

## **m-NEAT ACTION PLAN TOOLKIT: SNACK SHOP (\* BILLETING/LODGING) OPERATIONS**

### **BACKGROUND:**

For the majority of people, a PCS or TDY means eating the majority of foods in restaurants, or from vending and concession stands or snack shops. Many meals and snacks may be eaten in vending machines or snack shops located within military billeting or lodging facilities. This is an excellent opportunity to help fuel our warfighters with optimal performance-based foods and beverages. Many food and beverage options can be high in calories, fat, and added sugars and low in nutrients. Examples are candy, soft drinks, chips, cookies, and cakes. Offering nutrient dense foods, such as dried fruit or yogurt, can help individuals make better choices.

\*This toolkit applies to non-vending machine snack/beverage items sold at snack or sundries shops within military building/lodging facilities, including the front desk. For privatized facilities, contact the installation's contract office.

### **NUTRITIONAL STANDARDS FOR SNACK SHOP**

Various government agencies and some in the food industry have developed nutritional guidelines to evaluate foods and beverages related to vending operations and concessions. The m-NEAT Healthy Option Criteria are based on these guidelines:<sup>1, 2, 3</sup> Healthier vending is specifically mentioned in the m-NEAT Vending Action Plan (web link). See Table 1 for Healthy Snack Shop Nutrition Criteria.

### **FIT PICK™ Healthy Snack Shop Option**

FIT PICK™ is a national program developed by the National Automatic Merchandising Association which has also been adopted by the Army/Air Force Exchange Service (AAFES) and Navy Exchange Command (NEXCOM). Although designed primarily for vending machines, FIT PICK™ helps consumers by providing healthier items that are labeled according to a set of nutritional criteria based on recommendations of the [American Heart Association](http://www.heart.org) ( www.heart.org), [USDA Dietary Guidelines for Americans](http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/) (http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/), and [Alliance for a Healthier Generation](http://www.healthiergeneration.org/) (www.healthiergeneration.org/). There are two levels or options regarding nutrition guidelines: Option 1 and Option 2. The former is more liberal, while the latter includes additional guidelines for sodium, calories, portion size, and/or beverage standards and serves as a benchmark in the m-NEAT. Table 2: FIT PICK™ Nutrition Guidelines. FIT PICK™ includes an Option 1 food list which identifies foods that meet respective

guidelines. Efforts are underway to develop food lists that meet the stricter Option 2 guidelines.

**Table 1: m-NEAT Healthy Snack Shop Criteria**

<b>Food or Beverage Item</b>	<b>Nutrition Criteria</b>
<b>Snacks/Chips</b>	<p><b>Snack Items:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total Fat <math>\leq</math>35% calories per serving (excludes nuts and seeds without added fats or oils)</li> <li>• Trans Fat <math>\leq</math>0.5 grams per serving (excludes reduced-fat cheese)</li> <li>• Sugar <math>\leq</math>35% by weight of total sugars (excludes fruits, vegetables, milk)</li> <li>• Sodium <math>\leq</math>230 mg per serving (snack items) and <math>\leq</math>480 mg per serving (meal items)</li> <li>• Calories <math>\leq</math>200 calories <b>per package</b> (snack items) or <math>\leq</math>500 calories or less (entree meal)</li> </ul> <p><b>Chips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fat-Free: 0 grams fat/serving</li> <li>• Reduced-Fat: <math>\leq</math>3 gm fat/1 oz. serving</li> </ul>
<b>Fresh Fruit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is available and meets quality standards</li> </ul>
<b>Yogurt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is available and meets healthier criteria: non/low-fat, low-sugar and</li> <li>• <math>\geq</math>20% Daily Value (DV) for calcium</li> <li>• 10% DV for vitamin D</li> <li>• <math>\geq</math>5 gm protein/serving</li> <li>• “Live and Active Cultures” seal</li> </ul>
<b>Cereal/Cereal Bars</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <math>&lt;</math>10 gm sugar</li> <li>• <math>\geq</math>16 gm whole-grain or listed as 1<sup>st</sup> ingredient</li> <li>• <math>\geq</math>3 gm fiber</li> </ul>
<b>Frozen Dinners</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At least 1 Reduced-Fat (<math>\leq</math>9gm fat/ 8-11 oz. pkg.)</li> <li>• <math>\leq</math>480 mg sodium/serving</li> </ul>
<b>Beverages</b>	<p><b>Milk:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1%, skim, non-fat milk</li> </ul> <p><b>Soda/Carbonated Drinks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Availability of those with <math>\leq</math>40 kcals beverages;</li> <li>• If <math>&gt;</math>40 kcals, portion size=<math>\leq</math>12 oz.</li> </ul>

