



Why more healthy food is available at Toowoomba's Wellbean Co Café

At Darling Downs Health, the Wellbean Co Café at Toowoomba Base Hospital is making more healthy food available through implementing the A Better Choice strategy (ABC).

Health and Wellbeing Queensland's [A Better Choice](#) (ABC) strategy aims to encourage healthier food and drink options across Queensland, including at the Wellbean Co Café at Toowoomba Base Hospital.

Under the guidance of the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation CEO Alison Kennedy, the Wellbean Co Café Manager, Deb, is championing the implementation of the ABC strategy.

Deb acknowledges the team effort in implementing the ABC strategy. Deb works alongside the Wellbean Co chef, the Toowoomba Base Hospital Food Services dietitian and staff from the Toowoomba Hospital Foundation to deliver a healthier food environment.

How to manage change

Deb's team acknowledge that change is hard. Their focus is on finding a balance between providing healthy food that meets the guidelines in the ABC strategy while acknowledging customer preferences in a hospital environment.

Deb is working with the café's chef and Toowoomba Base Hospital's Food Services dietitian to increase the nutritional value of menu items through initiatives such as:

- Adapting existing recipes and menu items to be healthier, rather than ordering products.
- Making simple changes to modify recipes, for example, removing butter from sandwiches

and swapping full-fat cheese with a low-fat variety.

- Communicating with staff about changes and encouraging them to try new recipes and welcome new menu or food initiatives.
- Working as a team to create healthier menu choices and encouraging chefs to embrace the ABC strategy.

While there were some initial concerns around removing less healthy options, hospital staff appreciate the changes at Wellbean Co, as the café strives to increase the availability of more nutritious food and drink options.

Keeping costs down

At Wellbean Co, the café has adjusted its menu within its budget to provide affordable healthy meals to satisfy the customers.

Since making the changes, the café has received positive feedback about the healthy items which are now available, and sales continue to increase. This overcomes the common misconception that healthy food is more expensive for businesses to deliver and consumers to buy.

According to Deb, the focus should be on adapting and swapping food items to be healthier, as customers will select from the available choices. Deb has not found a negative impact on sales at Wellbean Co Café since changing the café menu to offer healthier food.

A Better Choice

Healthy options made easy



Sharing information with suppliers

Wellbean Co Café acknowledges that implementation of the ABC strategy requires suppliers to share the goal of providing healthy food and drink options.

Deb's tips for working with suppliers include:

- providing clear examples of products suitable for ABC
- encouraging small changes to recipes rather than requesting a full overhaul
- adjusting the menu with suppliers' budget in mind
- supporting suppliers to promote and label their healthier options.

Deb emphasises the importance of ensuring suppliers understand the shift to healthier food and drinks and of working together to negotiate healthier options for both supply and display.

Deb has a strong rapport with the café's beverage supplier, who understands that more nutritious drink options are the main choice for the Wellbean Co Café.

Staying positive

The Wellbean Co Café uses positive messaging and thoughtful product placement to encourage customers to look for healthy food and drink options.

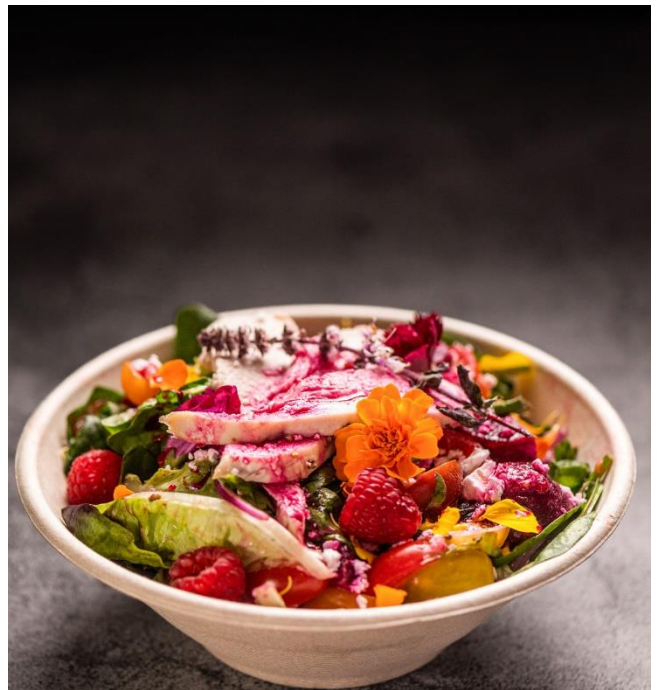
Healthier drinks are placed at eye level to focus the customer's attention on healthier options. A similar approach is in place for the display of healthier food and merchandise.

The Toowoomba Base Hospital Café was one of the [first to trial](#) Health and Wellbeing Queensland's '[Pick Me](#)' [promotional campaign](#) to empower their customers to choose healthier products.

At Wellbean Co Café, the team are proud of their achievements in creating a sustainable healthier food and drink environment and in setting an example for other cafés to follow.

'We are not changing the menu, we are adapting and swapping. We have created an affordable, healthy menu by making simple swaps that fit within the budget,'

Deb, Manager, Wellbean Co Café



Example of a healthy salad option at Wellbean Co Café