

Healthy Eating in Municipal and Recreation Settings Policy

Definition of a Healthy Food Environment

A healthy food environment is one where healthy foods and beverages are the norm. A healthy food environment is supportive of and encourages eating healthy foods and beverages by making healthy foods and beverages available, appealing and affordable.

Vision

Municipal and Recreation settings will be providing healthy food environments for all.

Scope

This policy shall apply to foods and beverages served and sold at Municipal and Recreation facilities, settings, programs, meetings, and events, which includes:

- vending machines
- canteens
- concessions
- catering and café/restaurants
- dining halls
- tournaments
- sporting events
- hospitality suites
- special events and festivals
- meetings
- training
- programming for all ages.

Community groups and individuals who are renting the municipal/recreation facilities shall be informed of the policy and shall be encouraged to adhere to the policy.

The maximum/moderate/minimum criteria shall be applied as 50%/40%/10% for every instance that involves foods and beverages except in cases where this document explicitly outlines exceptions.

Goals

- Create healthy food environments.
- Increase healthy food and beverage options and decrease unhealthy food and beverage options.
- Improve the availability, appeal, and affordability of healthy foods and beverages.
- Improve attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours around healthy eating.
- Increase the number of municipal councils and departments who are leaders in encouraging and supporting healthy eating policies.

Policy Components

1. Food and Beverages served and sold

This policy applies to:

- vending machines
- canteens
- concessions
- catering and café/restaurants
- dining halls
- tournaments
- sporting events
- hospitality suites
- special events and festivals
- meetings
- training
- programming for all ages.

Food and beverages served and sold will:

- Reflect the nutrient criteria for the three categories of food and beverages:
 - Maximum
 - Moderate
 - Minimum
- Each type of service within a setting (vending, canteen, programming, etc) must fit within the criteria of 50% maximum, 40% moderate, 10% minimum.

See the toolkit for food and beverage suggestions.

Tea and coffee are excluded

This policy does not apply to food and beverages brought into municipal and recreation settings, facilities, programs, meetings, and events from home or outside by an individual for their own consumption.

2. Portion Sizes

It is important that the portion sizes offered reflect and support healthy eating behaviours. Large portions (i.e., “super-size”) not only provide more calories, but studies show that when people are served larger portions, they also eat more food.

Appropriate portions of food and beverages will be served and sold. Super-sized portions are not appropriate to serve or sell. Refer to *Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating* for information related to portion sizes, available here: <http://hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php> and in the toolkit.

3. Food Safety

Nova Scotian’s need to have safe food.

All Not-for profit organizations within this setting are to serve or sell food under the requirements outlined in Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture’s Position Paper “Home Preparation of Potentially Hazardous Foods by Not-for-Profit Organizations”. (<http://novascotia.ca/agri/documents/food-safety/home-preparation-NFP.pdf>)

Food establishments within this setting which hold a food establishment permit from Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture are to prepare and serve foods in accordance with Nova Scotia Food Safety Regulations. <http://www.novascotia.ca/JUST/regulations/regs/hpafdsaf.htm>

4. Breastfeeding

Municipal and Recreation settings will provide a welcoming environment for mothers to breastfeed anywhere, anytime in the setting as desired.

5. Dietary Considerations

Whenever possible provide options for individuals with dietary restrictions and/or preferences (e.g., medical conditions, allergies, cultural and/or religious beliefs, vegetarians).

Appropriate allergy/anaphylaxis policies are required.

6. Clean Drinking Water

Water is an essential nutrient. Adequate hydration improves brain function, alertness and energy levels. Access to safe, potable water should be provided in all municipal and recreation settings. Use of reusable water containers should be encouraged.

- Ensure free access to safe, potable water in all settings whenever possible.
- Tap water is to be used, if the water source is deemed safe. If unsafe, label appropriately.
- For well water, ensure adequate testing of water source. If water is not potable bottled water is to be used/made available.
- Reusable water pitchers, glasses and bottles are to be used whenever possible.
- Promote consumption of water during recreation and sport activities.

7. Promotion, Advertising and Pricing

Every effort should be made to market and promote healthy food options in all municipal and recreation settings (e.g., menus, signage, promotional pricing).

Thoughtful pricing strategies have been shown to improve the intake of healthy foods when they are priced in a manner that makes them accessible to the majority of the population. It is recommended that when pricing is considered, ensure healthy foods are priced competitively with unhealthy foods.

8. Placement

The placement or visibility of foods increases the likelihood that those foods will be chosen. Priority space should be given to healthy food and beverages as defined by the Maximum Nutrition list (e.g., counter-top refrigerators, placement of fruits and vegetables at eye level).

9. Fundraising

Non-food items are the preferred method of fundraising. If food and beverage items are used for fundraising they shall conform to the maximum or moderate nutrition criteria.

10. Special Functions

External groups holding functions and food vendors are encouraged to follow the policy.

Municipalities shall adhere to the policy, with the exception of three (3) events per year that can be 60% maximum and moderate, 40% minimum. Municipalities are encouraged to adhere to the policy for all events.

11. Nutrition Education

Municipalities and recreation organizations can play a supportive role in nutrition education by:

- Supporting and sharing the standardized maximum, moderate and minimum nutrient criteria.
- Working with partners to identify opportunities and quality education sources and resources to model and share healthy food education.

12. Partnerships

For successful implementation the healthy eating policy requires support from many partners which could include: food vendors, District Health Authorities, community groups, other municipal departments (waste resource, sustainability, planning), food suppliers and distributors, schools and day cares.

To improve and contribute to a healthy food environment collaborative efforts could include: food packaging, NS products/produce, accessibility, pricing, group buying, and education of why changes are happening.

Best practices to support healthy eating policy implementation

Municipal units can demonstrate leadership by giving every consideration to implementing these best practices which will strengthen and contribute to healthy food environments.

A. NS produce and products

NS produces an abundance of fresh food both from the land and the sea. Buying food that is grown, harvested, or produced within the province supports NS agriculture, fisheries, aquaculture, and other businesses and means more money remains in rural communities.

When possible, municipal and recreation settings shall serve local, seasonal food and beverages that are harvested, produced or manufactured in Nova Scotia that conform to the healthy eating policy.

Local products used in municipal and recreation settings will be identified and promoted.

B. Food and packaging

Nova Scotians are committed to taking steps to ensure their province is as clean as possible. Those serving or selling foods and beverages within municipal and recreation settings are encouraged to reduce waste and support recycling and composting options.

- Provision of sorting bins at convenient locations
- Reduced packaging (ie: water jugs, not individual bottles)
- Bulk ordering
- Group purchasing

C. Municipal Grants

Municipalities can influence the food environment beyond the scope of this policy through their grants to organization programs. Municipalities shall endeavour wherever possible to incorporate healthy food and beverages in grant requirements.

D. Food as a reward/punishment

Using food to reinforce desired behaviours or achievements teaches people to eat when they are not hungry and to associate food with behaviour rather than nourishment. Finding alternatives to food to reinforce behaviours is an important part of providing a healthy food environment.

- Food and beverages shall not be used to reinforce positive behaviours (e.g., pizza party, treat day, etc).
- Food and beverages shall not be used as an individual reward (e.g., player of the game receiving an edible treat).
- Food and beverages shall not be withheld as a consequence for inappropriate behaviour.

E. Sponsorship

Municipalities and recreation organizations shall encourage sponsorships from companies that provide healthy foods and beverages.