Nutrition essentials in practice

Foodservice operators have an important responsibility to support all of their guests' needs. From taste and nutrition to portion control and sustainability, there are many factors to consider—so how do you put it all together?

1 Build a balanced plate

When planning a menu, include each of the main nutrients—and don't forget the beverages!



½ FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
Use a variety of colours, shapes, textures, and in-season foods

¼ HEALTHY PROTEIN
Balance plant & animal proteins, choosing lean portions

¼ WHOLE GRAINS
Prioritise fibre-full carbs like whole grain bread and pasta or brown rice



2 Choose fibre-full carbs

Carbs are the body's primary energy source.

- Fibre supports fullness, gut health, immune system, slow digestion and stable blood sugar
- Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts & seeds are good sources of fibre
- Choose whole-wheat bread, pasta and brown rice
- Add beans, lentils, and peas to dishes- they also contribute to a more varied protein intake
- Offer fruit as a snack for employees



3 Add lean protein

Proteins are the building blocks for balanced meals.

- Build and maintain cells, support fullness and energy
- Meat, fish, eggs, grains, nuts, legumes, pulses
- Balance plant & animal proteins
- Be mindful of portions
- Use lean options like chicken breast
- Pick plant-based proteins

4 Be mindful with fats & oils

Maximize flavour while being mindful about their use

- Add taste and texture
  - Help body absorb vitamins like A, D, E, K
- Animal (mostly saturated: butter, fatty meats)
  - Plant (mostly unsaturated: olive oil, nut and seed oils, although coconut is high in saturated fat)
- Prioritise unsaturated fats
  - Use just enough
  - Prioritise baking, boiling, or grilling, versus frying



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5 Hydration

Essential for daily wellbeing

- Support alertness, concentration, digestive health
- Water is the preferred option
  - Beverages with added nutrients, such as vitamins, electrolytes, minerals or protein, fibre, can contribute to the daily fluid intake
- Provide water in the canteen
  - Add water rich ingredients like fruits, vegetables, and soups to the menu



Source: Nutripro, Future-Ready Foodservice, 2026