

# 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 (to help meet the Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-2024 state-wide target)<sup>1</sup>.*

### **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 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.

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<sup>1</sup> The [Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-2024](#) target: “at least 80 per cent of hospitals and health services’ retail outlets and vending machines to meet the recommended Victorian Government food and nutrition standards (*Healthy choices*) by 2024.”

## 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.*

## Targets and timelines

Required date	Target
30 Sept 2022	<p><b>Drinks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vending and in-house retail food outlets:</b> 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.</li> <li>• <b>Catering:</b> No RED drinks are provided (with majority of options to be GREEN).</li> </ul>
30 Sept 2023	<p><b>Food:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vending and in-house food retail food outlets:</b> At least 50% GREEN foods and no more than 20% RED foods are available. No RED foods to be promoted/advertised.</li> <li>• <b>Catering:</b> No RED foods are provided (with majority of options to be GREEN).</li> </ul>

## Monitoring and reporting requirements

- **Early 2022:** Information about the number and types of retail food outlets, vending machines and catering to be provided to the Department of Health.
- **30 September 2022 and 2023:** Annual reporting against targets (including FoodChecker assessments) to be submitted to the Department of Health. (Further dates will be set thereafter).

*Further guidance and tools for monitoring and reporting will be provided by the Department of Health.*

The FoodChecker tool should be used to conduct a baseline, as well as annual assessments. This is not only for reporting, but can also assist with making changes and monitoring progress.

## Accountability

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

## Further information

### Related policies and guidelines

- [\*Healthy choices: policy guidelines for hospitals and health services\*](#)
- [\*Healthy choices: food and drink classification guide\*](#)
- [\*Healthy choices: healthy eating policy and catering guide for workplaces\*](#)
- [\*Policy and funding guidelines for Victorian public health services\*](#)
- [\*Victorian public health and wellbeing plan 2019 – 2023\*](#)

### Implementation support and tools

- [Healthy Eating Advisory Service](#)
- [FoodChecker](#)

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