low-fat or non-fat dairy options are available.
- When yogurt is served, offer yogurt with no more than 10 grams of sugar per serving.
- Best Practice: Offer plain non-fat yogurt as an option.

### Protein Foods

- When protein foods are served, make sure that lean meats (such as seafood and lean poultry) and low-fat plant-based protein options (such as beans or soy products) are available.
- For meals, provide at least one low-fat vegetarian option.

### Desserts

- When desserts are served, choose low-sugar/low-calorie options (such as fresh fruit), or offer smaller portions of desserts.

### Sodium and Trans Fat

- All meals offered contain  $\leq 800$  mg sodium, entrees  $\leq 600$  mg sodium, and side items  $\leq 230$  mg sodium
- Do not serve foods that contain *trans* fats or partially hydrogenated oils.

### Beverages and Packaged Snacks

- Provide water at all meals, snacks and breaks.
- All available beverages meet healthy beverage standards (below).
- All packaged foods and snacks meet healthy snack standards (below).

### General

- Limit deep-fried entrée options.
- Provide options that are appropriate for attendees' dietary and cultural food needs.

### Best Practice: Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice

#### Encourage Healthier Choices

Possible ideas include:

- Make healthier options the default, such as putting fresh fruit before desserts or offering sandwiches on whole grain bread.
- Use information, displays, decorations, and signage to highlight healthier choices.
- Make healthier options convenient and appealing, such as cutting up fruit or labeling vegetables with a catchy name (e.g. "lemony-garlic green beans").

#### Promote Healthy Portion Sizes

Possible ideas include:

- Use smaller plates, bowls and cups.
- Serve smaller portions of desserts and other foods that are high in salt, sugar or fat; and offer smaller portion options such as half-sized sandwiches, smaller-sized beverages and half-sized entrees.
- Ask coaches, staff and others to set an example for athletes.



# Healthy Food & Beverage Guidelines

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



## **Healthy Snack Standards (for packaged foods and snacks) healthy snacks should:**

- Have a whole grain as the first ingredient; or
- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food; or
- Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable

## **AND the snack should also meet the following nutrient standards per serving:**

- Calories: 200 calories or less
- Sugar: 35% of weight from total sugars or less
- Sodium: 200 mg of sodium or less
- Fat: 35% of calories from total fat or less
- Saturated Fat: Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- *Trans* Fat: Zero grams of *trans* fat

*Exceptions: reduced-fat cheese and part skim mozzarella; nuts, seeds and nut/seed butters; dried fruits with no added sugar (or only sweeteners required for processing and/or palatability); nut/seed/dried fruit combos with no added sugar or fats. These foods always meet the guidelines.*

## **Healthy Beverage Standards**

Healthy beverages include:

- Unflavored 1% or non-fat milk, or milk alternatives (e.g. soy or almond milk)
- 100% juice with no added sweeteners, can be diluted with plain or carbonated water.
- Plain or carbonated water
- Low and no-calorie beverages (including sports drinks) with no more than 60 calories per serving or container.

## **Requirements for Vending Machines**

In order for a vending machine to remain accessible during competitions or events, all of the products must meet the Healthy Snack and Healthy Beverage Guidelines. If this cannot be achieved, vending machines should be shut off for the duration of the competition or event.

**SOWA's Healthy Snack and Beverage Standards come from USDA's Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards. For more information visit:**

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smart-snacks-school>

# Optimizing Nutrition for Healthier Athletes

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



Through programming in sports, inclusive health, education and community building, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. In support of that goal, Special Olympics Washington prioritizes offering healthy food and beverages to all individuals who compete, volunteer, and support our organization.

**Special Olympics plays a critical role in preventing poor health outcomes by promoting physical activity and optimal nutrition.**

People with intellectual disabilities are **more likely** to experience poor health outcomes, unmet healthcare needs, victimization, and early mortality than people without intellectual disabilities.

## Among Special Olympics Washington Athletes:

- More than 50% are overweight or obese
- 22% have untreated tooth decay
- 27% have high blood pressure
- 30% have insufficient aerobic activity
- 13% have low bone density



## SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROMOTES NUTRITION & HEALTH

Lifestyle behaviors such as physical activity and a nutritious diet have shown to reduce risk for chronic disease and health complications in people with intellectual disabilities -- including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, poor bone health leading to injury, and cavities leading to further infection and disease.

In addition to promoting physical activity, Special Olympics Washington prioritizes optimal nutrition through the **Healthy Food and Beverage Guidelines**, which play an integral role to promote a healthy lifestyle by encouraging **fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and plant-based proteins, low-fat dairy and water and reducing low sodium, fats and added sugars.**

# Recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



Through programming in sports, inclusive health, education and community building, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. In support of that goal, Special Olympics Washington prioritizes offering healthy food and beverages to all individuals who compete, volunteer, and support our organization.

People with intellectual disabilities are more likely to experience poor health outcomes, unmet healthcare needs, victimization, and early mortality. Based on the Special Olympics Washington 2019 Health Promotion Screenings, greater than 50% of Washington athletes are overweight or obese, 30% have insufficient aerobic activity, 27% have high blood pressure, 22% have untreated tooth decay, and 13% have low bone density. Research shows that individuals with these health conditions have a higher risk for heart disease, diabetes, cavities, poor bone health, and other preventable chronic diseases.

Diets are important for health. What we eat is directly connected to how we feel, how well we perform physically, whether or not we get sick, and how long we live. To support the health of athletes, Special Olympics Washington has adopted nutrition guidelines that align with the [2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans \(DGAs\)](https://health.gov/our-work/food-nutrition/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines/guidelines/). The DGAs are released every five years by the U.S. government based on the most recent scientific evidence on nutrition. The guidelines outline a healthy eating pattern that is designed to help prevent diet-related chronic diseases, and are used as the basis for all federal nutrition programs - including the National School Lunch Program and the National School Breakfast Program. Research has shown that people who consume diets that align with the DGAs are more likely to maintain a healthy weight and have improved heart health, lower risk for cancer, lower risk for diabetes, improved dental health, improved blood pressure, and improved bone health.

