

Section 6 – Getting on with the job

Managing a better choice

In Section 3 and 4 the committee developed plans to implement *A Better Choice*. This section provides information on a range of key practice areas in food outlets – the management of staff, food, stock, organisation and workflow, money and promotion.

Making healthy choices easier also involves sound management and good organisation. Attention to all these areas will support changes made to the menu and enhance success.

Implementing *A Better Choice* also provides an educational opportunity to promote consistent messages about good nutrition to food personnel, facility staff, and visitors. These elements are explored in more details throughout this section.

Key elements of success

- ✓ Healthier food and drink choices are well promoted to customers.
- ✓ Tasks are organised in the most efficient way.
- ✓ Food safety is a key part of the outlet's operation.
- ✓ There are enough staff (paid or volunteer) to run the outlet efficiently when it is open.
- ✓ The outlet has adequate equipment to prepare and serve foods and drinks in line with the strategy.
- ✓ An improvement checklist is developed to review a range of management practices and identify areas for improvement.

Managing changes

How outlets are managed can be as important in achieving the successful implementation of the ABC strategy as reviewing the foods and drinks sold.

The food outlet manager or convenor, whether paid or voluntary, plays an important role in the

management of a successful kiosk or canteen. Managers lead by example as they guide and influence the work of paid staff or volunteers. They can help establish team spirit and provide a friendly, welcoming work environment.

Careful attention to the following issues can improve the ability of an outlet to implement menu changes successfully.

Planning

This involves looking ahead, working out what needs to be achieved, determining the best sequence for the jobs at hand and communicating this to the staff.

Organising and coordinating

This includes organising and coordinating all of the following resources within the outlet:

People — preparing rosters, breaks for morning tea and lunch during the day, attracting, thanking and rewarding staff or volunteers and working as an effective team member.

Food — ensuring safe, good quality food is prepared and served each day in a consistent manner. Ensuring foods on offer are appealing and flavoursome – this is achieved through attention to appearance, colour, taste, aroma and texture of foods. Ensuring recipes are modified to make them more nutritious.

Equipment — maintaining well-functioning equipment and submitting requests for additional or replacement equipment where required.

Time — ensuring food is ready for service at particular times.

Money — keeping track of money flow at all times. Ensuring that the totals are rung off at the end of each trading period during the day, maintaining a standard float, ensuring that the banking is done regularly and accounts are well maintained.

Monitoring

This requires having an awareness of everything that is happening in the outlet. Examples include monitoring stock, food handling practices, the quality of foods and drinks delivered and served, staff or volunteer rosters, the success of special days, meal deals and other promotions run through the outlet.

Attracting staff

Whether paid or volunteers, food personnel are a valuable resource in the outlets and should be appreciated and made to feel welcome.

It is important that staff know what is expected of them and have been shown the requirements of each task they carry out in the outlet. Written instructions and information posted on the wall can be helpful reminders. The outlet convenor or a committee member could use staff orientation as an opportunity to outline the strategy and provide updates about progress at staff meetings.

Keeping staff

Staff are more likely to continue to work in a food outlet when they enjoy themselves and feel valued. This can be achieved by:

- involving staff in menu planning and required changes
- identifying staff needs or training requirements in response to menu changes
- developing a buddy system
- involving staff in promoting healthier choices
- providing incentives or rewards for staff.

Identify staff needs

Consult with all staff on a regular basis to determine their training and development needs. Consider whether this is best done in a group or one-on-one manner. For example, arrange a focus group to allow staff to voice

their viewpoints about the changes and the potential issues the new menu and promotional requirements have created.

Focus groups usually meet for approximately one hour to answer questions about the workplace as they see it. Through facilitated discussion, participants share their perceptions on issue(s) from their perspective.

After consulting with your employees, analyse the results to determine whether there are any skill gaps. Compare the skills staff currently have with the skills they require to do their current job, and with the skills they will require to achieve the future development of the menu.

Investing in training and developing skills empowers staff to confidently perform their jobs and will help gain their support in implementing changes. For more information on assessing staff needs visit TAFE Queensland at <http://www.tafe.qld.gov.au/employers/index.html>

Managing hygiene and food safety

Whatever menu changes are implemented, attention must always be paid to hygiene and food safety. All food businesses regardless of type (fixed, temporary, mobile or not-for-profit organisation) have a fundamental responsibility to ensure the sale of safe and suitable food.

Everyone working in a food outlet should have the appropriate skills and knowledge to handle food safely and prevent contamination that can lead to food poisoning. This obligation applies to both paid staff and volunteers. Food handlers also have the obligation to inform the outlet managers or convenors when they are ill. In this case they should be excluded from food handling duties.

The *Food Act 2006*, does not apply to State food businesses ie. where the Government obtains profits from or covers the losses of

a food business in a State facility, such as a staff canteen run by a hospital food service department. Instead, Cabinet determined that all parts of Government involved in the sale of food, would ensure their food safety arrangements meet similar standards to their private sector counterparts. This is referred to as Equivalent Administrative Arrangements (EAA).

