

Poster Topical Area: Community and Public Health Nutrition

Location: Auditorium

Poster Board Number: 18

E16-03 - Foods and Beverages Obtained at Worksites in the United States

 Monday, Jun 11  8:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Objectives: Nutrition is a key component of worksite wellness efforts to prevent chronic disease but little is known about the foods or beverages people obtain at work. The purpose of this study is to examine the frequency of purchasing or acquiring free foods and beverages at work, determine the foods most commonly obtained, and to assess the dietary quality of foods.

Methods: Data from the USDA Food Acquisition and Purchasing Survey (FoodAPS), a nationally representative household survey on food purchases and acquisitions during a seven-day study period, was used to examine food purchases and free acquisitions made at worksites among 5222 employed adults. We assessed the prevalence of obtaining food from work on at least one occasion during the week overall and according to demographic characteristics. We also examined the number of worksite food acquisitions made, the amount of money spent on work foods, the most commonly obtained food types, the leading sources of calories, and the dietary quality of foods using the 2010 Healthy Eating Index (HEI-2010).

Results: Nearly a quarter (22%) of working adults obtained foods or beverages at work during the week and the foods they obtained averaged 1277 kcal per person per week. Obtaining foods at work differed by education level, sex, and race/ethnicity and was more common among college graduates, women, and non-Hispanic whites. Among those who obtained food at work, 35% had one acquisition occasion, 20% had two, 12% had three, 11% had four, 12% had five, and 10% had more than five. Acquiring food for free was more common than purchasing food (17% obtained free food at least once vs. 8% purchased food) and free food accounted for 71% of all calories acquired at work. HEI-2010 scores suggest that work foods are high in empty calories, sodium, and refined grains and low in whole grains and fruit. The leading food types obtained include foods typically high in solid fat, added sugars, or sodium such as pizza, soft drinks, cookies/brownies, cakes and pies, and candy.

Conclusion: A significant number of working Americans obtain foods and beverages from work and the foods they obtain do not align with dietary guidance. Worksite wellness efforts should consider improving the dietary quality of foods sold or offered at work.

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