

# JOURNAL OF THE ACADEMY OF NUTRITION AND DIETETICS



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**right.** Academy of Nutrition  
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## Widely available food in US workplaces: Perk or hazard?

*Offering more healthful foods at work could be a promising opportunity to improve wellness, according to a new study published in the Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*

**Philadelphia, January 22, 2019** – Nearly a quarter of employed adults obtain foods and beverages at work at least once a week, according to a new [study](#) from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and published in the [Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#). Foods obtained at work are often high in calories, refined grains, added sugars, and sodium.

Using data collected in 2012-13 from the large, nationally representative Food Acquisition and Purchasing Survey (FoodAPS), CDC investigators found that 23.4 percent of the 5,222 study participants obtained food at least once a week at work. The average weekly calories obtained was 1,292, and in general the foods consumed at work did not align well with the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

“Employers can offer appealing and healthy options in cafeterias, vending machines, and at meetings and social events,” said lead CDC investigator Stephen J. Onufrak, PhD, a researcher with CDC’s Division of Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity, Atlanta, GA, USA. “One way to do this is by incorporating food service guidelines and healthy meeting policies into worksite wellness efforts.”

Improving the nutritional quality of foods consumed at work can be a key component in worksite wellness efforts. Obesity and low dietary quality are important risk factors for chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and cancer. These conditions represent seven of the top 10 leading causes of death in the US and treating them accounts for 84 percent of healthcare costs. In 2010, nearly three in 10 employed adults had obesity. Employed adults with obesity reported lower consumption of fruits and vegetables and less frequent leisure time physical activity than normal weight adults.

With about 150 million working adults in the US, worksite wellness efforts to prevent chronic disease can reach a large portion of the American public. These programs have been shown to be effective at changing health behaviors among employees, reducing employee absenteeism, and reducing healthcare costs.

“Incorporating food service guidelines into wellness programs can help employers offer appealing and healthy options that give employees a choice,” suggested Dr. Onufrak.

The foods analyzed in the study were either purchased from worksite vending machines or cafeterias, or obtained for free in common areas, during meetings, or at worksite social events. The study did not include foods that people brought into work from home for their own consumption or foods obtained at an off-site restaurant or retail outlet during work hours.

For more information and resources about dietary guidelines and worksite health promotion, visit [www.cdc.gov/nutrition](http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition).

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### **Notes for Editors**

The article is “Foods and Beverages Obtained at Worksites in the United States,” by Stephen J. Onufrak, PhD, Hatidza Zaganjor, MPH, Liping Pan, MD, MPH, Seung Hee Lee-Kwan, PhD, Sohyun Park, PhD, and Diane M. Harris, PhD, MPH (<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jand.2018.11.011>). It will appear in the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* published by Elsevier.

Full text of this article is available to credentialed journalists upon request. Contact Eileen Leahy at +1 732 238 3628 or [andjrnmedia@elsevier.com](mailto:andjrnmedia@elsevier.com) to obtain copies. Journalists wishing to interview the authors should contact CDC Media Relations at [media@cdc.gov](mailto:media@cdc.gov).

An accompanying podcast and information specifically for journalists are located at [www.jandonline.org/content/podcast](http://www.jandonline.org/content/podcast). Excerpts from the podcast may be reproduced by the media; contact Eileen Leahy to obtain permission.

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The official journal of the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](http://www.jandonline.org), the *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics* is the premier source for the practice and science of food, nutrition, and dietetics. The monthly, peer-reviewed journal presents original articles prepared by scholars and practitioners and is the most

widely read professional publication in the field. The *Journal* focuses on advancing professional knowledge across the range of research and practice issues such as: nutritional science, medical nutrition therapy, public health nutrition, food science and biotechnology, food service systems, leadership and management and dietetics education. [www.jandonline.org](http://www.jandonline.org)

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