The aim of EAA is to ensure that all food sold from State food businesses is safe and suitable and to display a level of rigour in protecting public health comparable to that required of private food businesses. While licensing does not apply to State food businesses, other requirements for licensable food businesses are mirrored within the EAA. These include:

- Food premises design, construction and fit-out.
- Food safety skills and knowledge for staff, including Food Safety Supervisors.
- Routine Inspections of State food businesses.
- Food safety programs, accreditation and auditing.

It should be noted however, that if the government contracts a third party to provide food, the food business in that instance is not considered a State food business and is therefore subject to the requirements of the *Food Act 2006* eg. a privately-run café in a hospital.

Queensland Health will progress the implementation of the EAA framework for State food businesses in 2008/2009. Further advice will be provided as to the requirements for State food businesses and the compliance dates in due course. Various information fact sheets relating to food safety matters can be obtained from the Queensland Health website at <http://www.health.qld.gov.au/industry/food>

Refer to the **Resources** section on page 65 for further materials about food safety.

There are three main types of food contamination:

- Physical — includes hair, dirt, insects and pieces of plastic or glass in food.
- Chemical — includes insect sprays, detergents or sanitisers getting into food.
- Microbiological — bacteria and viruses found on hands, on vegetables, in raw meat and on our clothes that get into food.

Bacteria need time, temperature, moisture and food to multiply. The types of bacteria that can cause food poisoning multiply quickly on potentially hazardous food.

Safe food handling

This applies to receiving, cooking, serving and holding food. It also applies to packaging and cleaning procedures.



Receiving food

Always check the use by and/or packaging date marked on goods that are delivered (where applicable).

Food prepared at home and provided for sale in Queensland Health Facilities

Any food sold through the food outlets, temporary food stalls or that is intended for sale elsewhere must fully comply with the *Food Safety Standards* legislation.

Storing food

Keep food covered to protect it from contamination. Label and date all foods in the refrigerator and freezer. Raw foods should be stored at the bottom of fridges and ready-to-eat foods at the top. Frozen foods should be hard when tapped. There should be no condensation on the outside of packages as this indicates they are starting to melt.

Preparing food

Hands should be washed thoroughly. Do not touch foods with bare hands — use tongs, utensils or gloves. Long hair should be tied back.

Thaw foods in the refrigerator or microwave on defrost. Once thawed, use foods as soon as possible. Do not refreeze thawed foods.

Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before use.

Prepare food fresh each day. Apply the FIFO (First In First Out) principle if food has been prepared in advance. Never mix old and new food. Take food ingredients out as required and use the principles of good workflow to complete jobs quickly and put ingredients and finished food items in the refrigerator.

Hands should be washed and chopping boards and knives changed or cleaned thoroughly when the type of food being chopped changes, for example, from cooked meats to washed vegetables. Using different coloured boards for different purposes, for example, red for raw meat, green for vegetables may help this process.

Cooking

Raw meats naturally contain bacteria. Meat needs to be cooked thoroughly to kill bacteria. An internal temperature of 75°C is needed in foods such as burger patties to kill bacteria.

Heating

In some outlets foods arrive precooked and require heating. The most common piece of equipment is a food warmer. Foods placed in food warmers need to heat rapidly to a temperature of 60°C or above within two hours. Food can then be held in the food warmer for a further two hours at a lower temperature. After a total of four hours the food should be thrown away.

Food display

There are many different ways foods are displayed and served in outlets. Cover or wrap all food on display in clear plastic wrap or paper. Display any potentially hazardous foods under temperature control, for example, hot foods such as pastas, pies, pizzas above 60°C and sandwiches, salads and milk drinks below 5°C.

Cleaning

Frequent regular cleaning of food outlets will help minimise the risk of contamination and food poisoning. Some points to consider include:

- clean and sanitise benches before starting food preparation

- clean work-benches, sinks and floors daily
- replace dishcloths and tea towels daily
- clean refrigerators and stoves weekly and storage cupboards regularly.

Managing and ordering stock

The main aim when managing stock is to maintain the lowest level of stock while having sufficient stock to use or sell.

Effective purchasing to meet the requirements of the strategy means buying products:

- of the right quality;
- in the right quantity;
- for the right price; and
- at the right time.

There should be one person in the outlet responsible for ordering stock including foods, drinks, packaging and cleaning materials. This helps to prevent over-ordering or double ordering and maintains consistency.

To work out when to order stock, look at the food and drink requirements and how long it takes for the supplier to deliver the order. If possible try to order frequently so more perishable stock does not have to be stored for long periods of time. If the outlet is in an area where it is difficult to access stock frequently, it is better to access products with a longer shelf life.

Suppliers

When selecting a supplier, look for suppliers who:

- Are local, if possible.
- Keep the outlet manager or convenor informed of product availability and price increases.
- Provide competitively priced products.
- Allow reasonable payment terms.