**Learn more about the Dietary Guidelines for Americans here:**

<https://health.gov/our-work/food-nutrition/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines/guidelines/>



# Recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

*Special Olympics*  
Washington



The DGAs recommend following a healthy eating pattern that **INCLUDES:**



VEGETABLES

**A variety of vegetables, such as dark green, red and orange, and starchy vegetables.**

Vegetables provide lots of vitamins and minerals without a lot of calories. Vegetables, including beans, are an important source of fiber, which helps with digestion and lowers cholesterol. Starchy vegetables are a great source of potassium, which helps maintain a healthy blood pressure and improves heart health.



FRUITS

**A variety of fruit, emphasizing whole, pureed, or sliced fruits.**

Fruits provide important vitamins and minerals. Whole, sliced, and pureed fruit (including frozen fruit and fruit canned in 100% juice or water) is a better choice compared to juice because whole, sliced, and pureed fruit contain fiber, which helps with digestion and lowers cholesterol. Eating unprocessed whole fruits helps keep an athlete's energy and blood sugar more stable. Vitamin C, a nutrient found abundantly in many fruits, is important for the health of blood vessels and for preventing the cold and flu.



GRAINS

**Grains, of which at least half are whole grains.**

Whole grains have more vitamins and minerals than refined grains. Whole grains are an important source of nutrients to increase energy levels as well as an excellent source of fiber to both help with digestion and keep an athlete full for longer periods of time.

# Recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



**The DGAs recommend following a healthy eating pattern that INCLUDES cont'd:**



**PROTEIN**

**A variety of protein, including lean protein, such as fish, lean meats and poultry, eggs, beans, nuts, seeds, and soy.**

Proteins are the building blocks for muscles and cells. By eating different types of proteins, both from animal and plant sources, an athlete can meet their protein needs while consuming many vitamins and minerals. The guidelines recommend lean proteins, which have lower amounts of saturated fat, and plant proteins are often the lowest in saturated fat and have no cholesterol, which is better for heart health. Beans are an excellent source of lean plant-based protein that is high in fiber. Fish is also a great protein source that contains omega-3 fatty acids, an important nutrient for preventing heart disease.



**DAIRY**

**Fat-free or low-fat dairy, including milk, yogurt, cheese, and/or fortified soy beverages.**

Fat-free and low-fat dairy contain important nutrients for bone health including calcium, phosphorous, and vitamin D. Lower fat dairy options also contain less saturated fat and sodium – eating less of these two nutrients lowers risk for high blood pressure and heart disease.



**OILS**

**When choosing fats, choose unsaturated fats sourced from plants.**

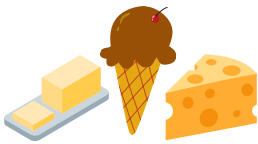
Oils extracted from plants, such as canola, olive, soybean, safflower oils, are made of unsaturated fats, which contain essential fatty acids, vitamins and minerals that help protect athletes from heart disease.

# Recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



## The DGAs recommend following a healthy eating pattern that **LIMITS**:



### SATURATED & TRANS FATS

#### **Saturated fats and *trans* fat:**

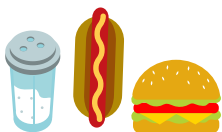
Saturated fats and *trans* fats have been shown to increase risk for heart disease. Saturated fats are mostly found in animal products such as whole milk, cheese, butter and in some desserts. These fats are also high in calories and may lead to weight gain. Limiting saturated fat and *trans* fats may help an athlete keep cholesterol levels low, which can decrease the risk for heart disease and heart attacks.



### ADDED SUGAR

#### **Added sugar:**

Added sugar is sugar that is not naturally found in a food. Examples include table sugar, honey, maple syrup, or corn syrup. Added sugar may contribute to weight gain, heart disease, diabetes and some types of cancers. Sugar may also contribute to tooth decay and cavities. Beverages - such as sodas, sports drinks and energy drinks - are one of the biggest contributors of added sugars in the average American diet. By decreasing consumption of added sugars, an athlete can improve stability of blood sugar levels, maintain stable energy levels for competition, and lower risk for diabetes, heart disease, and cavities.



### ADDED SALT

#### **Added salt:**

Excess salt in our diet can increase our risk for high blood pressure. High blood pressure can damage our kidneys and may lead to heart attacks and strokes. Most of the salt in an American's diet comes from highly processed foods, including fast food. Consuming a diet low in salt can help an athlete improve blood pressure and ultimately reduce risk for heart disease and kidney disease.

# Recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

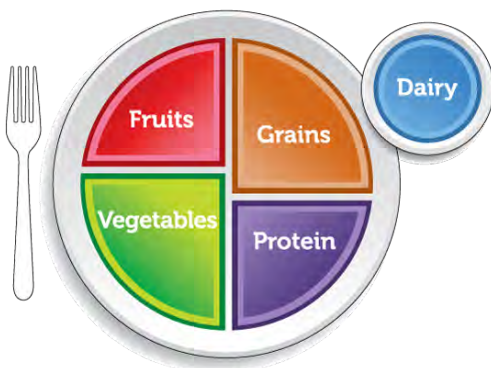
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Since people with intellectual disabilities are disproportionately affected by certain health conditions, it is extremely important for this population to consume foods and beverages that align closely with the DGAs to help prevent poor health outcomes and optimize the ability to live a longer, healthier, more enjoyable life.

By consuming a diet rich in fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, low-fat and fat-free dairy and unsaturated fats, a Special Olympics athlete also consumes beneficial nutrients like fiber, vitamins and minerals that are shown to lower blood pressure, lower cholesterol levels, stabilize blood sugars, improve bone density, and maintain a healthy weight. This can greatly reduce the risk of heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, bone injury, some types of cancers, and other chronic diseases.

