



YOUR Essential GUIDE TO HEALTHCARE MEAL CAPS

*Feeling
overwhelmed
with food and
beverage meal
caps?*

Here are 8 nuggets of wisdom to help you navigate meal caps like a pro for your next HCP event.

1 WHAT ARE FOOD AND BEVERAGE MEAL CAPS?

This is the amount of money event planners are allowed to spend per meal on individual healthcare professionals at their meetings. This food and beverage budget limit ensures that food provided at healthcare events is both “modest” and “reasonable,” and in line with local costs.



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Did you know that meal caps differ from country to country?

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2 WHY DO FOOD AND BEVERAGE MEAL CAPS EXIST?

The pharmaceutical, biotech and healthcare industries are highly regulated. The decisions tackled are literally life-changing for patients, so all decisions need to be without bias and bribery.

Meal caps ensure reasonable limits apply to the food and drinks offered to HCPs at events and meetings so the “transfer of value” remains consistent. Healthcare organizations also provide guidance for their employees on meal spend.



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The Sunshine Act was passed in 2010 to offer more transparency and visibility of the financial relationships between HCPs and pharmaceutical manufacturers, including the cap on food and beverage offerings at HCP events.

3 WHAT'S THE LATEST ON MEAL CAPS TODAY?

Post-pandemic, the rise in energy costs and gas costs have pushed food prices to the roof. This has impacted event professionals especially those working within strict budgets, such as those planning HCP events.

In the US, several pharmaceutical companies have recently increased their HCP meal caps to account for higher food prices. This eases the pressure on event organizers and gives more wiggle room in planning food and beverage meals.

4 WHY ARE THERE MEAL CAPS FOR PATIENTS, TOO?

Meal caps also include those for patients who attend HCP events as patient advocates or to participate in the discussions.

The budget is the same with those of HCPs to ensure that there is no bribery taking place at these HCP gatherings.

5 ARE THERE ALSO MEAL CAPS FOR INTERNAL EMPLOYEES?

Yes, internal staff also have meal caps and they are broadly the same as that of HCPs and patients.



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Did you know that some countries require a ratio for employees vs HCPs vs patient attendees to lessen potential bias?

For example, in the UK, there must be at least three HCPs in attendance for every one internal employee, whereas in the US there is a 1:1 ratio.

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HOW DO YOU HANDLE HCP MEAL CAPS FOR INTERNATIONAL GROUPS?

It's fairly simple to compute the per-head cost of your catering provision if all your attendees come from a single country. But with an international group where the rates vary per country, it can get tricky.

The rule of the thumb is 52% of meeting organizers choose to apply the most restrictive meal cap to all attendees, to ensure everyone is treated the same and make it easier to provide the same meals to all participants.

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IS A PLATED MEAL OR A BUFFET THE BETTER WAY TO GO?

The no-frills answer is to go buffet - this ensures the same catering experience is delivered to all attendees. This is also the more economical option. A discrepancy between meal caps will be much more evident between plated meals.

8

HOW DO I AVOID FINES?

Getting fined at HCP events can result in reputational damage to a pharmaceutical company. So make sure you cross all your T's and dot your I's by checking the attendees against your documentation every time a new batch of invitations is sent to stay on top of the meal caps. Any changes caught halfway through planning means there's still time to adjust to the new cap.

A MORE IN-DEPTH LOOK AT HCP FOOD AND BEVERAGE MEAL CAPS AND ITS IMPACT ON YOUR HCP MEETING PLANNING

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