

Mayor Adams Announces NYC Will Serve up Healthier Meals With Enhanced Food Standards

April 1, 2022

Updated Food Standards Aim to Support Health of More Than 1 Million New Yorkers, Including Schoolchildren, Older Adults, and H+H Patients Accessing Meals or Snacks From City Agencies

For First Time Ever, Food Standards Will Now Limit Added Sugars in Meals Served and Add Requirement for Whole or Minimally Processed Plant-Proteins

NEW YORK – New York City Mayor Eric Adams today announced that the city will begin serving healthier meals to New Yorkers with the release of its enhanced “[New York City Food Standards, Meals/Snacks Purchased and Served](#)” and the “[New York City Food Standards, Beverage Vending Machines](#),” guidelines affecting hundreds of millions of meals and snacks served annually across 11 city agencies. Starting July 1, 2023, these standards — which have been compiled by the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) — aim to support the health of more than 1 million New Yorkers, including schoolchildren, older adults, NYC Health + Hospitals patients, and others accessing meals or snacks from city agencies.

“I have long said that our agencies should not literally be feeding our ongoing health care crisis, by serving foods that contribute to chronic diet-related diseases,” said **Mayor Adams**. “These new food standards will help minimize the consumption of processed foods and sugary drinks, while encouraging whole and plant-based food options. This is a transformational step toward aligning our agencies’ missions and, more importantly, helping New Yorkers, including our most vulnerable, lead healthier, happier lives.”

“Every New Yorker deserves access to healthy and nutritious foods that tastes good,” said **DOHMH Commissioner Dr. Ashwin Vasan**. “While it’s often said that ‘you are what you eat,’ for the city, we are what we serve, to millions of New Yorkers every day, including our precious schoolchildren, who are establishing eating habits now, for a

lifetime. These standards illustrate our commitment to health and nutrition, and to the sustainability of their futures and the future of our planet.”

“The new food standards ensure that the food we serve our residents is delicious, nutritious, and helps reduce adverse diet-related health outcomes for New Yorkers,” said **Mayor’s Office of Food Policy Executive Director Kate MacKenzie**. “Under the leadership of Mayor Adams, New York City is a national leader in the shift towards a healthier, more culturally sensitive and sustainable food system.”

As part of these new food standards, individuals accessing meals and/or snacks served at city agencies will have food with less added sugars, lower sodium, a reduced number of beef options, and more opportunities to have a plant-based protein. Additionally, sugary drinks will be removed from city vending machines. The standards being put in place follow evidenced-based nutrition criteria that all city agencies and their sub-contractors must apply to the meals and snacks they serve.

Major updates to the food standards include:

- A new added sugar limit, requiring less than 10 percent of calories served come from added sugars,
- A lower daily sodium limit for youth,
- A new requirement for half of all grains served to be whole grain,
- A new requirement for offering whole or minimally processed plant-proteins, such as beans,
- A new limit for beef and processed meats,
- A new requirement for agencies to solicit client feedback regarding cultural preferences, taste, and food quality,
- A new restriction to eliminate sugary drinks in vending machines, as well as the creation of a new limit of two slots for 100 percent juice per vending machine, and
- Integration of nutrition and sustainability standards to simultaneously address and strengthen individual and planetary health and better align the standards with the “[Good Food Purchasing Framework](#).”

Structural inequities make healthy eating challenging, and goals of the updated food standards include increasing emphasis on eating whole and unprocessed plant-based

foods, as well as reducing the risk of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease by improving dietary intake, which is strongly impacted by such inequities. The updated food standards also aim to keep the planet healthy by reducing beef and processed meats as meal options.

City agencies have been mandated to follow the food standards for foods and beverages served since they were first established by an executive order in 2008, with updates made in 2011, 2014, and 2017. [Executive Order 8](#) — signed on February 10, 2022 by Mayor Adams — mandates that DOHMH and the Mayor's Office of Food Policy revise the city agency food standards every three years. Eleven city agencies are affected by this executive order, including the:

- New York City Administration for Children's Services,
- New York City Department for the Aging,
- New York City Department of Citywide Administrative Services
- New York City Department of Correction,
- New York City Department of Education,
- New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene,
- New York City Department of Homeless Services,
- New York City Department of Parks and Recreation,
- New York City Department of Youth and Community Development,
- New York City Health and Hospitals Corporation, and
- New York City Human Resources Administration.

More information about the food standards can be found on the [DOHMH's website](#) and searching "nutrition at work."

DOHMH has additional food initiatives, including:

Nutrition Incentive Programs:

- [Health Bucks](#) are farmers markets coupons available to recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits and through community organizations.