Together, we can ensure that Special Olympics athletes, their families and our communities can live their healthiest lives now and in the years to come, by encouraging nutritious food and beverages within all Special Olympics Washington events and programming.



MyPlate is designed to demonstrate how the components of healthy eating patterns in the DGA's can be translated into diet. MyPlate includes tips, recipes and information for people of all ages.

**Learn more about MyPlate here:**

[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

# Saturated and *Trans* Fats *tips*

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) recommend that less than 10% of total calories should come from saturated fats, and the American Heart Association recommends no more than 5-6%.

For the average adult consuming a 2000-calorie diet, 10% is 200 calories or about 22 grams. Saturated fats have been shown to increase the risk for heart disease, being overweight/obese, and certain types of cancers.

*Trans* fat can raise your risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes. Most *trans* fat is created during food processing and added to baked goods, shortening/margarine, fried foods and some packaged snacks. Always check the food label and avoid products with *trans* fat.

The DGAs recommend swapping foods containing saturated fats with foods that contain unsaturated fats. **Unsaturated fats** are found mostly in plant-based foods and have been shown to protect against heart disease. Examples of foods high in unsaturated fats includes nuts, seeds, vegetable oils, and avocados.



nuts and seeds



avocados

## Tips for reducing saturated fats and increasing unsaturated fats:

- Choose low-fat condiment options (such as vinegar-based salad dressings or low fat mayonnaise), and offer condiments and dressings on the side
- Choose low-fat (1%) or non-fat dairy options
- Use olive or canola oil instead of butter
- Choose leaner cuts of meat (such as lean poultry) or plant-based protein (such as beans)
- Grill, bake, poach or steam instead of frying
- Season foods with lemon juice, herbs, spices or vegetable-based sauces rather than butter or cream-based sauces



grill instead of fry



season with lemon, herbs and olive oil



low-fat dairy options



low-fat condiments on the side

## Foods commonly high in saturated fats:

- Fatty cuts of meat and processed meats (such as bacon, sausage, or salami)
- High-fat dairy (such as cream, ice cream, butter, cheese and full-fat milk, yogurt, or sour cream)
- Baked goods, pastries, cakes and cookies
- Fried foods



butter



sausage



cookies



bacon

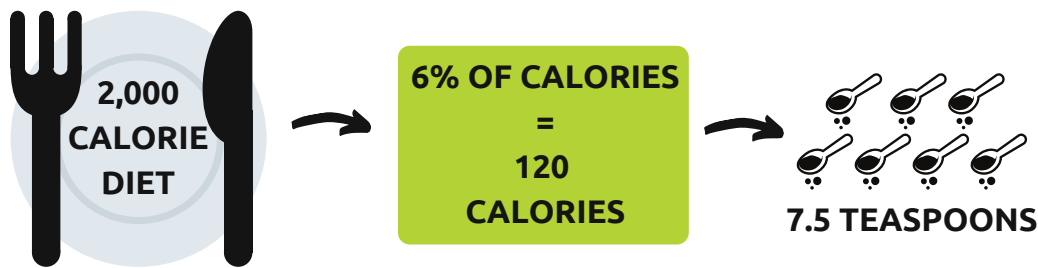


french fries

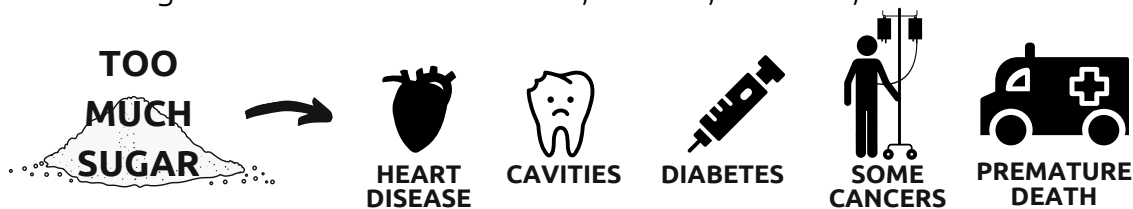


# Added Sugar *tips*

Added sugars are sugars or syrups added to food during processing or before consuming. This does not include sugar that is naturally occurring in foods such as fruit or milk. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend no more than 10% of calories should come from added sugar, and a recent report from the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee recommends even less (6%). In an average 2,000 calorie diet, 6% is 120 calories - the equivalent of 30 grams or 7.5 teaspoons.



Beverages are the highest source of added sugar in most diets. One 20oz Gatorade has approximately 35 grams of added sugar – more than the recommended amount for a whole day. Too much sugar can lead to heart disease, cavities, diabetes, some cancers and early death.



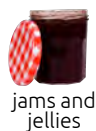
## Tips for reducing added sugars:

- Serve water or low-fat and fat-free milk instead of soda, sports drinks, energy drinks or coffee and tea with added sugar
- Check food labels for added sugar, and choose lower sugar options – especially for granola bars, breakfast cereals, and other packaged snacks
- Offer fresh fruit as a dessert instead of cakes or cookies



