

PURPOSE

- Food is important in **social, emotional, and cultural contexts** to celebrate and comfort, engage communities, and build relationships while physically nourishing the body and mind.
- Due to the **high mental and physical demands** on **military service members**, food can play a role in supporting morale, comradery, and military performance.
- Food venues can implement a variety of food environment strategies to optimize the **availability, accessibility, acceptability, and awareness** of nutritious foods to support health and performance.

METHODS

- The team explored **food environment strategies** across 6 categories in various food venues that serve the military community using available military resources.
- The **military nutrition environment assessment tool (mNEAT)** evaluates food policy, availability, and behavioral design across a variety of food venue types.
- The military's **Go for Green® (G4G) nutrition program** is anchored in these strategies.

SIGNIFICANCE

Collaborations with local food venues create opportunities to implement feasible, evidence-informed strategies and optimize the food environment to support service members where they live, work, and train.

RESULTS

Through research, education, and consultative efforts, the team built a knowledge base of standard strategies, established best practices, developed resources, identified key facilitators, and noted challenges to successfully plan and implement food environment interventions across different food venues.

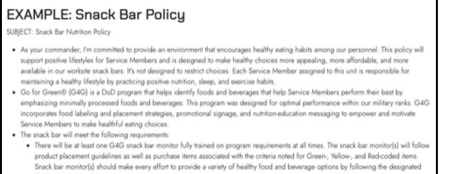
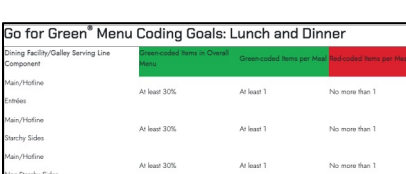
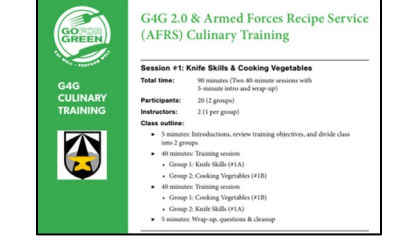
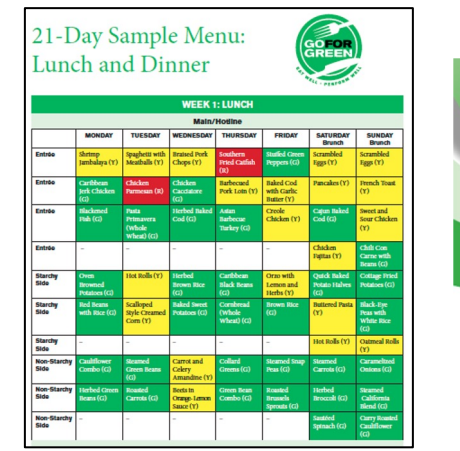
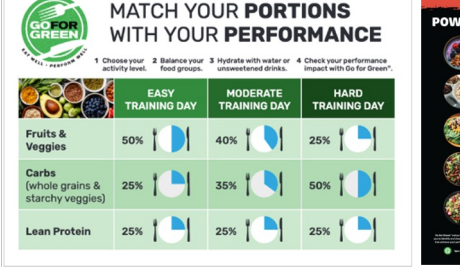
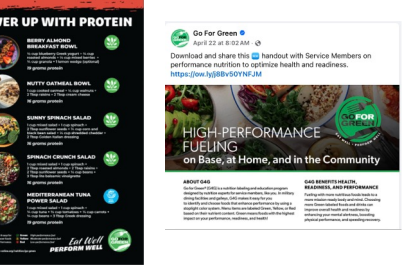
Category	Strategies	Examples
 Policy	- Nutrition guidelines - Menu standards	 
 Training	- Staff and leadership training on nutrition program standards - Culinary skills training	 
 Menu	- Identify nutritious options using defined criteria - Modify ingredients, recipes, and menus to offer more nutrient-dense options (fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein) - Offer more nutritious packaged options - Create a hydration station of healthier drinks	 
 Food Promotion	- Label nutritious foods and drinks with logos, symbols, or icons - Highlight nutritious options on menu boards and signs	 
 Choice Architecture	- Strategically place nutritious foods and drinks at or above eye-level in displays - Offer nutritious foods first in serving lines - Place nutritious options throughout the venue	
 Marketing & Education	- Post printed materials, labels, and signage inside the food venue - Develop a digital marketing campaign - Coordinate education efforts with nutrition experts	 

Figure 1. Food environment categories, strategies, and examples.

Facilitators

- Leadership & stakeholder support & buy-in
- Resources (time, materials, staff, financial)
- Prioritization of interventions by leadership & organization

Barriers

- Lack of, or, inconsistent leadership support
- Limited resources
- Current vendor contracts
- Procuring nutritious foods
- Current built environment
- Conflicting priorities

Figure 2. Facilitators and barriers to food environment improvement efforts according to food venue operators, nutrition experts, and leaders.

CONCLUSIONS

- As with many communities, **food plays an important role** in the personal and professional lives of service members.
- Recommend use of **standard strategy categories** to plan interventions.
- Customize strategies** by considering **available resources, venue operations, stakeholder support**, and potential **barriers** to ensure they are **feasible and successful** in each unique setting.

QUESTIONS?

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