- [Half Off Food Box](#) provides opportunity for New Yorkers who participate in SNAP to purchase a box of locally and regionally grown farm fresh fruits and vegetables for half of the full-box price at participating sites.
- [Get the Good Stuff](#) provides opportunity for New Yorkers who participate in SNAP to get free fruits, vegetables, and beans at certain New York City supermarkets.

Nutrition Education Programs:

- [Stellar Farmers Markets](#) provides free nutrition education workshops and cooking demonstrations at select farmers markets through New York City from July to November and through virtual platforms.
- [Eat Well Play Hard in Child Care Settings](#) supports staff and families associated with group childcare centers across New York City in implementing healthy eating policies and practices through nutrition workshops to adults and children and technical assistance to childcare center staff.

Food Retail Support:

- [Shop Healthy NYC](#) works to increase access to high-quality, affordable, healthier food options in neighborhoods facing food insecurity; an abundance of unhealthy food and higher rates of obesity, diabetes, and other diet-related diseases; and the oversaturation of predatory marketing.

“This is something to applaud and admire. Thank you, Mayor Adams, for such an important and inspiring announcement,” said **New York State Senator Luis Sepúlveda**. “For years, I have been committed to eating healthy, and whenever I can, I encourage others and tell them about the health benefits of good nutrition. For the city to announce that our students and people who receive food from city agencies will receive meals that are low in fat, lower in sugars, and place limits on things like sodium and processed meats is inspiring. Not only will we see results in the improved health of those impacted, but it also allows for proper education in the nutritional sense early on.

We will eventually become promoters of this knowledge in our homes, thus starting a chain reaction of wellness and health for our communities. It is even brilliant to put these measures in vending machines, as it is innovative and very practical. Congratulations, we are on the right track.”

“It’s great that Mayor Adams’ administration is encouraging New Yorkers to eat healthy, nutritious, and affordable food by promoting ‘Enhanced Food Standards’ in meals and snacks available through city agencies,” said **New York State Assemblymember Richard Gottfried, chair, Committee on Health**. “State and local public health authorities across the nation should embrace more such innovative public policies to help curb chronic diet-related conditions like obesity, heart disease, and diabetes.”

“Access to healthy food and drink options is essential in our efforts to improve health outcomes in the Bronx and throughout the city,” said **New York State Assemblymember Jeffrey Dinowitz**. “I applaud Mayor Adams and Commissioner Vasan for giving this issue the attention it needs, and I look forward to a continued effort to ensure that all New Yorkers have easy and affordable access to healthy food through our school system and public meals programs.”

“There are few greater moral imperatives for New York City than providing schoolchildren, older adults, H+H patients, and other vulnerable residents with access to healthy meals and snacks,” said **New York State Assemblymember Eddie Gibbs**. “A healthy-eating New York is a stronger New York, and I applaud the mayor’s announcement of these new food standards. This is a significant step forward towards achieving health equity in our city.”

“We would like to commend Mayor Adams on today’s announcement to serve healthier meals and snacks in schools and city agencies. As the saying goes, you are what you eat,” said **Staten Island Borough President Vito Fossella**. “We are confident that by the mayor making ‘the healthy choice the easy choice’ for New Yorkers, it will have a tremendous impact on the health and well-being of our constituents, particularly our children and senior populations.”

“It is important for us to create opportunities for all families, regardless of their zip code, to have access to fresh, healthy, high-quality nutritious food and live healthier lifestyles,” said **Bronx Borough President Vanessa L. Gibson**. “Today’s announcement is an important step forward towards improving the overall health and wellness of our city and

its residents. I applaud Mayor Adams for his commitment to making food equity and food justice a priority for his administration, and I look forward to our continued work together in dismantling structural barriers that have, for far too long, prevented many of our Bronx residents from having equal access to healthy food options.”

“Feeding more than 1 million New Yorkers is no small matter, and the city must ensure that each of those meals is nutritious so that New York can thrive,” said **Manhattan Borough President Mark Levine**. “These updated food standards reflect our city’s commitment to a healthier, more sustainable, and more equitable future.”

“Diet plays a tremendous role in someone’s health and wellness, and as city leaders, we should be creating standards and accessibility of better nutrition among New Yorkers,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Antonio Reynoso**. “Thank you, Mayor Adams, for championing this important cause and making New York a healthier place to live in.”

“As the city begins to recover from COVID, providing nutritious food options to New Yorkers is critically important,” said **New York City Councilmember Lynn Schulman, chair, Committee on Health**. “Making healthy, nutritious, and enhanced foods more accessible to our most impacted communities, including youth, older adults, and public hospital patients, is key to ensuring a healthier New York.”

“Expanding access to natural food options will serve to not only prevent common diet-related complications down the line but will also help people feel a better sense of mental well-being with an overall healthier lifestyle,” said **New York City Council Member Linda Lee, chair, Committee on Mental Health, Disabilities, and Addictions**. “AAPI communities suffer from disproportionately high rates of disease associated with poor diet, such as diabetes, and so Mayor Adams’ plan to make it easier to find affordable fresh produce and unprocessed food options will literally save lives.”