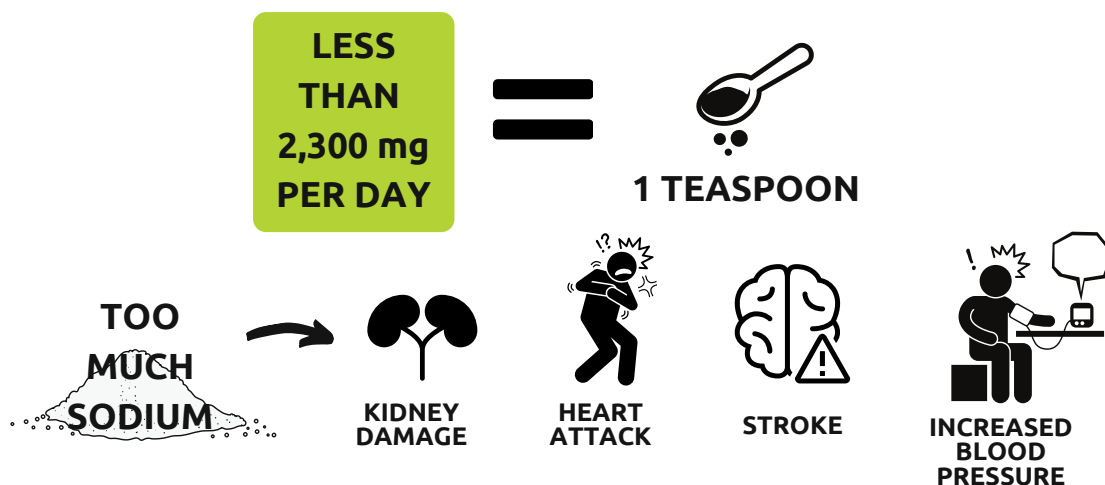
## Foods commonly high in added sugar:

- Flavored milk, yogurt and coffee creamer
- Sweetened beverages such as soda, energy drinks, sports drinks, fruit-flavored beverages and sweetened coffees or teas
- Granola bars or protein bars
- Condiments such as ketchup, honey mustard, sweet and sour and BBQ sauce
- Some jarred sauces such as spaghetti or pizza sauce
- Fruit canned in syrup



# Added Salt *tips*

The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend limiting sodium to less than 2,300 mg per day, or about 1 teaspoon. Currently, most Americans consume closer to 3,440 mg! Too much sodium can increase blood pressure, damage kidneys and lead to heart attacks or stroke. Sodium is found in table salt, but the majority of sodium in our diets comes from packaged and processed foods, including food from restaurants and fast food.



## Tips for reducing sodium:

- Choose packaged foods with no more than 10% of the daily value of sodium per serving on the label
- Look for lower sodium condiments and sauces, and serve condiments and sauces on the side.
- Use fresh or frozen vegetables instead of canned, and look for low-sodium canned products (such as beans)
- Use herbs, spices, lemon juice, salt-free seasonings or low-sodium condiments to flavor foods
- Look for lower sodium condiments and sauces, and serve condiments and sauces on the side



## Foods commonly high in sodium:

- Fast food, restaurant meals or frozen prepared meals (such as pizza, burritos, tater tots or frozen dinners)
- Processed meats (such as bacon, sausage, hot dogs or salami) or deli meats (cold cuts)
- Condiments such as soy sauce, marinades, ketchup, mustard or salad dressings
- Jarred sauces such as pasta sauce, pizza sauce and salsa
- Regular and processed cheeses (such as American cheese or cheese sauce)
- Bread or bread products
- Canned or dehydrated soup or noodle dishes (such as ramen, cup of noodles, or rice-a-roni)
- Snacks such as chips, pretzels, or cheese puffs
- Canned beans or vegetables, olives and pickles



# Tips for Food at Meetings and Potlucks

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



The Healthy Food and Beverages guidelines also apply to **staff events and meetings**, including potlucks. These tips can help to make staff events healthy and tasty, with food that meets everyone's dietary needs. More ideas can be found in the *Saturated and Trans Fats*, *Added Sodium* and *Added Sugar* tip pages.

## Best Practices

- Provide food and beverage options that are appropriate for the attendees' dietary and cultural food needs. (ex: vegetarian, gluten-free)
- Offer a sign-up sheet with healthy side options
- Offer items with dressing, condiments and cheese on the side
- Provide a knife to offer portion choice
- Provide water, sparkling water or infused water



condiments and cheese  
on the side



provide a knife



accommodate dietary  
and cultural food needs

## Healthier Meal Suggestions

- Swap whole grains (such as farro, quinoa, brown rice) for white rice, or try cauliflower rice.
- Use veggie pasta or whole grain pasta for white pasta, or try veggie noodles or spaghetti squash
- Use whole-wheat bread or wraps for sandwiches, or try lettuce wraps
- Add nuts or seeds instead of croutons or crunchy dried noodles in salads
- Use greek yogurt or hummus instead of mayo for spreads and dips
- Swap beans, hummus, tofu or extra veggies for meat fillings for tacos, grain bowls, sandwiches, or casseroles



nuts and seeds instead  
of croutons on salads



veggie noodles  
substitute for pasta



lettuce wrap  
substitute for tortilla

# Tips for Food at Meetings and Potlucks

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



## Healthy Suggestions for Baking

- Swap pureed fruit or vegetables (such as applesauce, mashed banana or pumpkin puree) for half of the butter, oil or shortening in a recipe
- Use cooking spray instead of butter or oil to prevent sticking
- Add shredded apple, carrot or other fruit or vegetable to boost nutrients, flavor and moisture.
- Try white whole-wheat flour, which can usually be substituted one-for-one for white flour without changing other ingredients, or make half of the flour whole wheat
- Reduce the sugar (you can usually reduce sugar by 25% without noticeable differences)
- Use low-fat or non-fat dairy instead of full-fat milk, yogurt, sour cream or cream cheese
- For eggs, try 1 Tablespoon flaxseed + 3 Tablespoons water; let sit for 5 minutes before using
- Swap unsweetened plant-based milk for whole milk



swap fruit or vegetable puree for oil in a recipe



add shredded fruits or vegetables for nutrient boost



non-fat Greek yogurt as cream substitute

## Snack Suggestions

- Low-fat string cheese or wedges with whole-grain crackers
- Satsumas, apples, and bananas
- Veggie sticks with hummus
- Bowl of nuts with spoon
- Hard-boiled egg packets
- Lightly salted popcorn



grab-and-go fruit



bowl of nuts



veggie sticks with hummus

For more snack ideas, see the *Coaches Guide*.

