Due for review: 23/01/2025

Healthy Choices Made Easy

# Applicability

This policy applies to food and drinks for sale or provided within NT Health facilities via:

* Kiosks and cafeterias
* Coffee carts and tea/lolly/snack trolleys
* Vending machines
* Retail outlets, such as pharmacies (leased or NT Health managed)
* NT Health funds or donations received used for:
  + Catering for functions, meetings and events
  + Rewards, incentives, gifts, prizes and give-aways
  + Advertising, promotion and sponsorships

This policy does not apply to:

* Food and drinks brought onto NT Health premises for personal consumption, e.g. packed lunches, or social occasions such as birthdays or morning teas
* In-patient and aged care resident meals
* Palliative care facilities
* Fundraising activities conducted by staff, volunteers and social clubs with the exception of sugar-sweeteneddrinks. **These must not be sold.**

# Policy statement

Healthy food and drinks are the most available and the only promoted options in all NT Health facilities where food is for sale to the public. Creating environments across NT Health that support healthier eating choices is one part of the long-term approach to improve the diet, health and wellbeing of Territorians.

The purpose of this policy is to:

* To ensure NT Health promotes consistent healthy eating and nutrition messages to staff and the community
* To apply these healthy eating and nutrition messages to the foods and drinks available for sale, promoted and provided to staff, volunteers and visitors across NT Health facilities

# Policy suite

The policy suite for this topic contains the following mandatory and related documents:

* [Healthy Choices Made Easy Guidelines](http://internal.health.nt.gov.au/pgc/dm/Documents/CHO/Public%20Health/Non-communicable%20Disease/Healthy%20Choices%20Made%20Easy%20Guideline.PDF)

# Policy principles

NT Health’s approach to healthy eating is founded upon the following principles:

* We have a responsibility to lead by example, creating environments that support healthy eating before profits
* We believe that healthy foods and drinks should be the most available options whenever these are sold or provided across NT Health sites
* We base this policy on the best available evidence, including the Australian Dietary Guidelines
* We will include policy compliance in contracts with external contractors and vendors. This will ensure healthy foods and drinks are the most provided and only promoted options. No sugar-sweetened drinks are to be available or promoted
* Compliance is compulsory by all facilities and staff across NT Health

# Policy requirements

## Food and Drink Classification

This policy uses a ‘traffic light system’ to categorise food and drink items into green (best choice), amber (limit) and red (off the menu). Classification is based on the food or drink type, ingredients and cooking method. Limited serve sizes and Health Star Ratings are also applied to some items. Refer to the Healthy Choices Made Easy Guidelines for full details.

## Mandatory requirements

Of the food and drinks items available or displayed:

* Green – Best choice: Should be most of the foods and drinks available (75% or more)
* Amber – Limit: Can be a small amount of the foods and drinks on offer (25% or less)
* Red – Off the menu: These foods and drinks should not be available.

Only Green foods and drinks are to be placed in prominent locations, sold at competitive prices, promoted and included in specials, e.g. two-for-one, meals deals, upsizing.

Where practicable, free drinking water should be available in all settings. Jugs of water must be available and promoted for catering and events.

Fundraising activities must not include sales of any sugar-sweetened drinks.

# Legislative or other Authority

Not applicable.

# Policy compliance

The NT Health compliance indicators for this policy are set out below. These indicators are required to be met and regularly evaluated by the respective business unit or responsible officer. Any instances of non-compliance with this policy should be reported to a regional health and hospital service dietitian.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Description | Responsibility |
| **Review** | Document will be reviewed within a period of three years or as changes in practice occur. | Senior Policy Officer |
| **Evaluation** | The document will be evaluated through a stakeholder consultation process as part of the review process. | Senior Policy Officer |
| **Compliance**  Healthy Choices Made Easy Audit | Yearly completion of a standardised audit tool measuring policy compliance | Regional Health and Hospital Service Dietitians, Food Service Managers, Senior Policy Officer |

# Definitions

The following definition(s) are relevant to this Policy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Term | Definition |
| **Amber ‘Limit’ foods and drinks** | Food and drink items that may still provide valuable nutrients but can contribute to excess energy intake. These contain moderate amounts of saturated fat, added sugars and salt. This also includes intensely sweetened drinks. |
| **Australian Dietary Guidelines** | [Evidence-based recommendations](https://www.eatforhealth.gov.au/guidelines/about-australian-dietary-guidelines) on the types and amounts of foods we eat need to eat for health and wellbeing. |
| **Discretionary food and drinks** | Food and drink items the Australian Dietary Guidelines identifies as energy-dense and nutrient-poor. These have high levels of saturated fat, added sugars, and added salt and/or low levels of fibre. These foods are drinks can increase risk of obesity and some chronic diseases. |
| **Green ‘Best choice’ foods and drinks** | Food and drink items that are good sources of important nutrients. These are lower in saturated fats and added sugars and/or salt, lower in energy and higher in fibre. These are based on the five food groups in the Australian Dietary Guidelines. |
| **Intensely sweetened drinks** | Any drinks with added non-nutritive sweeteners from artificial or natural sources. These are ‘amber’ drinks. Examples include ‘diet’, ‘low-joule’, ‘no sugar’, ‘and sugar-free ’, ‘low sugar’. Due to high acidic content, these drinks can contribute to dental erosion and dental disease. These are not recommended for children’s consumption. |
| **Red ‘Off the menu’ foods and drinks** | Food and drink items that are discretionary choices, as outlined in the Australian Dietary Guidelines. These are high in energy, saturated fat, added sugars and/or salt, and low in important nutrients. This also includes sugar-sweetened drinks. |
| **Sugar-sweetened drinks** | Drinks that have added sugar and low or no nutritional value. These are classified as 'red'. Sugars may include, but are not limited to, sucrose, glucose, honey, fruit syrups and deionised fruit juice. E.g. carbonated soft drinks, energy and sports drinks, flavoured mineral waters, cordials, fruit/vegetable drinks, and iced teas. |

Appendices

Appendix A: Supporting links

* [Australian Dietary Guidelines:](https://www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/the-australian-dietary-guidelines) The Australian Dietary Guidelines provide evidence-based recommendations of the types and amounts of foods Australians should eat to meet nutrition requirements.

# Document history

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Document metadata | | |
| **Document Owner** | Director, Health Improvement, Strategy Policy and Planning | |
| **Document Approver** | Tamsin Cockayne; Executive Director, Strategy Planning & Reform | |
| **Author** | Sarah Grace and Gillian Chat, Senior Policy Officers, Health Improvement | |
| **PGC-ID** | HEALTHINTRA-1627664142-59853 | |
| **TRM ID** | EDOC2021/203981 | |
| **Version Number:** | Version: 0.2 |  **DO NOT EDIT THIS FIELD** | **Approved Date:** 23/01/2024 | **Review Date:** 23/01/2025 |