**Table 2: FIT PICK™ NUTRITION GUIDELINES**

<b>OPTION/DESIGNATION:</b>	<b>FIT PICK™ OPTION 1 35-10-35</b>	<b>FIT PICK™ OPTION 2—BASED ON THE ALLIANCE FOR A HEALTHIER GENERATION</b>
<b>INTENDED AUDIENCE</b>	GENERAL POPULATION/SCHOOLS THAT DESIRE A MORE LIBERAL CRITERIA	SCHOOLS/YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS THAT WANT A CRITERIA FOR SODIUM, CALORIES, PORTION SIZE AND/OR BEVERAGE STANDARDS
<b>SNACK CRITERIA</b>	YES	YES
<b>FAT</b>	NO MORE THAN 35% OF TOTAL CALORIES (EXCLUDES NUTS, NUT BUTTERS, SEEDS)	NO MORE THAN 35% OF TOTAL CALORIES (EXCLUDES NUTS, NUT BUTTERS, SEEDS)
<b>SATURATED FAT</b>	NO MORE THAN 10% OF TOTAL CALORIES	NO MORE THAN 10% OF TOTAL CALORIES OR LESS THAN 1 GRAM
<b>TRANS FATS</b>	NO GUIDELINE	ZERO TRANS FATS
<b>SUGAR</b>	NO MORE THAN 35% OF TOTAL PRODUCT WEIGHT	NO MORE THAN 35% OF TOTAL CALORIES
<b>SODIUM</b>	NO GUIDELINE	NO MORE THAN 230 MG (EXCLUDES LOW OR NON-FAT DAIRY PRODUCTS)
<b>BEVERAGE</b>	NO GUIDELINES BUT OPTION 2 GUIDELINES COULD BE ADOPTED IN CONJUNCTION WITH OPTION 1	<p><b>WATER</b></p> <p><b>MILK:</b> FAT- FREE MILK OR LOW-FAT REGULAR/ FLAVORED MILK WITH UP TO 150 CAL/8 OZ.</p> <p><b>JUICE:</b> 100% JUICE WITH NO ADDED SWEETENERS; UP TO 120 CAL/8 OZ. &amp; MINIMUM 10 % RDV FOR 3 OR MORE VITAMINS AND MINERALS</p>

## GETTING STARTED

A Sample m-NEAT Healthy Snack Shop Action Plan Checklist (Attachment 1) is provided to help you begin. Garnering the most support for healthy food and beverage on your installation will require collaboration with others, especially your Installation Commander and Billeting/Lodging Manager. Items on the action plan can be developed and assigned to key stakeholders and progress monitored as a part of your Installation Health Promotion Working Group meetings.

**Define and develop a coalition of key stakeholders.** The first step is to develop a team of key stakeholders to include, most importantly, the Installation's Billeting/Lodging Manager. **If your billeting/lodging facilities are privatized, contact your installation contract office for further guidance.**

Other key team members may include the Health Promotion Manager, dietitian and Public Health Officer. Include billeting/lodging guests to ensure their favorite products are maintained. Determine if there are particular individuals or groups that oppose changes in healthier snack shop options that need to be included as part of your discussion/team.

**Meet with your BILLETING/LODGING MANAGER to determine how/where food and beverage products are acquired.** Determine whether a nutrition labeling program is in place, and if so, the existing nutrition criteria and labeling practices.

**Increasing Percentage of Healthy Items While Ensuring Customer Satisfaction and Profitability.** The m-NEAT toolkit gives the highest scores for meeting the target where  $\geq 50\%$  of snacks and beverages meet nutrition criteria. One of the most common challenges to increasing healthy choices is a perception by managers that the items will not sell and will hurt profits.<sup>4</sup> This is understandable. However, research suggests otherwise in terms of healthier vending practices (less is known regarding marketing healthier foods within the concession or convenience store setting). Multiple studies have shown consumer acceptance and ability to increase the percentage of healthy items<sup>5, 6</sup>. One study showed that increasing healthier options by up to 75% of choices<sup>7</sup> can be implemented without negatively affecting sales. Starting out at perhaps 15% of items (or current baseline) and gradually increasing the percentage of healthy choices may help consumer acceptance.

### **Optimize consumer purchases & sale of healthy items:**

- Adjust product mix based on consumer feedback

- Offer taste tests
- Include comment cards at the register

**Pricing Strategies.** One possible strategy to improve consumer selection of healthier items is to lower the cost of healthier items, increase the price of less healthy items, or a combination of both. A number of studies show that this strategy is effective and that vending profits are not negatively affected.<sup>5,8</sup> Current DoD policy, however, may limit the ability to adjust pricing to the degree necessary to observe a significant effect on consumer purchase behavior. Alternately, you might note whether the healthier snacks are priced **higher** than traditional versions of snack. Discuss possible pricing strategies with your Billeting/Lodging Manager.