### Resources:

- [Healthy Potluck Ideas](#)
- [Healthy Potluck Recipes](#)
- [Potluck Sign Up Example](#)
- [Themed Potluck Sign Up Example](#)
- [67 Healthy Recipe Substitutions](#)

### Healthy Potluck Signup

Use a [Healthy Potluck Signup Sheet](#) when planning a staff meal or potluck to encourage healthy sides and main dishes that meet the guidelines and accommodate dietary needs of the group.

# Coaches Guide to Athlete Nutrition

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



MODEL  
HEALTHY  
BEHAVIOR

PRACTICE  
POSITIVE  
MESSAGING AND  
COMMUNICATION



OFFER HEALTHY  
SNACKS AT  
COMPETITIONS  
AND PRACTICES



CHOOSE  
HEALTHY  
OPTIONS ON  
THE ROAD



Athletes often learn eating behaviors from watching us. By demonstrating healthy choices at competitions and practices, Special Olympics Washington coaches can role model healthy behaviors around nutrition and hydration.

- Choose water (avoid soda, sports drinks, energy drinks, sugary coffee beverages)
- Avoid having fast food bags and cups visible at practice, events and competitions
- Prioritize whole fruits and vegetables when you are at practice, events and competitions
- Practice and encourage healthy portion sizes



Use positive messaging to encourage healthier choices. Try to avoid language that is coercive, shaming or conditional. Most people are more motivated by positive messages than negative ones.

## Set Expectations

Events can feel like special occasions, and sometimes athletes might want to celebrate by having foods that are less healthy. Help set expectations by talking to athletes about how events are for promoting health, and that athletes can celebrate by playing with others and having fun.



## Use Positive Reinforcement

### Example of things **to** say:

- "Look how Susie choose apple slices as a side instead of French fries with her sandwich. She must know that fruits and vegetables are full of good nutrition that can help us perform better as athletes."
- "What are some of the healthy things we can order at today's lunch stop?"

### Example of things **not** to say:

- "You shouldn't eat so many cookies. They're going to make you gain weight."
- "I wish you hadn't ordered a super-sized soda with lunch. I'm disappointed that you don't care more about eating healthy."
- "Whoever skips dessert gets to ride at the front of the bus today."

## Recruit Athlete Leaders

You don't have to promote healthy choices alone. Athletes can be excellent health ambassadors and champions for healthy eating!

### Athlete leaders can:

- Coordinate healthy snacks
- Pick healthy stops on the road
- Brainstorm menu items to order
- Remind team to take water breaks







**Snacking is a great way to help athletes meet their nutrition needs and maintain energy during practice and sports events.**

## **Make healthy snacks available throughout the day**

- People can often make unhealthy choices when they are hungry and no healthy options are available.
- Try to make healthy food choices available throughout the day to keep athletes from getting hungry and seeking out less healthy foods.

## **Plan ahead**

- Sometimes, it's hard to find healthy choices on the go.
- Plan ahead for what snacks to have at events or on the bus, and where you'll stop for food when traveling. That way you know healthy choices will be available.

## **Have water stations**

- Sometimes when we feel hungry, we're really just thirsty.
- Try to have water available at all times. If possible, use water filling stations instead of plastic water bottles to cut down on waste.

## **Choose beverages and snacks that meet Healthy Beverage & Healthy Snack Standards**

- The Healthy Beverage & Healthy Snack Standards are part of the Healthy Food & Beverage Guidelines.
- When choosing snacks, it's good to offer a few items from different food groups.

### **Examples of healthy snacks that almost always meet the guidelines include:**

- Hummus and veggie sticks ●●●
- Fresh fruit and nuts ●●●
- Apple slices and reduced-fat cheese (like part-skim mozzarella sticks) ●●
- Trail mix with dried fruit and nuts (no added sugars, chocolate or candy) ●●●
- Whole grain crackers and reduced-fat cheddar slices ●
- Veggie sticks and guacamole ●●●
- Hard-boiled eggs ●●●
- Smoothies made with low-fat yogurt and fresh or frozen fruit ●●
- Lean turkey slices and whole wheat crackers ●
- Veggie sticks and nut butter (like peanut or almond) ●●●

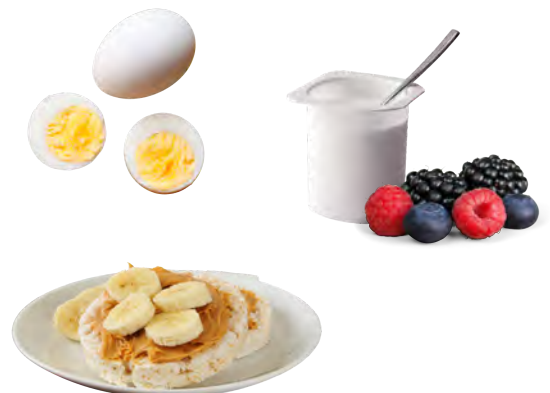


For snack and beverage suggestions:

<https://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=17867964011>

To see if a snack meets healthy snack standards:

<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>













Many athletes and teams travel to sports events in their regions and statewide. It is important to maintain good nutrition and hydration while traveling to an event, before, during and after the competition. Coaches should plan with the team to determine what foods and beverages to pack and where to eat while traveling and competing together.

