

## Guidance for caterers

This guidance has been put together to provide information on how to produce cooked food that is food safety compliant and low risk during COVID 19 and beyond

There is also information on supporting caterers to provide healthy, sustainable menus.

### Compliance on food safety

All the organisations/restaurants providing or looking to provide meals as a response to Covid19 need to contact Lewisham Environmental Health Team on:

Email: [environmentalhealth@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:environmentalhealth@lewisham.gov.uk)

Telephone: 020 8314 6536

Post: Food and Safety Team, Environmental Health, Lewisham Council, 9 Holbeach Road, Catford, London SE6 4TW

You will need to let them know about the planned food provision and how you will ensure that the food is safe and compliant.

The environmental health team will be able give food safety and standards advice in relation to the meals being prepared in the borough. And the safety and compliance of the meals is the responsibility of the food business/organisation.

### Standard labelling on prepared and cooked food

The labelling is a significant aspect of the production of meals because the food is not being supplied directly to the consumer but via a hub, organisation or community group.

All pre-prepared meals will need to provide the standard labelling information

See in table below for list of standard label declarations, which may be difficult to achieve during the emergency response, however any reduction in the label information must be agreed by the local authority as they will need to let the Food Standards Agency know about the omissions.

Declaration	Outcome
name of the food	Essential

list of ingredients	Essential
ingredients or processing aids causing allergies or intolerances that are stated in the <a href="#">14 Allergens</a>	Essential
quantity of certain ingredients or categories of ingredients	Preferable - <i>Please check with Lewisham Environmental Health</i>
net quantity of the food (weight in Kilo, grammes etc)	Essential
date of minimum durability or the 'use by' date	Essential
special storage conditions and/or conditions of use	Essential
name or business name and address of the food business operator	Preferable - <i>Please check with Lewisham Environmental Health</i>
country of origin or place of provenance	Preferable - <i>Please check with Lewisham Environmental Health</i>
instructions for use where it would be difficult to make appropriate use of the food in the absence of such instructions	Essential
nutritional declaration	Preferable - <i>Please check with Lewisham Environmental Health</i>

For more information on food safety the CIEH has produced a document for food businesses during Covid19, for guidance <https://www.cieh.org/media/4070/covid-19-food-delivery-and-takeaway-guidance.pdf>

FSA website has a prominent COVID section on the front page with links to a range of guidance, including central government <https://www.food.gov.uk/>

## Healthy eating guidance

GCDA guidance for caterers on using healthier ingredients and where possible to reduce the saturated fat, sugar and salt in the dishes prepared. This guidance has been written to support caterers in providing healthy, sustainable menus.

This guidance follows the basic principles of healthy eating, as illustrated in The Eatwell Guide. <http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx>

When preparing meals to be distributed through community food projects, it is recommended that you apply where possible this guidance to ensure that the meals are healthy and sustainable.

## **General**

- ✓ Label all food so people know what it contains

## **Savoury Food**

- ✓ Include plenty of vegetables and/or salad
- ✓ Offer wholegrain choices e.g. wholemeal bread
- ✓ Provide a fish option where possible (not fried or in a rich sauce)
- ✓ Provide at least two vegetarian and vegan options
- ✗ Cut down the use of fat when preparing food e.g. cooking oil, spread and mayonnaise in sandwiches
- ✗ Avoid deep fried foods such as samosas and spring rolls
- ✗ Limit the amount of salt added to food

## **Sweet Food**

- ✓ Provide a selection of fresh fruit
- ✗ Limit the amount of sugar and fat used e.g. by using low fat and sugar dairy products
- ✗ If biscuits are requested to accompany coffee/tea provide plain biscuits and always offer a healthy alternative such as a fruit

**The Eatwell Guide** (<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Goodfood/Pages/the-eatwell-guide.aspx> )

This is the model we use to promote healthy eating in the UK. It can be used by individuals, households and caterers to guide healthier menu planning.

Plenty of fruit and vegetables and starchy foods should be included in the menu provided. Moderate amounts of food should be offered from the Dairy & alternatives and Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins food groups, with the emphasis on lower fat options. Overall fat, salt and sugar content of the foods on offer should be kept to a minimum.

## **Fruit and Vegetables**

People in the UK are advised to eat *at least* five different portions of fruit and vegetables a day (one portion = 80g/3ozs). Fresh, frozen, canned (in natural juice if fruit and no added salt and sugar if vegetable), dried and juiced fruits and vegetables can all be used when preparing dishes to ensure customers get the variety required. With salads, offer the dressing separately so the customer can decide whether to use it. When preparing vegetables, avoid cooking methods that use a lot of fat and opt for healthier methods such as steaming.

### **Breads, Rice, Potatoes, Pasta and other Starchy Foods**

Offer plenty of foods from this group, preferably wholegrain varieties of cereals, as they are rich in fibre, vitamins and minerals as well as starch which provides the most important source of energy in the diet. Try to avoid excessive use of fat during preparation e.g. deepfrying potatoes, lots of oil in pasta dishes, adding butter to sandwiches or baked potatoes and using lots of mayonnaise in sandwich fillings. Where possible provide butter separately and let the customer decide whether to use it.

### **Dairy and alternatives**

Use lower fat and sugar versions where possible e.g. skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, reduced fat & sugar yoghurt or cheeses such as Brie, Camembert, Edam or cottage cheese. If using higher fat cheeses use those with a stronger flavour e.g. extra mature Cheddar, so that less is required to add flavour.

### **Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins**

Be more creative with vegetarian options that include nuts, seeds and pulses such as beans, chickpeas and lentils. Eggs are also part of this food group. Offer more fish whenever possible as healthy eating guidelines indicate we should be eating fish more often, including oily fish once a week. Cut down on fat by ensuring you choose leaner cuts of meat, removing skin from chicken before cooking and using healthier cooking methods (roasting, baking, grilling and poaching). Aiming for more meat free menu options is a way to saving money whilst also supporting sustainability and health.

### **Foods and Drinks high in Fat and/or Sugar**

Various methods to cut down on fat have been included above. Additional advice is to use unsaturated or reduced fat spreads in sandwiches (and only when required, some fillings do not need spread).

Ensure fresh fruit (platter, kebabs, salad) is part of the menu for dessert, snack and break-time options. Natural, low fat unsweetened yoghurt is a good alternative to custard, cream and ice-cream.

Water and fresh fruit juice should be available.

### **Salt**

Cut down on salt added to food and use lots of alternative flavourings e.g. herbs/spices/lemon juice. You could offer salt separately so the customer can decide whether to add more.

### **Other Considerations:**

As well as making your menus healthier, there are additional ways to help look after people and the planet, and even save your business money. These include:

- More meat free meals on the menu and reduce the amount of meat in other meals by bulking out with beans, lentils, vegetables and so on.
- Make sure there are some vegan options on the menu.
- Try using a cheaper cut of meat e.g. chicken on the bone; this way you could possibly afford a better quality e.g. free range.
- Commit to paying your staff London Living Wage or be working towards this aim.
- Use certified ingredients such as Fairtrade, Marine Stewardship Council MSC and Freedom Food.
- Source ingredients locally and nationally.
- Get involved with the [Food for Life Partnership](#) (if you're a public sector caterer).
- Try growing some of your own herbs and leaves.
- Reduce your waste. Have a look at the following websites for ideas and tips on how to do this: <http://www.lovefoodhatewaste.com/>, <http://www.wrap.org.uk/food-waste-reduction>
- Use recycled or recyclable consumables.
- Recycle all your packaging and other waste.

For more information on this guidance during COVID 19 please contact [livia@gcda.org.uk](mailto:livia@gcda.org.uk)