- Are able to deliver to customers at appropriate times.
- Handle food safely (use refrigerated vehicles for chilled and frozen products and deliver fresh products in a covered vehicle).
- Offer specials or deals that meet the requirements of the strategy including free promotional material, discounts and equipment.

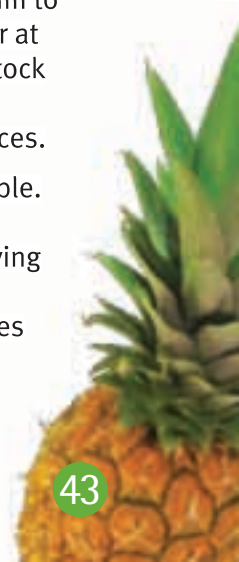
Ordering

When ordering stock:

- Check the stock currently in the outlet — a supplier product list can be used. This is a list developed by the manager containing information on each supplier and the products that the outlet orders from them. A manager can take a quick look at the stock on hand and use the product list to decide how much of each item is needed in the next order.
- Assess how well foods and drinks are selling as ordering will depend on the menu and sales.
- Consider seasonal changes.
- Keep a record of exactly what was ordered.

Hints and tips

- Storage space in outlets is often limited. Aim to have only the stock that is needed on hand. Order frequently as this reduces the risk of stock spoiling.
- Regular stocktakes should be done as the outlet needs to account for all stock. Aim to have as little stock as possible left over at the end of the month to avoid losing stock due to refrigeration breakdown, power failure or other unforeseen circumstances.
- Apply the FIFO (First In First Out) principle. Always use the oldest stock in storage before the newer stock. Do this by moving old stock to the front of shelves in the refrigeration unit and on storage shelves and place the new stock behind it.



- Reduce the price of slow moving stock. As long as it is within the use by date stated on the package, it is better to sell the stock at cost and recoup some money than throw it away.

Receiving

When the stock arrives in the outlet check the delivery docket and supplier's invoice against the order. Check the date marked on goods where appropriate. Check for price increases and adjust the outlet selling price on items if required.

Once the committee has designed a healthier menu:

- Plan ahead for any interest days, official visits, cultural events or open days that may affect sales or change the types of foods being sold.
- Identify special days or theme days that promote healthy food choices.

Workflow in food outlets

Good workflow in food outlets is crucial. It ensures that food is fresh and attractive, reduces wastage and maximises the amount of food that can be prepared in the time available.

Workflow planning means organising tasks in a logical order to make the work easier. To help do this, simplify the tasks that need to be done.

Consider:

- Timing — when do different foods need to be ready?
- Equipment availability — what equipment is needed to prepare, cook, or heat and serve foods?
- Task allocation — who is doing each job?
- Preparation and cooking times to ensure all foods will be ready to serve at the same time
- Preparing food on slow days

- Preparing and package some menu items in advance to reduce customer waiting times ie. sandwiches, rolls, salads etc.

Good workflow involves:

- minimum movement and backtracking
- efficient use of space
- appropriate use of equipment
- the application of safe food handling techniques; and
- minimum expenditure of time and effort by all staff, for maximum output.

The principles of good workflow should be applied to the following tasks:

- receiving products
- storing foods and drinks
- preparing foods
- packaging
- holding — both hot and cold foods
- serving foods and drinks; and
- cleaning.

Suggested workflow for preparing sandwiches, rolls, focaccias, wraps and burgers

Making sandwiches, rolls, wraps, toasted sandwiches, focaccias and burgers can be a quick, simple operation when efficient methods are used, as outlined below.

Prepare all the filling ingredients for the sandwiches, rolls, wraps and salads first:

- Wash all vegetables well.
- Shred lettuce, peel carrots, slice tomatoes, grate carrot and cheese, drain beetroot etc.
- Put all ingredients in resealable, stackable containers (rectangular takeaway food containers seal and stack well and are easy to label).

- Prepare moist fillings which can be spooned onto the breads quickly.
- For sandwich preparation, arrange the containers of filling ingredients behind the bread board within easy reach.
- Make up one type of sandwich or roll at a time. Only lay out enough bread for 10 sandwiches at a time (approx. one loaf of bread). Crusts can be used for bread cases or breadcrumbs.
- Pair the bread slices — top slice above the bottom slice.
- Use a spreader or spatula rather than a knife to spread margarine thinly — it provides a barrier on the bread and prevents the sandwich from becoming soggy. For toasted jaffles, only spread margarine on the outside of the bread to reduce the total fat content of the sandwich. There is adequate oil in focaccias to prevent sticking in the sandwich maker.
- Place the filling on the bottom layer of bread.
- Cut using a sandwich guide and serrated bread knife. Wrap straightaway to prevent drying out. Some outlets may use sandwich packaging for better display.
- If a large number of sandwiches are required and a refrigerated cabinet is not available place high-risk fillings in a tray of ice to keep these at a safe temperature. Cover bread with plastic to prevent drying out.

