



## Healthier Potlucks

Potlucks are a great way for workers to show off their culinary expertise and create camaraderie among staff. Make potlucks fun for everyone by having some healthier food choices available.

Challenge co-workers to try new dishes with less calories and fat. Check out the lighter recipes at Cooking Light (<http://www.cookinglight.com/cooking/>).

Consider re-making your favorites into healthier lower-fat dishes. Some simple substitutions can make old-time favorites healthier and just as tasty. See the example of ["Mom's Mexican Chicken"](#).

Send your favorite recipes to the [Wellness Program](#) for suggested modifications.

Since you never know what might show up at a potluck, pass around a sign-up sheet with indications for healthy options. Offer suggestions for fresh fruit (salads or kebabs), raw vegetable plates and salads. Picking up ready-made vegetable platters and fruit plates can be a time-saving option for the busy co-worker or the person who doesn't like to cook.

**"Salad bar" potluck:** Here's an idea for a different kind of potluck. Assign everyone to bring one item: sliced cucumbers, chopped celery, grape tomatoes, cauliflowerettes, broccoli tops, baby carrots, sprouts, canned garbanzo and kidney beans, shredded low-fat cheese, whole wheat mini pitas or small whole grain rolls, and an assortment of low-fat salad dressings. Arrange lettuce in 1 to 2 large bowls and set up your own salad bar on a couple of long tables. A crock pot of low-fat soup or chili adds a heartier touch.



**Tostada Bar potluck:** There are probably several co-workers who make "world famous" beans or meat toppings. Encourage everyone else to pitch in with fresh shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes, low-fat shredded cheese, low-fat sour cream, diced avocados or guacamole, several kinds of salsas, fat-free or no-fat pot beans, 100% whole wheat flour tortillas, and small corn tostada shells. Be sure to include fresh fruit for dessert along with more traditional sweets. Make an "exotic" fresh fruit salad with fresh pineapple, kiwis, berries and melons in season topped with grated fresh coconut.

**BBQ's:** Office BBQs set in local parks are a great way to get together and encourage physical activity. Arranging games seems a natural for most party planner, but be sure to include some healthier food selections, too. Offer baked chips, fresh fruit and vegetable plates with low-fat dip, green salad with low or no-calorie dressing choices, low fat hot dogs (ex: *Healthy Choice*<sup>®</sup>) or turkey burgers, Veggie Burgers (ex: *Boca*<sup>®</sup> burgers) and 100% whole wheat buns.

Below are some examples of what at least two County Departments did to make food healthier and fun!

- ✓ [CEO-Strawberry Shortcake Employee Birthdays Celebration](#)
- ✓ [HSA-Gourmet Salad Bar Luncheon](#)