- Confirm any food allergies or special diet needs with the athlete, family or caregiver
- Pack healthy snacks for the road instead of stopping at a drive through (see resources and references for snack ideas)
- Review restaurant menus with your team and discuss healthy choices before dining out
- Choose baked, grilled or broiled foods instead of fried
- Side recommendations: choose fresh fruit or side salad instead of fries or a cookie
- Ask for toppings and dressings on the side
- Always encourage water or unflavored low fat milk instead of sugary drinks

## Guidance for Ordering at Fast Food Restaurants

Sandwich Shops	Burger Joints	Mexican Food
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to keep your meal to 500 calories or less</li> <li>• Choose whole grain bread</li> <li>• Add extra veggies on your sandwiches</li> <li>• Choose mustard/vinegar instead of mayo</li> <li>• Choose a half portion of meat</li> <li>• Make it a salad instead – dressing on the side</li> <li>• Choose healthy sides like applesauce instead of cookies</li> <li>• Order a 6 inch instead of a foot long</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to keep your meal to 500 calories or less</li> <li>• Avoid supersized and value-sized items</li> <li>• Order burgers with a single patty without cheese</li> <li>• Choose a wrap instead of a burger</li> <li>• Skip the bacon</li> <li>• Choose healthy sides like apples instead of fries</li> <li>• Ask for condiments on the side</li> <li>• Choose a 4 or 6-piece chicken nugget instead of an 8-piece</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aim to keep your meal to 500 calories or less</li> <li>• Choose veggies and beans instead of meat</li> <li>• Choose two individual tacos instead of a platter</li> <li>• Watch out for sneaky sodium – meats, sides (beans, rice and fried potatoes) can contain a lot of added sodium</li> <li>• Avoid fried and breaded items</li> <li>• Ask for condiments on the side</li> </ul>
<div>SUBWAY</div>  <p>6" Veggie Delite Sandwich</p>  <p>Oven Roasted Chicken Salad with dressing on the side</p>	<div>MCDONALDS</div>  <p>Plain Hamburger with Apple Slices</p>  <p>4 or 6-piece Chicken Nugget with Apple Slices</p>	<div>TACO TIME</div>  <p>Veggie Chop Salad with dressing on the side</p>  <p>2x Crisp Chicken Tacos with Rice</p>
<div> <div> <p>Healthy Beverage Choices</p>   </div> <p>Water or low-fat plain milk instead of sugary beverages</p> </div>		



Wellness and Hospitality Stations are located at each competition venue, and are a place for athletes, coaches and volunteers to go to maintain healthy habits throughout a competition. Wellness Stations can include hydration, nutrition, sun safety, and fitness activities, resources, and tools. Wellness Stations should be visible at the competition venue and accessible to all athletes and coaches.

**You can help prioritize athlete nutrition and athletic performance by offering foods and beverages that align with our Healthy Food and Beverage Guidelines.**



**WHOLE FRUITS  
& VEGETABLES**

**SNACKS  
THAT MEET  
HEALTHY SNACK  
STANDARDS**



**WATER  
OR FRUIT  
INFUSED  
WATER**



**Snacking is a great way to help athletes meet their nutrition needs and maintain energy during practice and sports events. The Healthy Snack Standards are:**

**When procuring items for Wellness & Hospitality Stations, prioritize snacks that have:**

- Whole grain as the first ingredient
- Fruit as the first ingredient
- A vegetable as the first ingredient
- Dairy product, or a protein food as first ingredient
- Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable

**The snack should also meet the following nutrient standards per serving:**

- Calories: 200 calories or less
- Sugar: 35% of product weight from total sugars or less
- Sodium: 200 mg of sodium or less
- Fat: 35% of calories from total fat or less
- Saturated fat: Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- *Trans* fat: Zero grams of *trans* fats

For snack and beverage suggestions:

<https://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=17867964011>

To see if a snack meets healthy snack standards:

<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>

# Wellness & Hospitality Stations

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



**SERVE**  
*this*



fruit and nut trail mix



**NOT**  
*this*



sweet treats



fresh fruits and vegetables



fruit snacks



light string cheese or plain yogurt



sweetened yogurt and  
processed cheese and cracker pack



popcorn and rice cakes



cheese puffs



water or infused water



soda and sports drinks



# Making Healthy Choices the Easy Choice

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



Offering nutritious food and beverages isn't always enough to get people to make healthy choices. The environment that foods are served in, how they are served and what we see others do, have a big influence on the choices people make. These strategies can help athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff and others make the right choice for their health.

**ENCOURAGE  
HEALTHIER  
CHOICES**



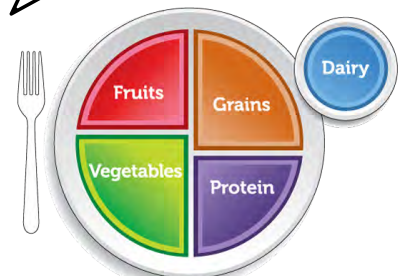
**Encourage Healthier Choices**

**PROMOTE  
HEALTHY  
PORTION  
SIZES**



## **MyPlate**

is a visual representation that can be used to encourage healthier choices and promote healthy portion sizes. MyPlate shows that half of our plates should be fruits and vegetables. It also gives us guidance on serving size for each category of food.



[www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

### **Information and Innovation:**

Use innovative ideas and the inclusion of healthier options as default choices. For example:

- **Make healthier options the default choice:**
  - Offer sandwiches on whole wheat bread.
  - Offer apple slices or sliced veggies instead of chips. Serve hummus as a vegetable dip instead of ranch.
- **Use labels, displays, decorations and signage to highlight healthier choices.**
  - Give healthier options catchy and appealing names, like "lemony-garlic green beans" or "Indian-spiced carrots".
  - Use color-coded signs to indicate healthier options, or as guidance for how to make healthy choices.
  - Use a visual representation like MyPlate to demonstrate how food should be served and portioned.
- **Offer healthier items in an easily accessible grab-and-go form.**
  - Slice fruit and vegetables into bite-size pieces or longer pieces for dipping.

### **Placement and Layout:**

Strategically place foods and beverages to encourage the selection of healthier options. For example:

- **In buffets, place healthier options at the front of the line or before less healthy options.**
  - Put salad at the front of the line and rolls at the end. Put grilled or roasted vegetables before mashed potatoes.
- **Prominently display healthier options up front and easily within reach.**
  - On a dessert table, put fresh fruit front and center and cookies towards the back.



