

Healthier Catering Commitment

What is the Healthier Catering Commitment (HCC)?

The Healthier Catering Commitment is open to all food businesses with a hygiene rating of 3 or above. The scheme is about making small changes to how food is prepared making it healthier. Participating in the scheme can help attract new customers who are looking for healthier food and drink options.

Criteria for businesses to join

To participate in HCC a business must have a food hygiene rating of 3 or above. You will need to meet a minimum of eight criteria, from a list of 25 that include conditions in relation to the use of fats, oils and salt and the availability of lower sugar drinks and snacks, and fruit and vegetables.

Every food business must meet the following essential criteria:

1. Reducing the amount of saturated fat in the food by swapping to a polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fat or oil such as sunflower, corn or rapeseed oil
2. Reducing the amount of salt in the food by allowing customers to add their own salt to their food and not adding salt to water used for cooking vegetables, rice or pasta.
3. Reducing the amount of sugar in drinks by offering and promoting water and low sugar drinks.
4. Making smaller portions available for children and adults– between ½ or 1/3 of standard size portions.

For businesses that carry out frying they must also meet the following additional essential criteria:

1. Ensuring that the cooking oil has to be heated to the optimum temperature 175°C
2. Ensuring that excess fat is drained from the food before serving
3. Ensuring that the oil is properly maintained – skimmed throughout service, topped up and regularly filtered.

The business will be assessed against the criteria and will be awarded with HCC if they meet the requirements of meeting 8 criteria, including any relevant essential criteria. A follow up compliance check will take place 12 months after a business has been awarded HCC.

Full list of criteria

<p>A minimum of eight criteria have to be fulfilled to qualify for the Healthier Catering Commitment. There are four essential criteria that have to be met by all businesses and a further three essential criteria that also have to be met by premises that deep fat fry.</p> <p>Essential criteria are marked with an E and those that are applicable to deep fat frying only are marked E*. Some non-essential criteria may not be applicable to you business.</p>	
<p>Fats and oils (see fact sheet concerning oils and fats for further information on types, use and cooking tips)</p>	
<p>Cooking and preparation</p>	
<p>1. Visible fat is removed from meat before cooking, fat is skimmed from minced meat dishes (or a lean mince is used) and skin is removed from poultry.</p>	

2. Food is grilled, baked, poached, steamed or griddled rather than fried wherever possible (e.g. sausages, bacon burgers, chicken, fish, samosas, etc.)	
3. A polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fat or oil is used when cooking food (e.g. sunflower, corn, sesame or rapeseed oil) instead of oils with a high saturated fat content such as lard, palm oil, ghee, butter, dripping. Partially hydrogenated vegetable oils such as AVR60 are not used. Levels of saturated fat need to be 15% or less.	E
4. A polyunsaturated or monounsaturated fat or oil is used when preparing food (see above examples above).	
Where deep fat frying is unavoidable	
5. For cooking potato products including chips, french fries, other cut (deep-fried) and sliced potato crisps made from fresh potatoes, including potatoes that are deep fried and finished in the oven, the oil temperature for cooking should ideally be below 175°C. For other food products the cooking oil in deep fat fryers should be heated to the optimum temperature, 175°C and 190°C and the thermostat should be in working condition (check the manufacturer's instructions for the correct use of your specific fryer).	E*
6. Excess fat is drained from the food before serving – Shake, Tap, Hang! (Shake and tap the basket vigorously twice and hang for at least 20 seconds).	E*
7. The oil is properly maintained (the fryer is skimmed throughout service; oil is topped up after every session and regularly filtered).	E*
8. Chips are thick cut, not skinny (as a guide pre-cut chips from a supplier that are 13mm or greater are considered "thick").	
Milk, spreads, dressings and sandwich fillings	
9. Semi skimmed or skimmed milk is used for drinks.	
10. Lower fat spreads, mayonnaise and dressings are available. Customers have the option to add their own dressings, mayonnaise and spreads.	
11. Where sandwiches are served at least two lower fat fillings are available (e.g. tuna or chicken without mayonnaise).	
SALT	
12. Where salt is added after cooking/preparation, customers add their own salt.	E
13. Salt is not added to the water used for cooking vegetables, rice or pasta.	
14. Sachets or salt shakers with fewer holes are available and salt is stored in a central location (rather than on individual tables).	
15. Lower salt alternatives are available for customers (such as tomato sauce) and are used in cooking (such as reduced salt soy, gravy and stock). Levels of salt below 1.5g per 100g (or 0.6g sodium) would be acceptable.	
SUGAR	
16. Where soft drinks and/or energy drinks are sold water, reduced sugar/diet drinks (<5% sugar) are available and are more prominently displayed.	E
17. Lower sugar snacks are available as an alternative to biscuits or chocolate, cakes, puddings etc. (e.g. fruit, dried fruit, unsalted nuts or seeds, plain popcorn, oat biscuits).	
18. Drinking/tap water is always available.	
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES	
19. A portion (80g) of vegetables or salad is always available as an accompaniment (e.g. peas, corn, mixed salad but NOT potatoes).	
20. Fresh fruit, tinned (in juice, not in syrup) or dried fruit is always available and is prominently displayed or listed on the menu.	
CARBOHYDRATES	
21. If chips are served, there is always a healthier starchy alternative (e.g. jacket potato, bread, rice, pasta, wraps, couscous etc.).	

22. Wholegrain varieties of starchy products are available (e.g. wholemeal bread, pittas, wraps, rotis, wholewheat pasta, brown or wild rice). Where rice is served, boiled/steamed rice is available as an alternative to pilau or fried rice.	
PORTION SIZE	
23. Smaller portions are available for children and adults and are on display or advertised (between 1/2 to 1/3 of standard size portion)	E
24. If a children's menu is provided, a range of healthier options are available which are lower in fat, salt and sugar.	
HEALTHIER OPTION PROMOTION	
25. Healthier eating is promoted by staff by providing, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Leaflets or posters, - Highlighting healthier options (e.g. with stickers) on the menu, - Meal deals showing diet drinks or water in the pictures, - Displaying healthy options prominently (e.g. on a board), - Staff should also be aware of the HCC and be able to help customers chose healthier options 	