Refer to appendix 1 on page 62 for more ideas on sandwiches, rolls and wraps.

For wraps (made from Lebanese or flat bread)

- Roll these carefully and firmly.
- Cut the wrap diagonally to show the contents and wrap in plastic wrap — not too tightly as the contents will be affected.

For burgers

Prepare all the buns with salad in advance and add the meat, fish, chicken or vegetable patty last (to maintain the correct temperature). The burgers can then be wrapped in paper or put into plastic containers for easy stacking and distribution. Develop a system for labelling the burgers to prevent confusion, for example ‘CH’ for a burger with cheese.

Managing food

How foods are presented can be as important as what foods are offered. Outlets can support the development of positive attitudes and behaviour towards food among customers.

The foods and drinks offered need to be nutritious, varied, quick and easy to prepare, appetising and well presented to appeal to customers. The following information provides practical ways to work with food to achieve these aims.

Ideas for new food and drink items can be found in the Food and Drink Guide on pages 27 – 39 of the ABC strategy, through food distributors, by modifying existing ingredients, and involving customers to identify what options they would prefer. Also refer to the **Promotion** section on pages 51 – 53 for ideas on ways to add variety to the menu.

Variety

‘Old favourites’ will always have a place, however, add variety and interest to the menu through daily or weekly specials suited to the season. Smaller outlets may offer certain items for sale on a particular day of the week, for example, burgers on a Friday — this means all the preparation for that item is done on one day. Offer different serve sizes of foods where possible to meet the varied needs of customers.



Food appeal

Interesting contrasts in colour, flavour and texture can be achieved with the addition of fresh, crunchy vegetables in salads, burgers, rolls and wraps. Serve a variety of quality fruits in season. Fruit that is cut up and served in chunks or as a fruit salad is a more popular choice than whole fruit.

Presentation and positioning

How are foods presented? Look at the outlet from the customers' perspective — what can they see when they are at the counter? Attractively displayed foods and drinks, with healthy choices positioned at the front of the counter and in prominent positions in the fridges, sell well.

Take care with presentation of individual foods, for example, wrap sandwiches and rolls in clear plastic so the contents can be easily seen. Foods should look like, and be, good value for money.

Sandwiches, rolls and wraps

Well-priced sandwiches, rolls and wraps are filling, nutritious, convenient and are very popular. When presented well they have great visual appeal. Add variety by using a range of breads on the menu. Fresh salad vegetables add flavour, colour and texture.

Refer to appendix 1 on page 62 for ideas for sandwich fillings and a quantity guide for fillings.

Salads

Salads can be made more nutritious and filling by combining salad vegetables and lean protein or legumes. For example canned mixed beans, cheese, cold lean meats, canned tuna or salmon or egg. A slice or two of bread or small bread roll is also a good accompaniment. Be careful not to price salads too high.

Also consider rice, pasta or cous cous salads for variety. Watch salad dressings, use no-oil or low-fat dressings.

Meals

The type and number of hot food choices available will depend on a number of factors for example the equipment available to cook the food, to heat it and keep it hot; impact on workflow; or current season. Many commercial hot foods fit into the **AMBER** category if prepared using low-fat cooking techniques such as using non-stick cook ware, oven-baking, microwaving, steaming or grilling. Always check the nutrition information panel and offer moderate portions.

There are many hot healthier food choices that are easy to prepare that may be included; such as:

- baked stuffed potatoes
- flat bread pizzas
- burgers served with lots of salad
- reduced fat meat pies and sausage rolls
- legume or meat-based burritos
- noodles or stir fry dishes
- pastas
- chicken drumsticks served with salad
- oven-baked coated meats served with vegetables
- toasted sandwiches
- frittatas; and
- soups.



Roast meals

Use lean cuts and cook with minimal amounts of poly – or mono-unsaturated oils. Lean roast meats can be used in hot rolls, sandwiches, salad plates, pizza toppings or kebabs. Look for reduced-salt, reduced-fat sauces, stocks and gravies.

Offer a variety of vegetables instead of plain boiled mixed cuts – try corn on the cob, a mixture of roasted vegetables such as sweet potato, red onion, parsnips, pumpkin and corn (tip: these can also be used in salads), baked potatoes cooked in their skins filled with baked beans or a savoury mince topped with reduced-fat cheese.

Meal and snack deals

These are standardised lunches and snacks that are bought as a package. Meal and snack deals support the implementation of the strategy because they can:

- encourage customers to eat a nutritional balance of foods
- streamline lunch and snack production
- make ordering easy
- promote healthier choices and new foods on the menu; and
- offer value for money.

Meal deal ideas

- Soup with a bread roll and a piece of fruit.
- Cheese and salad sandwich and a small fruit juice.
- Salad roll, tub of reduced-fat yoghurt and bottle of water.
- Burger (lean meat patty and salad), small carton of flavoured reduced fat milk and small packet of dried fruit.

