



Mater Hospital Brisbane — how its communication facilitated early success

Mater Hospital Brisbane credits effective communication with onsite café operators for their early implementation of the A Better Choice (ABC) strategy.

Health and Wellbeing Queensland's [A Better Choice](#) (ABC) strategy aims to encourage healthier food and drink options across the state, including at Mater Hospital Brisbane.

Mater Hospital harbours four cafes, which are owned and operated by [Zouki Australia](#). Through effective communication, Mater has formed new relationships with Zouki and their suppliers, and as a team are aiming to build an environment in the hospital that fosters good health and wellbeing for the staff and visitors.

How to make healthy happen

Mater's Director of Dietetics and Foodservices, Sally, and their Senior Nutrition Research Dietitian, Jennifer, are working together with their team to assist in making healthy happen at the hospital's food retail outlets and vending machines.

Their dedication in promoting the ABC strategy among onsite food retail outlets and vendors is evident through an increase in the range of healthy foods and drinks available at the hospital, particularly in vending.

Appoint ABC champions

Jennifer acknowledges the benefits of appointing staff champions to drive the implementation of the ABC Strategy.

Through working with staff champions who are dedicated to making more healthy food and drinks available at onsite cafes and vending machines, change can be accelerated.

Key factors in implementing the ABC strategy include:

- Open communication with the operator of cafes to strategise collective actions, such as preparation for ABC audits.
- Regular meetings with café and vending machine decision makers to share ideas about healthy products, marketing and merchandising.
- Developing an understanding of the business goals of key vendors and suppliers to progress negotiations for the ABC strategy.

According to Jennifer, effective implementation of the ABC strategy at onsite cafes and vending machines can be made easier through harnessing the dedication and skills of ABC staff champions and engagement with hospital leadership.

Small changes over time

Mater's café operators and retail food vendors appeared supportive of the ABC strategy early on, and this has enabled small and sustainable changes to be made over time.

Jennifer said gradual changes also made it easier to stock vending machines with healthier food and drinks that meet the ABC strategy requirements.

A Better Choice

Healthy options made easy



Jennifer highlights the importance of continual open communication and collaboration with vendors and suppliers to negotiate healthier product swaps to reduce the proportion of sugar-sweetened beverages at cafes and vending machines.

Showcase ABC success

The dietitians at the Mater value working together with the hospital's marketing team to showcase the success of the ABC strategy in the hospital community.

In the Mater Hospital Brisbane's newsletter and social media, the healthy option vending machines and the colourful salad bar at one of their cafés, *Café on 3*, have been promoted to showcase the implementation of the ABC strategy.

Mater's Café on 3 was also one of the first hospital cafes in Queensland to trial Health and Wellbeing Queensland's ['Pick Me' promotional materials](#), which empower consumers to choose healthier food and drink options.

Communication tips:

- Allocate staff ABC champions
- Communicate with onsite café and vending machine operators and suppliers to build rapport and encourage introduction of healthier food and drinks
- Showcase your ABC success.

'If you've got a few champions who are really committed on site, utilise their strengths and see what you can do; engage hospital leadership where you can because that's where you are really going to get some traction.'

Jennifer, Nutrition Research Dietitian, Mater Hospital Brisbane.



Salad Bar at Mater Hospital's *Café on 3*, including 'Pick Me' promotions.