

Meeting Well Healthier Potlucks

Potlucks are a great way for workers to show off their culinary expertise and create camaraderie amongst staff. Make potlucks fun for everyone by having some healthier food choices available. Consider re-making your favorites into healthier lower-fat dishes. Some simple substitutions can make old-time favorites healthier and just as tasty. For ideas, see Meeting Well Ingredients Substitutions.

Challenge co-workers to try new dishes with less calories and fat. Check out the lighter recipes on the Cooking Light and Champions for Change websites (www.cookinglight.com and www.cachampionsforchange.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/recipes). Since you never know what might show up at a potluck, pass around a sign-up sheet with indications for healthy options. Offer suggestions for fresh fruit (salads or kebobs), fresh vegetable plates and salads. Picking up ready-made vegetable platters and fruit plates can be a time saving option for the busy co-worker or the person who doesn't like to cook.

Healthy Potluck Ideas

Salad Bar Potluck

Here's an idea for a different kind of potluck. Assign everyone to bring one item: sliced cucumber, chopped celery, grape tomatoes, cauliflower, broccoli, baby carrots, sprouts, canned garbanzo and kidney beans, shredded low-fat cheese, whole wheat mini pitas or small whole grain rolls, and an assortment of low-fat salad dressings. Arrange lettuce in 1 or 2 large bowls and set up your own salad bar on a couple of long tables. A crock pot of low-fat soup or chili adds a heartier touch.

Tostada Bar Potluck

You probably have several co-workers who make world famous beans or meat toppings. Encourage everyone else to pitch in with fresh shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes, low-fat shredded cheese, low-fat sour cream, diced avocados or guacamole, several kinds of salsa, fat-free beans only, 100% whole wheat flour tortillas and small corn tostada shells. Be sure to include fresh fruit for dessert along with more traditional sweets. Make an exotic, in-season, fresh fruit salad with fresh pineapple, kiwis, berries and melons topped with grated fresh coconut.

Barbecue Potlucks

Office barbecues are a great way to get together and encourage physical activity. Arranging games seems natural for most party planners, but be sure to include some healthier food selections too. Offer baked chips, fresh fruit and vegetable plates with low-fat dip, green salad with low or no-calorie dressing choices, turkey burgers, veggie burgers (for example, Boca burgers) and 100% whole wheat buns.

For more information, go to www.healthyshasta.org

Employee Birthday Celebration Ideas



Berry Angel Food Cake



Fruit Parfait



Fruit Kabobs

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Berry Angel Food Cake

Ingredients:

- 1 1/3 cups superfine sugar, divided
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 10 large egg whites (at room temperature)
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- Dash of salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/8 teaspoon almond extract
- Seasonal berries

Superfine sugar is very finely granulated and can be found in a box next to regular sugar in the supermarket. If you prefer regular granulated sugar, pulse it two or three times in your food processor before using.

Preheat oven to 350°. Sift together 1/3 cup sugar and flour; set flour mixture aside. Beat egg whites at medium speed of a mixer in a large bowl until foamy. Add cream of tartar and salt; beat until soft peaks form. Add 1 cup sugar, 2 tablespoons at a time, beating until stiff peaks form. Sift flour mixture over egg white mixture, 1/4 cup at a time; fold in. Fold in vanilla, lemon juice, and almond extract. Spoon cake batter evenly into a 10-inch tube pan, spreading evenly. Break large air pockets by cutting through cake batter with a knife. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes or until cake springs back when lightly touched. Invert pan, and cool cake for 40 minutes. Loosen cake from sides of pan using a narrow metal spatula. Invert cake onto a serving plate, and garnish with fresh berries.

Nutritional Information

Calories: 279 (1% from fat)
Fat: 0.2g
Protein: 7.8g
Carbohydrate: 61.3g
Fiber: 0.6g
Cholesterol: 0.0mg
Sodium: 93mg
Calcium: 7mg

Makes six servings

Source: Cooking Light, October 1997

Fruit Kabobs

This refreshing afternoon snack is easy to make. Choose your favorite fruits to create your own special kabob.

- apple(s)
- banana(s)
- green grapes
- red grapes
- canned pineapple chunks
- plain or fruit flavored smooth-style yogurt
- flaked or shredded coconut, or if you prefer, granola, raisins or nuts
- 1 knife, 2 wooden skewer sticks and 2 large plates

Wash the apples and grapes. Cut the apple into small squares. Peel the banana and cut into chunks. Open the can of pineapple chunks or use fresh pineapple. Slide pieces of each of the fruits onto the skewers, keeping a little space at both ends empty. You can put equal amounts of each fruit on the skewer or more of your favorite ones. It's all up to you. Enjoy!

Healthy Fruit Parfait

- 1/2 cup fresh strawberries, sliced
- 1/2 cup pineapple, chopped
- 2 cups nonfat vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup granola cereal
- 4 fresh strawberries (to garnish)

Toss fruits in a bowl and toss gently. Into each parfait dish, layer 1/4 of fruit mixture, 1 tablespoon granola, 1/4 cup yogurt, 1/4 cup fruit mixture, 1/4 cup yogurt, 1 tablespoon granola and then garnish with a mint sprig. Substitute any fresh fruit in season.