

Policy directive: What do I need to report for food?

Health services

A practical guide to assessing your
retail and vending food provision.

Food targets

The Victorian Government's Healthy choices: Policy directive targets for food are:

In-house retail outlets* and patient/ resident menus:

- At least 50% **GREEN** foods and no more than 20% **RED** foods are available
- No **RED** foods to be promoted/advertised

Vending:

Food only vending machines:

- At least 50% **GREEN** foods and no more than 20% **RED** foods are available

Combination food and drink machines:

- At least 50% **GREEN** items (combination of foods and drinks)
- No more than 20% **AMBER** artificially sweetened drinks
- No more than 20% **RED** items are available (no **RED** drinks allowed)
- No **RED** foods to be promoted/advertised

Catering:

- No **RED** foods are provided (with majority of options to be **GREEN**)

*You may choose to assess commercially managed retail outlets against the Policy directive. While we encourage such assessments (which will help you meet the Cancer Plan 2020-24 target1), reporting on these outlets is optional.

FoodChecker should be used to assess your retail and vending food provision. FoodChecker assessments form part of your Policy directive reporting to the Department of Health, but also assist with informing and making changes and monitoring progress.

[Click here to access instructions on how to select the correct Policy directive flow in FoodChecker](#)

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Reporting to the Department of Health

Progress Tracker is the online reporting tool where each health service will report their progress towards meeting the Healthy Choices: policy directive targets. [Click here to access the tool.](#)

Please note that only the FoodChecker assessment/s you choose to submit in this online portal will be visible to the Department of Health.

What if our health service has no/limited provision of food and drinks? Do we still need to report to the Department of Health on this Policy?

If your health service has no (or limited) provision of food and drinks across any of their sites you are still required to submit some information to the Department of Health via Progress Tracker. The questions you need to answer will be brief (and will not require a FoodChecker assessment).



In-house retail outlets and patient/resident menus available to staff

In-house retail outlets are cafes and kiosks run by the health service that sell or provide food and drinks to staff and visitors at the health service.

Meals and snacks available to staff from the patient or resident menu are also in scope of the Policy directive and should be included in your Policy directive reporting.

Only the menu options available to staff need to be assessed for the Policy directive - the Policy directive does not apply to meals provided to patients/residents.

What food to assess via Food Checker: All food available via the following:

- in-house managed retail outlets - cafes, kiosks, food carts
- patient/resident menus that have food available for staff and visitors to purchase
- food/snacks sold via volunteer or auxiliary groups.

Food to be excluded from assessments includes that intended as a gift and irregular cake stalls or other fundraisers.

What types of meals and snacks should be included?

- The FoodChecker assessment should include all items offered on and off the menu (even if not physically on a written menu)
- The FoodChecker assessment should include items available for lunch and snacks throughout the day.



- Breakfast and dinner do not need to be assessed in FoodChecker and submitted for Policy directive reporting. However, you should still ensure any breakfast and dinner food/drink provision is in accordance with the Healthy choices: policy directive.

How many days of the menu should be assessed?

If the menu offers 10 or fewer items per day over lunch and snacks to staff or visitors from an in-house retail outlet or patient/resident menu:

- Assess five days of the menu in FoodChecker
- All five days of the menu assessment should be done in the one FoodChecker assessment
- If you have items that appear every day on the menu, enter those items into FoodChecker once for every day they are provided. For example, if you have cheese and crackers on the menu every day, enter this item into the assessment five times.

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If the menu offers more than 10 items per day over lunch and snacks to staff or visitors from an in-house retail outlet or patient/resident menu:

- Assess three days of the menu in FoodChecker
- Each day of the menu assessment should be done in a separate FoodChecker assessment e.g. you will submit three separate FoodChecker assessments (day 1, 2 and 3) for your Policy directive reporting.
- If you have similar items available every day, complete one day's menu assessment and use the 'copy and edit' function to copy that assessment, rename it to day two, and make the changes so the menu reflects day two. Tip: this will save time if you offer the same snacks every day, and only change your hot meal options.

Health services are strongly encouraged to assess their complete menu cycle/offering to ensure they meet the food targets on non-assessed days.



Food available on catering menus

This includes foods purchased by the health service and provided*:

- at meetings/training
- at events/celebrations
- at client programs run by the health service
- for staff gifts/rewards/incentives
- via food vans/trucks (providing free food to staff at an event/celebration)

Catering menus should be assessed in FoodChecker in order to plan and implement your healthy catering policy, but a FoodChecker assessment for catering is not required for Department of Health Policy directive reporting.

Health services will, however, be asked some questions as part of Policy directive reporting to demonstrate they do not provide RED foods/drinks through catering.

* Catering applies to staff procuring food and drinks with health service (i.e., government) funds for meetings, functions, and events. This includes occasions such as workshops, conferences, community events, launches, celebrations and ceremonies, as well as client or community education, information, or training programs. It also includes food/drinks provided (free) on the ward or in staff rooms/waiting rooms for staff/visitors (e.g. tea/coffee, water, fruit, biscuits, lollies).

Whilst not included in the Policy directive, health services are encouraged to promote and communicate their healthy catering policy to any external groups using their facilities, for example community support groups.



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Vending machines

Your health service may have multiple vending machines with varying layouts, or you may have multiple vending machines with identical layouts.

If your health service has:

- one vending machine, then submit one FoodChecker assessment
- multiple vending machines with identical layouts, then submit one FoodChecker assessment per layout (you will nominate in FoodChecker how many machines your assessment applies to)
- multiple vending machines with different layouts, then submit one FoodChecker assessment per layout.

Assess your vending machines when fully stocked, do not assess the planogram provided by your supplier.

Food vending machines

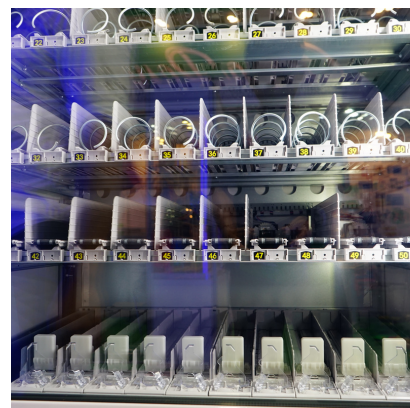
One FoodChecker assessment is required per vending machine layout.

Mixed vending machines (food and drink)

One FoodChecker assessment is required per vending machine layout.

Mixed vending machines reported on during 2022 should be updated to ensure food is accurate.

Only food and drinks are considered in a vending machine. Non-food items are excluded from total count of available food and drink spaces in the machine.



Support in assessing your food and drinks

We are here to support you in assessing your food and drinks against the Policy directive targets. You can contact one of our dedicated Nutrition Policy Advisors for information and advice specific to your service's needs.



References:

[1] The Victorian Cancer Plan 2020-2024 target: "at least 80 per cent of hospitals and health services' retail outlets and vending machines to meet the recommended Victorian Government food and nutrition standards (Healthy choices) by 2024."