A Better Choice
Healthy options made easy

Checklist for a healthier kitchen

Creating canteen spaces and menus that offer lots of healthy food and drink options is crucial for the health of your members and visitors now and for future generations.

The case for healthier kitchens

Approximately 3.4 million children in Australia participate in organised sport outside of school through a sports club or association each year[1]. This often involves at least weekly visits to attend training and/or games during the season. At these times, the food options available impact what we purchase and shapes our eating habits. Healthy eating improves overall health and performance and by providing healthy options at your club you can help support children's growth and development. Offering healthy options can also help clubs to:

Increase revenue

Making healthier food and drink options more accessible in your canteen will increase the likelihood of people purchasing items on site rather than bringing food from home.

Tip: Designate clean bench space for food preparation



Increase customer retention

Increasing the availability and promotion of healthy options encourages health-conscious and mindful choices and will attract customers that are more willing to return.

Support a healthy brand image

Encouraging sales of healthier food and drink options over less nutritious items promotes a healthy image for your food outlet.

Contribute to healthy habits

Increasing exposure to healthy options and providing kids with all the necessary information helps them to make healthy decisions, both now and into the future.

Help kids choose the healthier option

Sport and recreation outlets play a vital role in supporting kids to choose the healthier options, which can be done through product placement, healthy menus, signage design, kitchen appliances that support healthy cooking methods, and optimising the kitchen and canteen layout.

Ready to upgrade your sport canteen? Check out our kitchen checklist and start making some healthy changes!

[1]*Based on data collected in January 2024 – December 2024 for the AusPlay National Sport and Physical Activity survey (April 2025).*

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Kitchen checklist

	Positioning of Food and Drinks
☐	Place the healthier food and drink options at eye level for immediate attraction.
☐	Place healthier food and drink options in front facing fridges that are visible to customers whilst storing options high in fat, sugar and salt out of sight.
☐	Place healthier food options at the front of the canteen and near the checkout.
	Menu and Signage Design
☐	Display the healthier options at the top or to the left side of the menu, leaving less healthy options below or to the right. This highlights the healthier options based on the order that people read and interpret information.
☐	Showcase the healthier options on physical or digital menus by adding a contrasting colour or box on the items with the most nutritional value.
☐	Apply eye-catching signage or healthy messaging stickers to promote the healthy options available on shelves, fridges and menus. An example of this is Health and Wellbeing Queensland's 'Pick me' promotional materials.
☐	Display nutritional information on menus and packaging for quick and easy interpretation by customers. This may include total calorie or kilojoule content, and saturated fat and salt content per serving, along with recommended daily intake.
☐	Display healthier meal deals on menus and signs with affordable pricing.
☐	Display allergy information and dietary restrictions for easy understanding and decision-making. This may include small symbols or stickers, such as V for vegan, GF for gluten free, HF for halal friendly, or icons for items that contain common allergies such as dairy, eggs, fish or nuts.
☐	Introduce promotions or meal deals for healthier options with associated signage. This may include offering discounted water with any meal purchase or setting up a 2 for 1 deal that features healthy options.

Appliances	
☐	Replace kitchen appliances that require large amounts of cooking oil, such as deep fryers, with healthier alternative, such as air fryers or industrial ovens. See the Factsheet on Tips for healthier cooking methods.
☐	Use appliances such as a sandwich press, food processor or meat slicer to make healthier options faster and easier to prepare.
Canteen and Kitchen Layout	
☐	If possible, place the checkout counter further away from the entrance to allow customers to flow through the space and browse the menu without pressure.
☐	If possible, designate a large area of clean bench space for food preparation.
☐	Designate adequate space in fridges to store freshly prepared food.

For more tips on how to support healthy changes in your sporting club or association and to see how Ross River Athletics Association and the Western District Netball Association did it, visit Health and Wellbeing Queensland's *A Better Choice for Sport and Recreation* website at https://hw.qld.gov.au/a-better-choice/sport-and-recreation/#case-studies.