
Healthy Eating Environment Policy

Department: **Recreation**
Adopted: **December 08, 2015**

Policy No: **5.22**

1. Policy Statement

To create healthy food environments by increasing access to and consumption of healthy foods and beverages within municipal settings, making the healthy choice, the easy choice.

2. Definition of a Healthy Food Environment

A healthy food environment is supportive and encourages the production and consumption of healthy foods and beverages by making them available, accessible, appealing, and affordable. A healthy food environment is one where healthy foods and beverages are “the norm”.

3. Background

HERSS (Healthy Eating in Recreation and Sport Settings), an advisory group comprised of Recreation, Health, Department of Health and Wellness Active Living Branch, formed in 2012. The goal of the group is to inform, guide and support municipal units, recreation settings and communities on policy and environmental approaches to healthy eating in municipal, recreational and sport settings. Projects have developed as a result of this Advisory Committee, including universal lunch programs at day camps, edible landscapes, and conversations with various municipalities. An opportunity to look at education and access to healthy food within the town of Berwick was identified. A presentation was made to Berwick Council on healthy eating and the go-ahead was given to explore a healthy eating policy for the town. A working group was struck and included members of Council, Recreation, Health, Community, and Acadia.

4. Rationale

Healthy eating in municipal settings is important because it:

- Creates an environment that fosters healthy eating for all citizens by supporting access to and consumption of healthy foods and beverages.
- Supports a sustainable change that has a long term impact on the health of future generations by reducing the risk of developing diet related conditions including Type II diabetes, cancer, heart disease and obesity.
- Supports evidence across Canada involving the importance of creating supportive, healthy eating environments.
- Supports healthy eating policy development and implementation within other settings across Nova Scotia including public schools and regulated childcare centers among others.
- Moves toward an environment that provides individuals with healthy food and beverage options.
- Supports present and future healthy eating strategies and initiatives within Nova Scotia.
- Supports a cultural shift in which healthy eating is considered the norm.
- Promotes local economic development in agricultural production/food sourcing.

5. Objectives

1. To engage key partners in this exploratory process (councilors, recreation, health) to help increase the number of leaders in the councils and departments to encourage and support the policy.
2. To improve the availability of healthy food and beverage options for all proceedings (meetings, special events, day camps, gym events) within facilities/sites owned and/or operated by and affiliated with the Town of Berwick.
3. To consider all opportunities for healthy eating in our recommendations (i.e. access, supporting local farmers and producers, vendors, fundraising, learning opportunities, etc.)
4. To normalize healthy food and beverage consumption at town affiliated events/meetings/venues.
5. To encourage buying and supporting local producers thereby supporting economic sustainability and local prosperity.
6. To develop a promotion/communication plan (which will include an educational piece).
7. To build in an evaluation plan.

6. Scope

This policy applies to the food and beverages served and sold in the following areas:

- All municipal owned recreation facilities and places
- All recreation programs and municipal events, meetings, special events, fundraisers, and sales
- All municipal workplace wellness programs
- All canteens, contracts, and vending machines located on municipal properties

This does **not** apply to:

- Food and beverages brought in for meals and snacks by the employees
- Organizations or individuals who rent space/rooms for special events, however they will be encouraged to follow the policy and offer more healthy food options
- Organizations/events which the Town provides financial support or sponsorship, however they will be encouraged to participate in modelling the policy and offer more healthy food options
- Alcohol (alcohol is not included in the scope of this policy)
- Coffee or tea

7. Policy Components

7.1 Food and Beverages Served and Sold

Providing healthy foods and beverages within Municipal settings will support a cultural shift whereby the healthy choice is the “norm” within a variety of settings where we live, work, and play.

All foods and beverages served and sold will:

- Be consistent with the defined nutrient criteria (*maximum, moderate, minimum*) detailed in **Appendix A**.
- Be served and sold in the appropriate portion sizes as identified within Canada’s Food Guide to Healthy Eating.

The following should **NOT** be served: energy drinks (all brands) and relaxation drinks (all brands).