# Making Healthy Choices the Easy Choice

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



## Promote Healthy Portion Sizes

- **Offer smaller portions size options.**
  - Offer half-sandwiches and half-sized entrees. Offer smaller versions of desserts, or other foods high in salt, saturated fat or added sugars.
- **Use smaller plates, bowls, beverage containers and other serve ware.**
  - Have smaller-sized cups for beverages other than water.
  - Use tongs and serving spoons that match appropriate serving sizes in all serving lines, including self-serve, and educate volunteers or catering staff on how to use them.
- **Role model healthy portion sizes**
  - Encourage athletes, coaches, volunteers, staff and others to model healthy portions.
  - Ask volunteers, staff and coaches to drink only water when athletes are present. Request all other beverages be in opaque unmarked containers.



baseball



1 serving of fruit



1 serving of rice  
or pasta



1 serving of  
vegetables



hockey puck



1 serving of bread



1 serving of beans



1 serving of meat



golf ball



1 serving of cheese



1 serving of nuts



1 serving of nut  
butter

Source: *Special Olympics Fit 5 Guide*

# Definitions and Tips for Meeting Cultural and Dietary Needs

Special Olympics  
Washington



## Vegetarian

*Free of meat and meat products, including seafood. Eggs, cheese and dairy are usually okay. (Note: Pescatarian is a vegetarian who also eats seafood).*

- TIPS**
- Avoid using broths or stocks made from animal products, instead use low-sodium vegetable stock.
  - Serve plant-based proteins such as hummus, tofu or beans.



### Plant-based proteins

are protein foods that don't come from animals. Examples include beans (e.g. black, kidney and pinto), lentils, soy products (e.g. tofu, tempeh) nuts, nut butters, and seeds.

## Vegan

*Free of all animal products. This includes meat, seafood, dairy, eggs and cheese. It may or may not also include animal gelatin and honey.*

- TIPS**
- Offer plant-based proteins. Replace milk and dairy with non-dairy types (see "Dairy-free").
  - Avoid eggs and cheese.



## Dairy-free

*Free of all dairy and lactose-containing foods.*

- TIPS**
- Sample foods to avoid: milk, milk products (including ice cream, yogurt, sherbet, pudding and custard), cheese (including cottage cheese and cream cheese), and butter.
  - Check ingredient labels for milk, milk products or milk components (casein, caseinate, whey, rennet, lactose, lactulose, lactalbumin and lactoglobulin).
  - Serve dairy replacements such as low-sodium soy or nut cheeses, non-dairy milks (i.e. soy, almond, oat or coconut) or lactose-free milk.
  - Substitute nut butters or olive oil for butter. If using margarine, make sure it's labeled dairy-free or kosher.



## Common Allergens

*There are eight foods identified as common food allergens. Any time a food served contains one or more of these ingredients, that product should be labeled as such.*  
*The common allergen foods are:*



eggs



cows milk or dairy products



shellfish



peanuts



fish



tree nuts



wheat



soy

## Gluten-free

*Free from the protein gluten, found in a variety of grains. Most important for people who have celiac disease, gluten allergy or gluten intolerance.*

### TIPS

- Most grains are actually gluten-free. The main gluten-containing grains are wheat (including bran, farro, bulgur, semolina and couscous) barley and rye. Oats are naturally gluten-free, but are frequently contaminated with gluten during growing or processing.\* Serve only oat or oat products labeled gluten-free. Naturally gluten-free grains include buckwheat, corn, amaranth, quinoa, rice, teff, millet and wild rice.
- Wheat or wheat products (like barley or malt) are also found in many processed foods, such as hot dogs, condiments (like soy sauce or salad dressings) spices and meat substitutes (such as textured vegetable protein). Check ingredient lists and avoid those with gluten or gluten-containing foods (such as wheat, barley or malt). When in doubt, only serve products labeled as gluten-free.
- For more information on gluten-free, including a list of processed foods that often contain gluten, visit: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/in-depth/gluten-free-diet/art-20048530>



### Contains Gluten



### Gluten-free



### Common Foods Containing Gluten



When in doubt, only serve products labeled as gluten-free.



## Kosher and Halal Diets

*Kosher foods comply with strict dietary standards according to traditional Jewish law. Halal foods adhere to the dietary standards in the Qur'an (the Muslim scripture). In some cases, people who follow religious diets such as Halal/Kosher can be accommodated by vegetarian/vegan diet. If you are trying to accommodate a Kosher or Halal diet, these links are a good place to start:*

- For more information, see Kosher Foods from the University of Kentucky.  
<http://www2.ca.uky.edu/agcomm/pubs/FCS3/FCS3577/FCS3577.pdf>
- For more information, see this Guide to Understanding Halal Foods from Toronto Public Health  
<http://www.halalrc.org/images/Research%20Material/Literature/Guide%20to%20Halal%20Foods.pdf>

# Catered Meal Checklist

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Caterer: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Meal: ☐ Breakfast ☐ Lunch ☐ Snack ☐ Dinner # of meals needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Requests or Considerations: \_\_\_\_\_

## Menu Plan:

Gluten-Free Option (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ # needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian Option (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ # needed: \_\_\_\_\_

Vegan Option (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ # needed: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Option (Y/N): \_\_\_\_\_ # needed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Healthy Food & Beverage Guidelines Checklist:

The menu has one or more ☐ **fruit without added sugar** or ☐ **non-fried vegetable without added fat**.

If grains are served, ☐ **at least half** or ☐ **all** options are whole grains.\*

If proteins are served, ☐ **lean/low-fat** and ☐ **vegetarian/plant-based** protein options are offered.

Any desserts offered are ☐ **low-sugar/low-calorie** (such as fresh fruit) or ☐ in **small portions**

☐ If dairy is served, **low-fat** or **non-fat** dairy options are available.