Snacks

There is a variety of snack foods that can be provided as part of a healthy menu. Some examples include:

- seasonal whole or sliced fruit
- fruit buns or reduced-fat cheese and herb scrolls
- popcorn
- small bags of unsalted or salted dry-roasted nuts
- hot cheese or ham, cheese and pineapple muffin melts
- reduced-fat, reduced salt dips with veggie sticks
- cheese and crackers
- snack packs – cheese, dried fruit, crackers, plain nuts
- cereal and fruit-based bars; and
- yoghurt and fruit cups.

Refer to Appendix 2 page 64 for more suggestions.

Healthy breakfast ideas

Many outlets serve breakfast. Offer nutritious choices all morning such as:

- assorted breakfast cereals served fresh fruit and reduced-fat, low fat or skim milk and milk alternatives
- fruit toast with condiments served separately
- toasted sandwiches
- egg and ham English muffins
- yoghurts with fresh or stewed fruit or untoasted mueslis
- fruit salad
- milk drinks (warm and cold); and
- assorted sweet and savoury muffins such as zucchini and feta, mixed berry, pumpkin and rosemary, apple and cinnamon.



Drinks

There are many choices of nutritious drinks available. Water is a good thirst quencher and should be encouraged.

Milks are a rich source of calcium and many other nutrients important optimal health. Choices include full fat and reduced fat milks (plain and flavoured), milkshakes, soy milks and soyshakes – use a moderate serve size of 300ml for all flavoured milks.

Offer juices in small serve sizes no greater than 300ml chilled or frozen to provide variety.

Managing money

It is not just the food that is sold that determines profit. There are many management issues that also play a part. Operating a financially successful outlet involves managing the resources efficiently and effectively this includes:

- knowing what the outlet spends and earns
- accounting for all money and stock
- working out the cost price of all items (that is how much it costs the outlet to make or buy the product) versus the selling price in order to determine actual margins or mark-up
- setting selling prices to cover all costs and make a profit.

For an outlet to operate as a profitable business, income must be greater than the running costs. Costing foods accurately is an important part of making sure all costs can be met. The cost of a food or drink can be calculated by:

- using the wholesale price of the food or drink
- adding up the cost of all the ingredients that make up a food or drink

- including the cost of packaging of the food or drink where appropriate.

Additional running costs to consider include:

- cost of employees including wages, workers compensation insurance, superannuation and long service leave
- electricity, gas and water
- rent
- equipment and potential ongoing maintenance.

Setting selling prices

Set selling prices to cover costs. The mark-up or margin is the difference between the wholesale price of the food (cost) and the selling price.

When setting the selling prices for foods and drinks consider:

- What is the cost of the food to the outlet?
- What are the other costs involved in running the outlet?
- What would be a reasonable price to pay in order to gain sales?
- Is there competition from other shops nearby?
- Will the outlet consider a policy of lower prices on foods and drinks in the **GREEN** category and higher prices on less healthy foods?

Develop a mark-up or margin schedule which will show the percentage mark-up on each item and use this to track sales volume of each food and drink item. This tool may help determine the average mark-up to use. Some outlets may use a standard gross profit for all items, that is, they apply a standard mark-up to all items.

The selling price can also be set using the supplier's recommended retail price. If the outlet does not choose to sell at this price, it is important to regularly check for price increases using supplier invoices.

How to minimise costs

There are several ways to minimise costs in food outlets:

- Provide clear instructions for all staff to ensure that all foods and drinks are prepared and sold in standard serve sizes, for example, the same quantity of filling each time for sandwiches and rolls.
- Use portion control equipment so serves of foods and drinks are the same each time the product is made ie. standard serving spoons and set containers.
- Avoid unnecessary packaging and wrapping.
- Put procedures in place to provide accountability for all products and money.
- Sell foods and drinks nearing their use by date at a reduced price to avoid a total loss.

Managing promotion

Once foods and drinks have been revised to align with *A Better Choice*, it is important to make sure customers know what is now available for sale and are encouraged to buy it. Marketing and promotion of the new menu will assist in this process. Both are very important aspects of implementing the strategy.

Marketing is getting the right product in the right place at the right time at the right price using the right promotion to attract customers who will buy.

Customer surveys

To market the outlet and the foods for sale, gaining an understanding of customers' ideas about healthy choices, their cultural background and any food preferences is vital. Food outlets are well placed to carry out brief satisfaction surveys to find out this kind of information and continue to review menu choices.

Keep surveys brief and user friendly ie. participants can simply tick boxes instead of writing long responses.

Frame questions to investigate:

- How well are new products being received by the customers?
- Do customers believe these products are good value for money?
- Do the customers know about the strategy?
- Are the customers satisfied with the outlet service?
- Are the customers satisfied with the range of healthy choices? If not, what would they like to see?