7.2 Breastfeeding

Breastmilk is the perfect food for human babies and is the only food babies need until 6 months of age. The province of Nova Scotia supports breastfeeding through its Provincial Breastfeeding Policy and the Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission affirms a woman’s right to breastfeed in public. By providing a welcoming and supportive atmosphere for breastfeeding, Municipalities may help reduce barriers influencing a woman’s decision to breastfeed.

7.3 Promotional Pricing and Placement

The pricing of foods/beverages influences the types of products individuals select and purchase. Healthy foods and beverages should be priced slightly lower than unhealthy foods and beverages. 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). Healthy foods and beverages within the *maximum* or *moderate* categories will be priced lower than comparable products in the *minimum* category.

7.4 Promotion, Advertising, & Sponsorship

Although partnerships often serve as important funding supports, marketing of unhealthy food and beverage products has a strong influence on the food choices of children and adults.

- When possible, municipalities are encouraged to seek sponsorship from local, healthy food providers/growers that meet the maximum nutrition criteria.
- Items provided as tokens of appreciation or for participation will not promote or advertise products from the *minimum* and/or the *do not serve* categories.

7.5 Fundraising

Fundraising with non-food or healthy food and beverage items provides an opportunity for municipal settings to create healthy food environments. If foods and beverages are sold for fundraising, municipalities are encouraged to include foods and beverages that fit within the *maximum* and *moderate* categories. Fundraising events will primarily focus on non-food items.

7.6 Food Safety

It is important to provide food that is safe and healthy to eat. Safe food helps to prevent the development and spread of illnesses.

Further guidance regarding food safety practices can be obtained from the Nova Scotia Food Safety Regulations: <http://novascotia.ca/agri/documents/food-safety/NSFoodCode.pdf>

7.7 Local Produce and Products

Berwick and its surrounding areas produce and harvest an abundance of produce and other foods. When possible, local, seasonal foods and beverages harvested and/or produced in Berwick will be offered. Following this, buying local will expand to the Annapolis Valley, then to Nova Scotia, and then the rest of the Atlantic provinces.

7.8 Environmental Sustainability

Foods and beverages served or sold within Municipally operated facilities/services will find new ways to reduce waste and support recycling and composting options.

- Green and recyclable bins will be available within municipally operated facilities/services.
- Where possible, re-usable dishes will be used to reduce waste from foods/beverages. If re-useable dishes are not available, recyclable or biodegradable dishes will be utilized.
- When possible, bulk service will be offered (i.e. using a carton/carafe of milk versus individual milkers).
- Energy saving equipment including fridges and stoves which meet the EnerGuide standard will be used where possible.
- Ensure access to safe, potable water in all settings using reusable water pitchers, glasses, and bottles wherever possible.

7.9 Special Events

Municipal Organized Special Events shall adhere to the policy as outlined in this document.

Special Events organized by community groups will be encouraged to follow the leadership example set by the Municipality and work towards providing more healthy food options at these community events.

8. Implementation Plan

Year 1: 50% max, 30% mod, 20% min

Year 2: 60% max, 20% mod, 20% min

Year 3: 70% max, 20% mod, 10% min

APPENDIX A

Nutrient Criteria – Healthy Eating Policy

Maximum Nutrition Foods & Beverages

- **Should be chosen most often**
- Healthiest options
- Low in saturated and trans fat
- Contain little or no added fat, sugar, and/or sodium
- High in natural fiber
- No sugar substitutes (i.e. aspartame, sucralose)

Moderate Nutrition Foods & Beverages

- **Chosen less often than maximum foods and beverages**
- Contain added fat, sugar and/or sodium
- May be processed
- No sugar substitutes (i.e. aspartame, sucralose)

Minimum Nutrition Foods & Beverages

- **Chosen least often**
- High in fat, sugar, and/or sodium
- Contain sugar substitutes (i.e. aspartame, sucralose)
- Contain caffeine
- Highly processed

Foods Not to Be Served or Sold

- Energy drinks and shots – all brands
- Any foods that have been deep fat fried during food preparation

Revision Dates:

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