“Serving New Yorkers better food means that we’ll live longer, healthier lives,” said **New York City Councilmember Shaun Abreu**. “The mayor’s updated food standards will bring better options to New Yorkers, including food that is more nutritious and that better reflects the cultural preferences of the people eating it. This is a major win for public health.”

“My home, the Bronx, has consecutively ranked 62/62 as the unhealthiest county in New York state,” said **New York City Councilmember Oswald Feliz**. “It is high time that we advocate for efforts that increase access to healthy and affordable food options for residents of my community. By providing healthier options to families and making it affordable, we start making strides to move away from cheap and unhealthy alternatives.”

“I applaud the administration’s new, improved city food standards as a way to break the cycle of many New Yorkers’ poor health, by getting them access to healthful, natural food,” said **New York City Councilmember Robert Holden**. “It will more than pay for itself in the long run.”

“All our neighbors deserve access to healthy, affordable foods that taste good, regardless of their ZIP code, skin color, income, or background,” said **New York City Councilmember Rita Joseph**. “I’m thankful for the leadership of Mayor Adams on this hugely important topic, as city agencies work to feed populations that have been marginalized for too long.”

“I commend the mayor and everyone that’s worked hard to launch this in-depth initiative to get healthy meals to all New Yorkers,” said **New York City Councilmember Chris Marte**. “Starting kids with healthy habits when they’re young is important to shaping their long-term well-being, but that doesn’t mean we should write off the adults and seniors that didn’t have the opportunity to develop healthy habits. With this kind of leadership across agencies, our city will set a new national standard for balanced diets that I hope all cities will follow.”

“The enhanced new food standards will ensure that, at the very least, city meals are not a contributing factor to diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension, that are prevalent in the communities hardest hit by COVID,” said **New York City Councilmember Francisco Moya**. “Increasing access to healthier food is how we truly fight food insecurity and build stronger communities.”

“I’m looking forward to the rollout of the mayor’s enhanced food standards for members of our community,” said **New York City Councilmember Althea Stevens**. “It is important that city agencies are progressively working to ensure we undo the lack of access to healthier foods in all communities. Providing equal access and enhancing

food standards can assist in decreasing the chances of food-related diseases that our communities have suffered from for way too long.”

“I applaud the Adams administration’s efforts to make our city healthier,” said **New York City Councilmember Marjorie Velázquez**. “The pandemic has taught us the importance of prioritizing our health, and that often starts with what we eat. Creating healthy standards, providing accessibility to healthy foods, and incentivizing healthy eating will bolster community welfare and end inequities associated with healthy dining.”

“The New York City Food Standards have long served as a national model for how cities can use their food purchasing power to improve the health of vulnerable populations including, children, seniors, hospital patients, and jail inmates,” said **Nicholas Freudenberg, distinguished professor of public health, City University of New York School of Public Health and Health Policy**. “With the newly revised standards, New York City has taken another step forward in using its resources to tackle diet-related diseases, food insecurity and limited access to healthy affordable food.”

“We applaud Mayor Adams for making a strong commitment to reducing diet-related diseases,” said **Dr. Charles Platkin, executive director, Hunter College New York City Food Policy Center**. “Whether or not a poor diet can cause damage to the body should no longer be debated — there is clear evidence that supports the causal relationships between dietary factors and diet-related diseases. We must continue to create strategies to eliminate hunger, food insecurity, and diet-related disease and give people the basic human right to healthy food for every meal — these updated food standards are one step closer to achieving that goal.”

“New York City’s new food standards should help schools and city agencies serve meals that better promote health and sustainability as well as meeting nutritional needs,” said **Dr. Marion Nestle, professor of nutrition, food studies, and public health, emerita, New York University**. “They emphasize whole foods and those that are minimally processed — the cutting edge of nutrition advice these days. Once again, New York leads the way toward health equity and food justice.”

“The updated NYC Food Standards for Meals and Snacks Purchased and Served and the NYC Food Standards for Beverage Vending Machines represent a significant step in the direction of creating an environment that will support the healthy growth and

development of the city's schoolchildren," said **Dr. Sara E. Abiola, executive director, Tisch Food Center**. "Eliminating access to sugary drinks in vending machines and limiting the amount of added sugar in meals served to young people will undoubtedly promote the consumption of healthier food and beverage options in many settings and diminish the burden of chronic diet-related diseases in years to come."

"It's exciting to see New York City once again leading the way to catalyze healthier food for all, with strong, science-based standards to improve nutrition and well-being for kids and adults in schools, hospitals, and offices across the city," said **Dr. Dariush Mozaffarian, dean and Jean Mayer professor of nutrition, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University**.

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