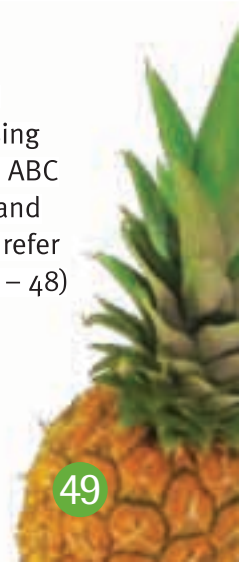
This information can be used to continue to review the menu, new products, determine pricing and assess the promotional strategies that are in place. Arrange to leave copies of the survey at registers with pencils and ask register staff to highlight the surveys to customers.

Also arrange an area to collect the surveys that is well signed. Consider having a staff or committee member to wander through the outlet to verbally take feedback during busy periods – this will increase the volume of surveys completed.

An incentive may also help to encourage customers to complete the survey. Offer a complimentary sample of a new menu item or advise participants they will be entered into a draw to win a free lunch.

Product

Foods and drinks for sale should meet the strategy's display, promotion and advertising requirements (refer to pages 11 – 16 of the ABC strategy). There are many healthier foods and drink alternatives that are easy to prepare refer to the section on [Managing food](#) (pages 45 – 48) for suggestions.



Place

Place can mean many things. A helpful way of thinking about it is to consider the outlet's image. Image is a combination of factors: what the outlet looks like, the food it serves, how food is promoted and how well connected the outlet is to the facility.

Involve customers in creating a positive image for the outlet. Some ideas for creating an image include naming the outlet. This could be done by holding a name competition for customers.

Other suggestions include:

- Use easy-to-read menu boards to let customers know what is available while they queue.
- Repaint and refurbish the outlet — give it a new look. Use some of the profits to improve equipment and the work environment for staff.
- Create a space outside that is pleasant for eating.
- Arrange aprons for staff to not only give a professional look to the outlet but to also enhance hygiene standards.
- Update staff uniforms.
- Promote the outlet as a positive part of the facility in local newsletters.
- Arrange to have the menu and other relevant information placed on QHEPS.
- Promote the outlet as serving locally grown fresh food in support of the community's farmers — keeping carbon miles to a minimum.

Price

Customers want variety at a price they can afford. They want value for money. Price products to sell. Keep pricing simple, so this is easier for personnel and customers, for example, \$3.50 is preferable to \$3.49.

Always check the selling price with customers. They will compare the cost with what they pay outside the facility. Refer to [Setting selling prices](#) on page 48 for more information.



Promotion

Active product promotion is essential when changing the menu to healthier products as it generates sales. Products sell best when they sound interesting to the customer and the customer feels they are going to get an immediate benefit by choosing that food.

Keep this in mind when creating an image for foods and drinks. Apply the ideas in the promotion checklist as these ideas can often increase the popularity of the food or drink. Put this into practice on the printed menus or menu board, as well as for individual foods.

Developing a communication plan may help to organise how to promote new products, upcoming changes to the menu and the overall messages about the strategy. Guides on how to prepare a marketing strategy are available from Public Affairs on QHEPS at http://qheps.health.qld.gov.au/media/tools_marketing.htm. The communication plan for the strategy's implementation has been included on the CD-ROM as an example.

Draft a communication matrix to help identify who needs to be informed, what key messages need to be communicated and how this will be delivered (refer to CD-ROM for an example). Aim for 2 – 3 key messages and keep it simple. For example:

Who	What	How
Customers – Queensland Health staff – Visitors	Promote GREEN foods and drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create GREEN areas in drinks fridge, bain main and cold cabinet • Use stickers against GREEN choices on menu board • Offer GREEN special each day • Place postcards in table talkers on cabinets in the outlet and in dining area (tables and next to cutlery stand) • Place brochures at registers, in waiting areas in the outlet and at reception areas in the facility • Contact Media and Communications to send a copy of the new menu and weekly GREEN specials to all staff • Place posters in and around the outlet, in lifts, at information areas and on notice boards

Contact your local Public Affairs Officer for marketing ideas and advice. Use the checklist below to help target activities to promote your message.

Promotion checklist

- Know the audience.
- Use their language, terms, symbols and icons.
- Sell a benefit, lifestyle and image.
- Use motivating, descriptive, sensory words, for example, 'delicious', 'mouth watering', 'scrumptious'.
- Use branding for the foods and drinks, not generic terms, for example, name a burger after your outlet, or give a meal deal a special name.
- Use theme foods/days, specials, sampling, meal and snack deals, and giveaways. Rotate foods through the menu.

Use the point-of-sale materials that have been developed to help inform customers about the strategy and promoting **GREEN** choices. Additional copies of the poster, brochure, stickers and postcards are available at Queensland Health Publications ph: (07) 3234 1053.

Look for opportunities to be involved with other campaigns that promote healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. *Go for 2&5®* and *Eat Well Be Active* campaigns have associated merchandise available that may assist promotions. Refer to **Resources** on page 65 for contact details and websites with more ideas for successful promotions.



