



## Healthy Communities

It's a scary world out there; full of expanding waistlines, junk food marketing, fast food and confusing and conflicting nutrition messages. As one person, your power to lobby the government or increase bike paths is a little limited - but you can have huge influence and great power: just focus on your own community!

Whether that community is your home, workplace, school, kinder or sporting club, YOU can guide the health culture of that community. And by creating a healthier community, you can be helping those community members to make better decisions about their eating in the wider world.

You are in charge of your community's health culture, so be a great leader. Help us change the world and make it a more colourful place, with lots of fruits and vegetables!

### 1. Review your healthy eating policies

Do you have a policy? Do your members know you have a policy? Involve your community in reviewing the policy and give them the bigger picture. We want our kids to eat more colourfully so they can concentrate better at school or so they can perform better on the field.

Disseminate your policy in a fun way. Perhaps a fruit salad or vegetable soup day. One school made a picture version of their policy filled with ideas for school lunchboxes. Get creative! Ask for colourful (healthy) recipes from families and share them.

### 2. Be a good role model

Eat lots of fruits and vegetables and minimally processed foods in front of others. Avoid using food as rewards or threats within your community. Remember as a leader, people are watching you and will replicate your behaviour.



### **3. Create a powerful physical environment**

Do you sell or provide food to your community? Studies have shown that healthier canteens can still be very profitable, especially when teamed with some great marketing. By more carefully considering the foods on offer, teach the community with what they should be fuelling their bodies. Large foodstuff companies have so much money for advertising that we need to create a healthy physical environment within our communities to help protect our members.

Save 'special treat' party foods for parties rather than every day or week.

### **4. Create a healthy social environment**

Healthy fundraising. Rather than selling chocolate again this year, think Fender Blender smoothie bikes, slinky apple fundraisers, walk-a-thons, herb/seed fundraising, and active team events.

Offer healthy foods at social events, which can be just as delicious and fun! As an example, mother's day events can be filled with strawberries, love heart shaped tomatoes, homemade pink milk (raspberries/strawberries blended with milk) etc.

### **5. Partner with others**

There are lots of places to partner with for support including supportive government organisations such as Healthy Together and Nutrition Australia, local fruit shops for donations, and other health and wellbeing businesses.

### **6. Share your knowledge, ideas and roadblocks**

Share your triumphs and struggles with other community leaders, families, the local paper, on forums, Facebook, in newsletters and blogs!

Look for others doing the same, and don't be afraid to have the conversation.

Do not get disheartened by those opposing change: take small steps, involve the community every step of the way and inspire them to work together for a brighter future for all.



For free healthy eating tips, recipes, events and services to help create your healthier community.