☐ Yogurt has less than **10 grams of sugar** per serving. ☐ **Plain, non-fat** yogurt is available.\*

☐ All meals offered contain  $\leq 800$  mg sodium, entrees  $\leq 600$  mg sodium,  
and side items  $\leq 230$  mg sodium



*\*Indicates best-practice*

# Catered Meal Checklist

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



- ☐ The menu does not contain any items with *trans* fats.
- ☐ The menu contains entrée options that are not deep-fried.
- ☐ The menu can accommodate cultural and dietary needs (gluten-free, vegetarian, dairy-free, etc).
- ☐ The menu contains seasonal/local fresh fruits or vegetables.\*
- ☐ Water is available free of charge.
- ☐ All beverages meet healthy beverage standards (see below).
- ☐ All packaged food and snacks meet healthy snack standards (see below).

*\*Indicates best-practice*

## Healthy Beverage Standards:

Healthy beverages include:

- Plain or carbonated water
- Unflavored 1% milk, non-fat milk, or milk alternatives (e.g. soy or almond milk)
- 100% fruit juice with no added sweeteners (can be diluted with plain or carbonated water)
- Low-calorie beverages (including sport drinks) with no more than 60 calories per container



## Healthy Snack Standards:

Healthy snacks should:

- Have a whole grain as the first ingredient; or
- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food; or
- Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable

The snack should also meet the following nutrient standards per serving:

- Calories: 200 calories or less
- Sugar: 35% of weight from total sugars or less
- Sodium: 200 mg of sodium or less
- Fat: 35% of calories from total fat or less
- Saturated fat: Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- *Trans* Fat: Zero grams of *trans* fat

*To see if a snack meets healthy snack standards:*

<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>

*For snack and beverage suggestions:*

<https://www.amazon.com/b?ie=UTF8&node=17867964011>





# Letter of Support Template

**Special Olympics**  
Washington



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Through programming in sports, inclusive health, education and community building, Special Olympics is changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities. In support of that goal, Special Olympics Washington prioritizes offering healthy food and beverages to all individuals who compete, volunteer, and support our organization through adoption of a Healthy Food & Beverage Guidelines Policy. The Healthy Food and Beverage Guidelines encourage all food and beverages served at events to include: fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and plant-based proteins, low-fat dairy and water and reducing low sodium, fats and added sugars.

Based on the Special Olympics Washington 2019 Health Promotion Screenings, greater than 50% of Washington athletes are overweight or obese, 30% have insufficient aerobic activity, 27% have high blood pressure, 22% have untreated tooth decay, and 13% have low bone density. People with intellectual disabilities (IDs) are also at an increased risk for poor health outcomes, unmet healthcare needs and early mortality. Lifestyle behaviors such as physical activity and a nutritious diet have been shown to improve health and decrease risk for poor health conditions in people with IDs - including high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease, poor bone health and cavities.

**We thank you for supporting our policy by ensuring that any food or beverage made available at our events meet the Healthy Food and Beverage Guidelines.** If you have questions or need suggestions on how best to support our guidelines policy, please contact Della Norton our *Director of Health Programs* at [dnorton@sowa.org](mailto:dnorton@sowa.org).

Special Olympics Washington, ENL 91-0962383, is a registered charitable organization, governed under Federal Statutes of the State of Washington. Contribution may be considered tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law.

In health,

*Signature*

# Resources

## **USDA Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards (SOWA's Healthy Snack and Beverage Standards)**

- [A Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools](#) from the USDA – includes a description of the standards, tips for identifying if your product meets the standards.
- [Smart Snacks Calculator](#) from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation – this is the official Smart Snacks calculator, sanctioned by USDA. You need a product label to complete the calculator.
- [Smart Snacks Food Planner](#) from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation – Includes meal plans, recipes and other resources (not limited to Smart Snacks).
- [Smart Snacks at Amazon](#) from the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and Amazon. Products have been identified to meet Smart Snack standards using the Smart Snack Calculator.
- [Smart Snacks at Costco Business Center](#) - Ideas and suggestions that can be ordered and delivered to a commercial address. Most products listed should meet Smart Snack standards.
- [Connecticut State Department of Education](#) - List of packaged foods and beverages by category that meet Smart Snack standards.

## **Dietary Guidelines for Americans:**

- [MyPlate from USDA](#) - MyPlate is a visual representation of the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. You can search the MyPlate site for information by age, food group, type of resource and language. Resource includes fact sheets, recipes, activities and ideas.
- [MyPlate from USDA for Parents & Educators](#) - Helpful tools, activities and information for teachers and parents to help children and adults make healthier choices.
- [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#) - The Dietary Guidelines is designed for professionals to help all individuals ages 2 years and older and their families consume a healthy, nutritionally adequate diet.

## **Additional Food and Beverage Guideline Resources:**

- [CDC's tips for offering healthier options and physical activity at workplace meetings and events](#) - Tips and resources for increasing healthier food and drink options at worksite meetings, conferences, and events and for offering physical activity opportunities for employees throughout the work day.
- [Food Service Guidelines for Federal Facilities](#) - Example of federal nutrition guidelines that helped shape Special Olympics Washington's Healthy Food & Beverage Guidelines. Refer to pages 20-21 for more about making the healthy choice the easy choice.

## **Special Olympics Resources:**

- [Fit 5](#) - Athlete tool with the resources, education, and motivation to improve and maintain health. Fit 5 is based on the three simple goals of exercising 5 days per week, eating 5 total fruits and vegetables per day and drinking 5 water bottles of water per day.
- [Health Resources Page](#) - All the resources for health-related programs, Healthy Athletes disciplines, Healthy Communities and tools and information needed to promote and run events.



# THE HEALTHY FOOD & BEVERAGE TOOLKIT

Presented by Kaiser Permanente,  
the Official Health Partner of  
Special Olympics Washington

