



Frequently Asked Questions

UC Berkeley Food & Beverage Choices Policy

✓ **Why is UC Berkeley implementing the Food and Beverage Choices policy?**

The main goal is to increase access to healthy food and beverages, not take away options. Health education alone—in the absence of change to the food environment—does not always produce lasting behavioral change. In addition, students, faculty, and staff have consistently requested more healthful options in surveys about the campus food environment. This policy will help to ensure that there are some healthy food and beverage choices available in retail foodservice operations and markets, vending machines, athletic concessions, and University-sponsored meetings and events.

✓ **What changes will I notice?**

Since there is already a high demand for healthy choices, many food and beverage retailers already carry several healthy options. However, you may notice that there is an even better selection of options, that they are easier to find, and that they are priced equal to or less than other items. Other items that do not meet the nutrition criteria will still likely be available, allowing the consumer to make their own choice.

✓ **Does this take away any food or drink options?**

No, no food items are restricted in any way. All beverages are allowed with the exception of beverages that exceed the Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS) limit of added caffeine in soda, 71mg per 12 ounces, for safety reasons. University Health Services sees many students with health complaints related to consumption of highly caffeinated drinks, often mixed with alcohol. Products that only contain naturally occurring caffeine such as coffee are not restricted.

✓ **Does this policy tell people what to eat?**

No, not at all. This policy is all about offering choices, hence the word “choices” in the name. It supports healthy behaviors by making it easier to choose healthful options rather than taking away choices that aren’t as healthful.

✓ **Why not ban unhealthy food or drinks?**

The majority of folks that set foot on a college campus are adults and can make their own choices. Banning all “junk” food and drink would be very restrictive. In addition, labelling foods “bad” can be detrimental, especially to those with eating disorders. Most foods can be enjoyed as part of a balanced lifestyle. Our approach is to promote the healthier options.

✓ **How was this policy created?**

This policy was developed by a working group of subject matter experts from University Health Services, School of Public Health, CNR - Nutritional Sciences and Toxicology, and the Berkeley Food Institute. This group reviewed nutrition policies, best practices, public health guidelines and toolkits, and consulted with colleagues throughout the country. The policy was vetted and reviewed by administrators, faculty, stakeholders, students and vendors.