

## Health eating and drinking factsheet

### Why promote healthy eating and drinking?

Many of us spend a large part of our day at work and most of what we eat during the day is eaten in the workplace or an associated setting. Workplaces can make a big contribution to the foods and drinks consumed by workers through things like onsite vending machines and canteens, workplace catering and the facilities made available for food and drink storage.

Workers who eat well are more likely to be healthier, happier and more productive. Consuming healthy food and drinks helps to maintain energy levels and concentration and is associated with better mental health and boosted immune function. On the other hand, unhealthy eating and drinking is linked to weight gain, obesity, type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.

### The facts

- » 85% of Australian workers do not eat enough vegetables and 47% do not eat enough fruit.<sup>1</sup>
- » Australia wide, 70% of men and 56% of women are overweight or obese.<sup>2</sup>
- » Poor diet is linked to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, some cancers, overweight and obesity, high blood cholesterol, high blood pressure and other health conditions.<sup>3</sup>

### What can we do about it?

Support workers to eat in line with the *Australian Dietary Guidelines*. Encourage them to:

- » Choose water and avoid sugary drinks,
- » Cut back on salt, saturated fat and sugar,
- » Eat more fruit and vegetables,
- » Choose healthy snacks,
- » Start their work shift with a healthy start,
- » Eat or drink a healthy portion size.

### You can do this by:

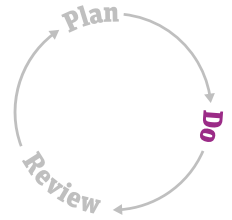
- » Providing areas for food storage, preparation and consumption away from work areas.
- » Displaying healthy eating information, including posters and brochures, throughout the workplace.
- » Offering healthy food and drink choices when catering for workplace functions and meetings. See *Healthy Choices Healthy Futures* for more information.

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- » Coordinating a vegetable and fruit box scheme for workers.
- » Having a workplace nutrition policy.
- » Having guidelines for workplace catering.

#### References:

1. Pricewaterhouse Coopers. 2010. Workplace Wellness in Australia; Aligning action with aims; Optimising the benefits of workplace wellness. Sydney: PricewaterhouseCoopers' National Health Practice.
2. Australian Bureau of Statistics. 2009. National Health Survey: Summary of Results, 2007-2008. Cat. no. 4364.0. Canberra: Australian Bureau of Statistics. Viewed at <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/4364.0/>
3. Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. 2010. Premature mortality from chronic disease. AIHW Bulletin no. 84. Cat. no. AuS 133. Canberra: Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Viewed at <http://www.aihw.gov.au/publication-detail/?id=6442472466>

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