**Promoting Healthy Products.** Suboptimal marketing may cause an initial decrease in revenue. Work with your Billeting/Lodging Manager to help promote marketing of healthier items:

- Implement signage
- Conduct a product sampling event

### **Buying and Storing Fresh Produce**

Fruit and vegetables are powerhouses for a variety of nutrients for health. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans encourage individuals to eat a rainbow in order to get a variety of antioxidants. Many types of pre-cut fruit and vegetables are currently available. However, if selections do not look appealing, customers will not select or eat it. Use the following buying and storage tips below to ensure quality and safety of fresh produce.

#### **Buying Tips For Fresh Produce**

- Purchase produce that is not bruised or damaged.
- When selecting fresh cut produce, such as individual apple slices or carrots, choose only those items that are refrigerated or surrounded by ice.
- Bag fresh fruits and vegetables separately from meat, poultry and seafood products.

#### **Storing Tips for Fresh Bananas**

- **Too Green?** Try putting them in a paper bag with an apple overnight to speed up the ripening process.

- **Too Ripe?** Store the fruit in the refrigerator. The skin may darken but the banana will be just right for several days.

### **To Maintain Quality of Fresh Produce**

- Refrigerate **pre-cut or peeled produce and perishable fresh fruits and vegetables (like apples, fresh fruit cups, and lettuce)** to maintain both quality and safety.
- Keep your refrigerator set at 40° F or below. Use a fridge thermometer to check! If you're not sure whether an item should be refrigerated to maintain quality, ask a produce manager

**ATTACHMENT 1: Sample m-NEAT Healthy Snack Shop (Billeting/Lodging) Action Plan Checklist**

This sample checklist is intended to help you get started and can also be included in your Installation Health Promotion Working Group (HPWG) meeting minutes.

Suggested Action Items and Points of Contact can be modified as needed according to the needs of the installation and resources available. The FIT PICK™ Implementation Guide (FPIG) also contains valuable guidance and tools.

<b>Suggested Action Items</b>	<b>Suggested Point of Contact</b>	<b>Status/Considerations</b>	<b>Expected Completion Date</b>
<b>Define and Develop a List of Key Stakeholders</b>	Installation HPWG Officer		
<b>Assess Current Snack Shop Status</b>	Installation HPWG Officer	Address the following: a. Current m-NEAT Snack Shop Score/ Areas of Improvement c. Billeting/Lodging Manager Concerns	
<b>Conduct Healthy Vending Survey</b> See Sample <b>Billeting/Lodging Healthy Snack Guest Survey</b> (Attachment 2)- (Could also use electronic survey or conduct a focus group)	Installation HPWG Officer		
<b>Conduct Taste Test</b> (If Vendor and/or Billeting/Lodging Managers are willing) See FPIG pg. 47			
<b>Develop Grand Launch Items to include:</b> Stickers/Labeling  Plan-o-grams  Advertise presence of	Installation HPWG Officer Oversight Billeting/Lodging Manager	Choose a pilot site (if applicable) first before full implementation to assess compliance with standards, acceptance,	

healthier snacks in Billeting/Lodging Guest Info	w/Installation HPWG Officer  Billeting/Lodging Manager	and sales.	
Monitoring See Sample Comment Card FPIG pg. 59	Billeting/Lodging Manager	Ensure healthy items are stocked and priced appropriately	
Marketing strategies See Sample Articles, FPIG pp. 54-55	Installation HPWG/ Billeting/Lodging Manager		
Develop ongoing education /employee training	Billeting/Lodging Manager		
Collect, Track & Report Evaluation Measures 1. m-NEAT Snack Shop scores 2. Billeting/Lodging Satisfaction (See sample comment card, FPIG, pg. 59) Sales Reports comparing healthy vs. traditional products	Installation HPWG Officer/ Billeting/Lodging Manager	Document lessons learned	

**ATTACHMENT 2: Billeting/Lodging Healthy Snack Guest Survey**

1. Please tell us about yourself by indicating your rank/grade.

- E1-E4       E5-6       E7-E9       O1-03       O4-06       O7 & Above
- Gov't Civil Service: Indicate Grade: \_\_\_\_\_       Gov't Contractor
- Family Member/Retired       Other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. I am currently residing in billeting because I am (circle) TDY/TAD    PCS'ing  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. How many days have you been residing in billeting during this stay?

