

Healthier sandwich tips

Healthier eating is becoming more and more important to customers⁸. Here are some practical healthier catering suggestions for you to consider to help support your customers with a healthier lifestyle.

Following these tips will help you:

- ✓ make your sandwiches healthier
- ✓ offer more choice to your customers, helping you to compete in the market
- ✓ make more money from the sandwiches you already sell

Try to achieve as many tips as possible. ☒ Tick the box when you have achieved each tip and try to add a new tip every month. You may already be achieving several of these tips but be prepared to go further and make real changes to help your customers stay healthy.

PORTION SIZE - Eating too many calories can lead to obesity, which in turn increases the risk of diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Even small reductions at each meal can make a real difference.

Think about the size of your portions and if you're being too generous. Have a set portion for each filling (eg a certain size of scoop/spoon, or a fixed number of slices/pieces) and ask staff to keep to these portion sizes to provide consistency for your customers – this could help you save money. ☐

If you're mixing two fillings (eg chicken and bacon) you don't have to use a full portion of each – **try using half a portion of each.**

START WITH THE RIGHT BREAD

1. **Try using wholegrain, wholemeal, malted wholegrain or brown bread as standard**, unless customers ask for white. Offer 50:50 bread or white bread with added nutrients and fibre for customers who do not like brown or wholemeal bread. ☐
2. **Choose lower salt bread** where possible. Look for breads with less than 0.9 mg salt per 100g (or less than 0.360g sodium per 100g). ☐

⁸ See www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39132/attitudes-to-obesity.pdf and www.gov.uk/government/news/new-change4life-campaign-encourages-parents-to-be-food-smart

CHOOSE THE RIGHT SPREAD

3. **Use low or reduced fat spread**, ideally made from unsaturated vegetable oils such as those made from sunflower, rapeseed and olive oils. Compared with butter, these spread more easily and are lower in fat, especially saturated fat, and cost less. ☐
 4. Choose a spread that has less than 1.06g salt per 100g (or less than 0.425g sodium per 100g). ☐
 5. Try **making sandwiches without any spread**, especially if the filling is moist – or let your customers choose if they want spread. You will save time preparing your sandwiches and save money by using less spread. ☐
 6. If a customer asks for spread, try to spread it thinly or consider putting it on one slice of bread only. ☐
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PICK THE RIGHT FILLINGS – By checking the label when selecting ingredients, or making simple changes when making your sandwiches, it is easy to reduce the levels of salt and fat, especially saturated fat.

How to make some common sandwich fillings healthier:

7. **Cheese** ☐
 - swap to **reduced-fat hard cheese or a cheese naturally lower in fat**, like Edam
 - swap to lower fat cream cheese
 - use thinly sliced cheese or grated cheese instead of sliced – this can mean you use less cheese and it will add volume to your sandwiches
8. **Mayonnaise , salad cream and salad dressings** ☐
 - **using less mayonnaise** in sandwiches is another way to reduce the amount of fat and saturated fat the sandwich contains and also saves you money
 - swap to **lower fat and salt mayonnaise or salad cream/dressing or use low-fat plain yoghurt** (most are similar in price and taste)
 - if you do not want to use a lower fat mayonnaise, try picking a standard mayonnaise with lower fat, saturated fat and salt levels – often these are from the 'basic' or 'value' ranges, so this may also save you money while satisfying your customers

9. **Pre-made fillings, pickles, sauces and condiments** ☐
Check the label and choose products that are lower in salt, sugar, fat and saturated fat. There can be a big difference between products. Use the following link for advice on how to read food labels:
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/food-labelling.aspx>
10. **Meat and fish** ☐
 - **offer leaner meats** like ham, beef, turkey and chicken without skin
 - where there is visible fat on a product try cutting it off – it looks nicer for the customer and is healthier too
 - **processed meats like bacon, ham, and other cured and smoked meat and fish can all be high in fat and salt**, so try to pick those with lower salt and fat levels and **try using less** in sandwiches
11. **Salad vegetables** ☐
Low in calories and good sources of vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre. Eating plenty of them will help to promote digestive health and can help prevent heart disease, stroke and some cancers.
Offer salad (eg lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber, peppers, sweetcorn, radish, cress, rocket, courgette, carrot ribbons, onions or spinach and choose seasonal vegetables to increase variety), **in or with every sandwich**. It is a good way of making your sandwiches look bigger and more colourful.
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SUGAR – Eating too many foods and drinks high in sugar can contribute to excess calories and lead to weight gain, which in turn increases the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke and some cancers. It is also linked to tooth decay.

12. **Offer healthier drinks as the default option** – such as water, lower fat milks, low calorie or no added sugar drinks, or pure fruit juices (in a 150ml serving size or as close to this volume as possible) rather than sugary drinks. ☐
13. **Remove confectionery, cakes, pastries, biscuits, morning goods and sugary drinks from till points, checkout aisles and areas around checkouts. If you do offer them** offer smaller portion sizes, and choose products that meet the **sugar reduction and calorie or portion size guidelines**. ☐
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PROMOTE HEALTHIER OPTIONS although it is important to improve the nutrient content of all menu items you can additionally develop promotions to give a unique selling point and encourage customers to pick a healthier meal or snack to eat.

14. **Promote healthier sandwich options, snacks and drinks with meal deals;** this could also give you a unique selling point. ☐
 - **offer fresh fruit, plain unsalted nuts, plain low-fat yogurts.** Or choose low fat fruit yogurts that meet the **sugar reduction and calorie or portion size guidelines**

- try **offering a selection of baked or popped crisps and snacks** – they're not fried so have a lower fat content than standard crisps
 - **offer smaller-sized packets** of 30g or less of crisps, smallest standard single serve pack sizes of confectionery such as chocolate, containing no more than 250kcal per pack
 - if **biscuits, cakes and pastries** are sold offer those lower in fat and sugars, offer smaller portion sizes. Or choose ones that meet the **sugar reduction and calorie or portion size guidelines**.
 - if you offer meal deals try to include a starchy carbohydrate (eg potato, bread, rice or pasta), vegetables and one portion of fruit
15. **Attractive store and window displays** are a simple way to promote the range of healthier options that you offer. **Putting fruit and healthy snacks in prominent areas** or near where customers stand may boost their sales and your profits. **Try putting healthier drinks like water, lower fat milks, and no added sugar drinks at eye-level in fridges.** ☐
16. Have **promotional sandwiches** (eg sandwich of the day/week) **that are also healthier**, such as lean meat, tuna, hard-boiled egg, and cheese such as Edam, mozzarella, and lower fat cream cheese, all including salad. ☐
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PROCURING HEALTHIER INGREDIENTS AND FOOD PRODUCTS FROM SUPPLIERS

17. **Check the nutrition information** about the foods and drinks you buy in and choose options with higher fibre and less salt, sugar and fats. Use the following link for advice on how to read food labels: <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/food-labelling.aspx> Your supplier may be able to assist you. ☐
- To check against the sugar reduction and calorie or portion size guidelines see www.gov.uk/government/collections/sugar-reduction.
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