

Healthy choices: policy directive for Victorian public health services

Purpose

This policy directs public hospitals and health services to ensure that healthier food and drinks are sold, provided and promoted at their facilities. This helps reinforce health services as places that support the health and wellbeing of their staff and visitors.

Scope

This directive applies to food and drinks available within public hospitals and health services via:

- **All** vending machines
- **Any** ‘in-house’ retail food outlets, such as cafes, kiosks, restaurants (i.e., outlets that are managed directly by the health service), as well as items purchased by staff and visitors from patient/resident menus.
- **All** catering provided by the service to staff and visitors (includes catering ordered through in-house or commercial providers).

*Note: Victorian public hospitals and health services are encouraged to apply this policy to **all** retail food outlets (including privately managed retail outlets).*

This directive does not apply to:

- Inpatient and residential aged-care meals (with the exception of those that are made available to staff or visitors to purchase).
- Food and drinks that staff and visitors bring from outside the facility to share or for their own consumption.

Mandatory requirements

All vending machines and in-house managed retail food outlets

- Food must be provided in line with the *Healthy choices: food and drinks classification guide and policy guidelines for hospitals and health services* (at least 50 per cent of the food available or displayed must be classified GREEN and no more than 20 per cent classified RED).
- There is no sale of sugary (or RED category) drinks.
- Drinks classified GREEN must be at least 50 per cent of the total proportion of drinks available or displayed. In addition, drinks containing artificial or intense sweeteners (classified AMBER) must be no more than 20 per cent of the total proportion available or displayed.
- Both food and drinks classified RED cannot be promoted/advertised.

Catering provided to staff / at events

- Food and drinks must be provided in line with the *Healthy choices: workplace healthy eating policy and catering guide* (no food or drinks classified RED can be provided, and the majority of food and drinks provided must be classified GREEN).

Health services are also encouraged to have free drinking water (for example, water fountains, jugs of tap water) readily available and promoted.

Summary of requirements

The following Food and Drinks targets are required to be maintained by public hospitals and health services.

Required for:	Targets
Vending and in-house managed retail outlets	<p>Food:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 50% GREEN foods and no more than 20% RED foods are available. No RED foods to be promoted/advertised. <p>Drinks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No RED drinks to be available or promoted/advertised. At least 50% GREEN drinks, and no more than 20% drinks containing artificial or intense sweeteners (classified AMBER) are available.
Catering	<p>Food and drinks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No RED foods or drinks are provided (with majority of options to be GREEN).

Monitoring and reporting requirements

- The Department of Health requires ongoing annual reporting on the directive against the Food and Drinks targets above, via *Progress Tracker*.
- Food Checker should be used to conduct annual assessments of your service retail menus and vending outlets within six months of the reporting period.
- Support with assessments and reporting will be provided by the Healthy Eating Advisory Service.

Accountability

Responsibility for this policy should be allocated by health services at the relevant Executive level.

Further information

Related policies and guidelines

- [Healthy Choices](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/preventive-health/healthy-choices) – including classification guide, policy guidelines and catering guide <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/preventive-health/healthy-choices>
- [Policy and funding guidelines for health services](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/policy-and-funding-guidelines-for-health-services>
- [Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2023–27](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-health-and-wellbeing-plan-2023-27) <https://www.health.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-health-and-wellbeing-plan-2023-27>

Implementation support and tools

- [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/) <https://heas.health.vic.gov.au/>
- [FoodChecker](https://foodchecker.au/) <https://foodchecker.au/>

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Available at [Healthy choices: policy directive and guidelines for health services](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/publications/healthy-choices-policy-directive-and-guidelines-for-health-services)

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