Promoting better choices – Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital

Food and Retail Services at Royal Brisbane and Women’s Hospital have a history of promoting healthier menu items to their customers.

“We’ve learnt from previous projects that changing menus and recipes is just one aspect to consider. Promoting healthy choices and providing consistent messages are equally important,” states Don Bambrly, Manager Food and Retail Services.



Drawing on this experience, Food and Retail Services have introduced a number of methods to promote and identify their better choices.

Examples include:

- colour coding shelves to highlight **GREEN**, **AMBER** and **RED** options (refer to Figure 1)
- installing plastic holders in the food court to display information brochures
- arranging features in local newsletter *News at the Royal*
- organising broadcast emails to staff
- placing posters on notice boards within the hospital
- preparing an on-hold phone message for switchboard.



“There are many opportunities to promote healthy menu items. We’ve experienced great success with cooking demonstrations, taste tests and participating in other initiatives that promote healthy eating such as the Go for 2 and 5 campaign and health interest weeks including National Nutrition Week.

“We’ve just received a small grant from the Go for 2 and 5 campaign to focus on promoting **GREEN** choices in the food court. Plans are under way to finalise the implementation of the strategy to coincide with these activities and then work towards celebrating our achievement with an official launch of *A Better Choice* in July.”



Figure 1. Colour coded shelves in staff cafeteria drinks fridge

Improvement Checklist

In addition to reviewing the types of foods and drinks offered for sale, successful implementation of the ABC strategy requires careful attention to a number of other matters as outlined in this section. The following improvement checklist summaries key elements to achieve *A Better Choice* and identify other factors that will influence its success.

The committee can explore and discuss each factor and identify areas for improvement to help plan changes required.

The checklist may be used to help monitor progress. If current practice meets the key element described, then a tick can be entered in the 'yes' column. If it is not met or only partially met, comments need to be entered into the 'Areas that need improvement' column following committee discussion. Refer to the example below.

Key element for success	Met	Requires improvement
<p>Committee</p> <p>A functioning committee meets regularly.</p> <p>The committee is well informed about the strategy and has accessed all relevant resources.</p> <p>The committee regularly communicates information to staff and visitors about the <i>A Better Choice</i> (ABC) strategy, the plans for change and the changes implemented.</p> <p>The committee monitors its progress against set timelines.</p> <p>The committee identifies and prioritises areas for improvement.</p>		
<p>Food outlets</p> <p>Food outlet personnel (including part-time or casual staff) are well informed about the ABC strategy and have access to information about healthier food products.</p> <p>Healthier food and drink choices are offered at prices customers can afford.</p> <p>The outlet prices healthier choices competitively.</p>		

Key element for success	Met	Requires improvement
<p>Food outlets</p> <p>The outlet has reliable, regular access to healthier food and drink products.</p> <p>The menu is planned with customer input and includes food and drink choices that are tailored to customers' preferences.</p> <p>The outlet offers foods and drinks at times to suit the needs identified in the facility.</p> <p>A maximum of 20 per cent of foods and drinks displayed are RED choices.</p>		
<p>Marketing and promotion</p> <p>The outlet offers daily or weekly specials that are regularly promoted and feature GREEN foods and drinks only.</p> <p>Feedback is sought from customers when introducing new foods.</p> <p>The new menu is clearly displayed and advertised to customers.</p> <p>GREEN food and drink choices are well promoted to customers. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GREEN products are placed at eye level or the most prominent position in shelves, cabinets, fridges and vending machines. • GREEN choices are highlighted on the menu and throughout the outlet. • GREEN products are always available. <p>Foods and drinks from the AMBER and RED categories are not advertised. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no signage or advertising on the top, front, sides or within internal shelving of cabinets, fridges or vending machines. 		



Key element for success	Met	Requires improvement
<p>Marketing and promotion</p> <p>Foods and drinks from the AMBER and RED categories are not advertised. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no promotional stands, product displays or materials ie. display boxes. • no point-of-sale promotions ie. two-for-one deals or upsizing, buy two for an extra \$1. • no features in dining areas ie. advertising on tables, placemats or posters. <p>Foods and drinks from the AMBER and RED categories are not promoted. These items are not displayed in prominent areas of locations within outlets and throughout Queensland Health facilities including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not at an entrance or exit of a food outlet. • not at eye-level in cabinets, shelves or fridges. • not beside cash registers. • not in lifts, on staff notice boards, at receptions desks or counters in waiting areas. 		
<p>Management issues</p> <p>Standard procedures are available in a written form for all paid staff and volunteers.</p> <p>Outlet tasks and daily schedule are organised in the most efficient way.</p> <p>There are enough serving areas to prevent long queues.</p>		
<p>Food safety and hygiene</p> <p>The outlet manager and staff have obtained appropriate training in safe food handling to meet legislative requirements.</p>		

