



REACH FAR Toolkit
Healthy Eating in Retail Settings

KEY STEPS

1. Define the problem

A number of population-wide approaches to improve nutritional practices at restaurants in NYC are in place, including: Menu/Calorie labeling; Point-of-purchase signage; and Communication to increase consumer awareness of available healthy options. Similar efforts were developed for grocery stores, including: pricing, placement, and promotion to motivate customers to choose more heart healthy items.

However, these approaches may not reach certain Asian Americans (AA) due to a number of reasons such as: 1) policies are only applicable to franchises/larger retail chains and not small businesses, 2) A lack of cultural fit in the strategies, and 3) Cultural adaptation is required to make strategies more relevant for AA retailers.

2. Find the right partners

Small business owners are incredibly busy with many competing priorities; above all, they are focused primarily on making and keeping their businesses profitable. In order to start the Healthy Eating program at retail sites, you must cultivate buy-in from ownership and management, demonstrate the “business” case for a “healthy” priority such as heart health, and sustain the Healthy Eating program based on the business’ changing operation practices.

3. How to implement the program

When you have discussions with retailers to starting the Healthy Eating program at their business sites, you may want to emphasize how the program can improve the community’s health WHILE positively affecting sales at their small businesses. Please consider the following talking points when engaging with small business owners in starting the Healthy Eating program at their locations:

- Healthy options may be welcomed by existing customers
- Variety/healthy options in menus may attract customers back
- Possibility for repeat purchases (increase profit)
- May attract new customers (increase profit)

Restaurants had an option to include the following strategies as they participated in the REACH FAR project:

Restaurant Strategies	
POINT OF PURCHASE	Menu stickers
	Calorie Labeling
PROMOTION	Table tents

	Menu inserts
AVAILABILITY	Add new healthy choice
	Fewer salt condiments
	Modify menu option to be healthier
PRICING	Coupons for healthy items
	Discounts for healthy dishes
ACCESS	Have lower salt condiments on the dining table
	Offer to pack half of the meal “to-go”
	Introduce smaller portion sizes

Grocery Stores had an option to include the following strategies as they participated in the REACH FAR project:

Grocery Store Strategies	
PRICING	Incentivize purchase of healthy food through coupons, and reduce price of items
PLACEMENT	Place healthy food or beverages at eye level for customers or at front of store/near cash registers
	Healthy “end-cap” (display at the end of the aisle or other special displays)
PROMOTION	Increase labeling and promotion of healthy food
	Signage on shelves and refrigerators
	Decrease amount of advertising for unhealthy food
	Offer recipes for fruits and vegetables in produce section
PRODUCT	Sell more healthy products: brown rice, low sodium canned goods or condiments

4. Get the word out:

You may want to host interactive events with customers to highlight a retailer’s participation in the Healthy Eating program using culturally adapted health promotion items. Not only do these events generate interest from customers, but they are also excellent ways to generate publicity for the retailer in the community they conduct business in. Consider the following communication activities:

- Hold press events announcing businesses participating in the Healthy Eating program to media outlets to increase awareness in the community
- Advertising/marketing businesses through YELP, social media, ethnic media, and other online platforms may attract new customers

- Provide a list of healthy businesses to other stakeholders/community groups in the area that may become new customers

Health Promotion Materials	Print form	Topics	Try it out at your place of business
Healthy Restaurant Sticker	Door Decal	Sodium levels, nutrition facts	<i>Place at the entrance doors for customers to notice</i>
Healthy Store Sticker	Door Decal	Blood pressure, exercise, nutrition, emotional support	<i>Place at the entrance doors for customers to notice</i>
Healthy Restaurant Tent Cards	Menu tent cards	Healthy eating, physical activity, and blood pressure information for you & the whole family	<i>Place on dining tables to highlight healthy menu options</i>
Healthy Store Tags	Aisle and shelf tags	Food portion sizes	<i>Place on aisles and shelves where whole grains, low-fat dairy, low sodium options are available</i>
Healthy Heart Poster	Poster	Healthy Food groups highlighted	<i>Hang up by the fruits & vegetables section of the grocery store</i>
Key Steps for Healthy Heart Poster	Poster	Blood pressure, Reducing salt intake, Healthy eating	<i>Hang up by cashier registers</i>

5. Things to Consider

REACH FAR Community Partners who worked with Healthy Eating partners at retail settings since 2015 have provided some of the following best practices:

- Choose/identify businesses who already are interested in Healthy Eating or have connections to the community group(s) involved with starting the Healthy Eating program
- Offer one-on-one assistance to business owners- designate a staff member who can ask questions, write details during engagement meetings
- Respect the small business owners' needs/experiences with customers and operations
- Embrace business concepts to match up with "health" priorities
- Assist with in store food tastings and education activities at grocery stores to generate customer interest in the project

Lessons learned related to recruitment of retail champions and sustaining program activities are as follows:

Challenges & Best Practices Encountered During Implementation of the Healthy Eating Program in Retail Settings	
Challenges	Solutions
“The grocery danglers will take up too much space and cover our existing marketing materials” – Grocery store manager	Adjust the print design or size of the grocery danglers and/or work with the store managers to see what will work the best in terms of displaying marketing materials that won’t obstruct their existing signage
“The table tent cards take up too much space on the restaurant tables” – Restaurant manager	If you cannot display the tent cards, have the wait staff suggest the healthier options from the menu first to the customers verbally and then leave the table tent card with the existing menu
“We don’t know if our customers are aware of the healthy items on the menu” – Restaurant owner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Restaurant Specials can be meals from the healthier option menu. Specials are usually the first thing customers see or ask for. ❖ Conduct engagement and education opportunities with walk-in customers.
“Some grocery danglers were removed from shelf” – Grocery store cashier	Resupply and re-install danglers as needed