4. How many times per day have you purchased a food/beverage item in the Snack Shop?

- Less than once
- 1-2 times
- 3-4 times
- 5-6 times
- 7 or more times per week

5. If you purchased no food or beverage items during this stay, skip to question 6. If you purchased food or beverage items during this stay, please indicate all items that you purchased:

- Fruit
- Sodas/Carbonated Beverages
- Energy Drinks
- Fruit or Vegetable Juice
- Cereal or Cereal Bars
- Snacks/Chips
- Yogurt
- Frozen Dinners

**When making a decision about what food or snack to purchase at the**

**Snack Shop, how important is:**

(MARK ONE BOX FOR EACH ITEM)

		<b>Not at all important</b>		<b>Somewhat important</b>		<b>Very important</b>
6	Trying a food/snack item I've never had before:					
7	How the food/snack item tastes:					
8	Food/Snack item price:					
9	Number of calories in a food/snack:					
10	Amount of fat in a food/snack item:					
11	Amount of carbohydrates in a food/snack item:					
12	How "healthy" a food/snack item is:					
13	Watching my weight or health concerns:					
14	Value for my money:					
15	Buying my "usual" snack:					
16	How hungry I am:					

17. Where do you usually get your snacks when staying in Billeting/Lodging?

(CHECK ALL BOXES THAT APPLY) <input type="checkbox"/> Billeting/Lodging <input type="checkbox"/> Bring from home <input type="checkbox"/> Buy from nearby store (Commissary/Exchange store) <input type="checkbox"/> Vending Machine within Billeting/Lodging
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18. I am satisfied with the number of healthy items at this Billeting/Lodging Snack Shop for each of the following:

Food/Snack/Beverage Item:	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Fruit					
Sodas/Carbonated Beverages/Energy Drinks					
Milk					
Fruit or Vegetable Juice					
Cereal, Oatmeal, Cereal Bars					
Yogurt					
Frozen Dinners					

19. If there were a variety of healthy food and snack food choices, I would buy them from the Snack Shop more often than I currently do.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree

**SURVEY COMPLETE**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSES!**

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES & REFERENCES:

**FIT PICK™** Developed by the National Automated Merchandising Association (NAMA), Fit Pick™ helps consumers locate vending machine choices that support a healthy lifestyle. It is a simple, ready-to-use system of vending machine stickers that identify vended products which meet a standardized set of nutrition guidelines. Its comprehensive implementation toolkit includes an implementation guide, healthy product list, and marketing tools (stickers, clings, posters). [www.fitpick.org](http://www.fitpick.org).

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.** Health and Sustainable Food Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations. <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/guidelines/food-service-guidelines.htm>.

**National Automated Merchandising Association (NAMA).** NAMA is the national trade association of the food and refreshment vending, coffee service and foodservice management industries including on-site, commissary, catering and mobile. Its membership is comprised of service companies, equipment manufacturers and suppliers of products and services to operating service companies. The basic mission of the association is to collectively advance and promote the automatic merchandising and coffee service industries. <http://www.vending.org>

**Alliance for a Healthier Generation** is a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation as a response to the growing rate of childhood obesity. [www.healthiergeneration.org](http://www.healthiergeneration.org)

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<sup>1</sup> HHS/GSA Healthy and Sustainable Food Guidelines (Federal Concessions and Vending Operations): [http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/pbs/Guidelines\\_for\\_Federal\\_Concessions\\_and\\_Vending\\_Operations.pdf](http://www.gsa.gov/graphics/pbs/Guidelines_for_Federal_Concessions_and_Vending_Operations.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations: Q & A for HHS Employees: <http://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/pdf/QA-foro-Employees.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> FIT PICK™ Toolkit: [www.fitpick.org](http://www.fitpick.org).

<sup>4</sup> Healthy Vending Toolkit: Guide for Federal Healthy Vending Options.

<sup>5</sup> Gorton D., Carter J., Cvjetan B., Ni Mhurchu C. Healthier Vending Machines in Workplaces: Both Possible and Effective. *N A Med J.* 2010 Mar 19; 123 (1311): 43-52.

<sup>6</sup> French S.A., Jeffery R.W., Story M., Breitlow K.K., Baxter J.S., Hannan P., Snyder M.P. Pricing and Promotion Effects on Low-Fat Vending Snack Purchases: the CHIPS Study.

<sup>7</sup> Kimmons J., Wood M., Villarante, J.C., Lederer A. Adopting Healthy and Sustainable Food Service Guidelines: Emerging Evidence from Implementation at the United States Federal Government, New York City, Los Angeles County, and Kaiser Permanente. *American Society for Nutrition. Adv. Nutr.* 3: 746-748, 2012; doi:10.3945/1n.112.002642.

<sup>8</sup> French S.A., Hannan, P.J., Harnack L.J., Mitchell N.R., Toomey T.L, Gerlach A. J. *Occup Environ Med* 2010 Jan;52 Suppl 1:S29-33.