Key element for success	Met	Requires improvement
<p>Food safety and hygiene</p> <p>Foods are stored and served safely at the correct temperature.</p> <p>The outlet uses accredited suppliers (HACCP approved or equivalent).</p> <p>The outlet has a food safety plan or equivalent arrangement in place.</p>		
<p>Outlet personnel</p> <p>There are enough personnel (paid or volunteer) to run the outlet efficiently.</p> <p>Personnel have a clear understanding about their role in implementing the ABC strategy.</p> <p>Personnel are valued and viewed as part of the facility.</p>		
<p>Equipment</p> <p>The outlet has adequate equipment to prepare, serve and store foods and drinks in line with the ABC strategy.</p>		
<p>One-off RED occasions</p> <p>Potential occasions have been identified where foods and/or drinks from the RED category are permitted.</p>		
<p>Vending machines</p> <p>Vending machines stock only foods and drinks that fall into the GREEN or AMBER categories.</p> <p>GREEN foods and drinks are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> stocked and displayed on prominent shelves. always available. <p>Vending machines do not advertise or promote foods and drinks that fall into the AMBER or RED category.</p> <p>Contractors or personnel restocking vending machines are well informed about the ABC strategy and vending machine requirements.</p>		



Key element for success	Met	Requires improvement
<p>Tea trolleys</p> <p>GREEN food and drink choices are well promoted to customers. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GREEN products are placed at eye level or the most prominent position on the trolley ie. top shelf. • GREEN choices are always available. <p>A maximum of 20 per cent of foods and drinks displayed on the trolley are RED choices.</p> <p>Foods and drinks from the AMBER and RED categories are not promoted including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not displayed in excessive quantities • not placed on the top shelves of trolley • not advertised on the trolley including any promotional materials or stands, signage or sale promotions ie. two-for-one deals featuring these products. 		
<p>Paediatric settings</p> <p>Additional recommendations regarding the ABC strategy are met where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all non-sugar, zero sugar, low joule and/or diet soft drinks; and • all caffeinated beverages <p>are RED choices in food outlets, vending machines, catering or fundraising activities conducted within paediatric settings.</p>		
<p>Fundraising</p> <p>All foods and drinks used in fundraising activities are from the GREEN or AMBER category.</p> <p>RED foods and drinks are not used in fundraising activities conducted within Queensland Health facilities.</p>		
<p>Catering supplied at meetings or functions</p> <p>All foods and drinks provided at meetings, functions or events are from the GREEN or AMBER category.</p>		

Key element for success	Met	Requires improvement
<p>Catering supplied at meetings or functions</p> <p>Staff preparing or organising catering are well informed about the strategy and catering guidelines requirements.</p>		
<p>Social occasions or special events</p> <p>Where foods and drinks are supplied or purchased by Queensland Health no RED choices are provided.</p>		

Developing an Action Plan

The Action Plan template provided in this section can help to prioritise issues of concern and help move a facility towards providing and promoting healthier food choices for staff and visitors.

The Action Plan helps you work through the following steps.

1. Prioritise issues

Look at the areas for improvement identified in the Improvement Checklist. Questions the committee may consider include:

- Which are the more urgent issues?
- What is the committee going to do first and which activities can be left until later?
- What operational issues need to be dealt with now to support the phasing in of healthier food choices?

2. Explore options

Discuss the range of possible solutions to the issues identified and develop creative ways of dealing with each issue. Identify resources to support the committee in this process.

3. Select one or more preferred options that best suit the situation.

4. Identify strategies that will be used to implement the options selected.

5. Set timelines or dates for implementation of the selected options.

6. Assign specific people to be responsible for implementing the options.

7. Record the outcome after the change has been made.

The example on page 60 shows how the Action Plan could be used to explore the issues such as time-consuming preparation of fresh foods.

Note: To document decisions about changes to the menu itself, that is, phasing in new foods, see pages 16 – 33 on developing alternatives, introducing new foods and finalising the menu.



Action Plan Template

Issue	Options	Preferred option (s)	Strategies	Time line	Who	Outcome
Preparing hot meals too time consuming	1) Buy in: – ready-to-eat options – salad/vegetables/ – ingredients that are washed and/ or cut up	Reorganise workflow practises	Prepare all ingredients prior to production of hot meals	Trial over 2 weeks	Outlet manager to prepare instruction sheets	Daily hot meal ready for purchase prior to pre-lunch rush
	2) Reorganise workflow practises to increase efficiency		Put up instruction sheet for the production of hot meals		Committee member to type up and laminate sheets	A 40% increase in the number of hot meals sold
			Purchase containers to store prepared ingredients		Outlet manager to source suitable containers from supplier	

Check your progress:

- Healthier food and drink options are promoted.
- Organisation of workflow and associated tasks are streamlined.
- Food safety and hygiene practices are implemented.
- Enough staff members (paid or volunteer) are available for efficient operation of the outlet.
- There is adequate equipment to prepare and serve healthier foods and drinks.
- Action plans are developed to address key issues identified in the improvement checklist.