



**Healthy Eating in Municipal
&
Physical Activity Recreation Sports
Settings
Policy**



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DEFINITION OF A HEALTHY FOOD ENVIRONMENT

A healthy food environment is supportive of and encourages the consumption of healthy foods and beverages by making them available, appealing and affordable

Vision

All physical activity, sports, recreation and municipal settings and facilities in Victoria County will create a healthy food environment for all residents and visitors.

Scope

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

1. All municipal owned recreation facilities and places
2. All recreation programs and municipal events, meetings, schools, special events, fundraisers and sales
3. All municipal workplace wellness programs
4. All canteens, contracts and vending machines located on municipal properties
5. Municipal Grant funding. Victoria County has the ability to influence the food environment beyond the scope of these guidelines through the grants available to community organizations, service providers and facility operators

Grant applicants that encompass healthy eating requirements will be given increased consideration

- a) Grant Priority Projects to receive funding will support collaborative work in developing and/or implementing innovative approaches to healthy eating policy work.
- b) All municipal staff & elected councilors and partners within the municipality will demonstrate leadership and role modeling for the healthy eating and food policy.
- c) Initiatives that address food security, access and affordability.
- d) Events that is culturally significant.

6. 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.

This policy also applies to sponsorship, fundraising, gifts purchased and whenever possible preference be given to local producers to provide the food.

Goals

To enhance healthy eating in Victoria County physical activity, sports, recreation and municipal settings by:

- Supporting a culture shift whereby the healthy choice is the available choice leading to committed long-term change
- Increasing availability and access to healthy eating choices, safe foods and beverages throughout the municipality
- Providing healthy food and beverage choices that are affordable, available, appealing and convenient
- Ensuring healthy foods and beverages are placed in visible locations
- Creating an understanding of healthy eating for food and beverage providers and distributors
- Increasing the number of leaders in communities, council & departments to encourage and support these guidelines and policy
- Linking the physical activity, sports & recreation sectors to food & nutrition resources in the community (i.e. community gardens, food skill workshops, etc.)

Policy Components

1. Food and Beverages Served

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

Food and beverages served and sold will:

Reflect the nutrient criteria for the three categories of food and beverages:

- o Maximum – food and beverages in this category are considered to be the healthiest options, and generally have higher levels of essential nutrients and lower amounts of fat, sugar, and/or sodium, and higher in naturally occurring fiber.
- o Moderate – food and beverages in this category provide less nutritional benefits than Maximum foods and may have higher levels of fat, sodium and/or sugar and lower amounts of naturally occurring fiber.
- o Minimum – food and beverages in this category have little or no nutritional benefits. If a food or beverage does not fit maximum or moderate nutrient criteria and is on the “Not Permitted” list, then it is considered to be a Minimum choice.

Each type of service within a setting (vending, canteen, programming, etc.) must fit within the criteria of 50% maximum, 40% moderate, 10% minimum.

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

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/JUST?regulations/regs/hpafdsaf.htm>

4. Breastfeeding

Breast milk is the optimal food choice 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. Victoria County has adopted a breastfeeding policy.

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 signage/labeling at events alerting people about allergens, and food content.

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.
- 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 safe drinking water during recreation and sport activities.

7. Promotion, Advertising and Pricing

Marketing of unhealthy food and beverage products can influence an individual's food choices. Although partnerships often serve as important funding supports, marketing of unhealthy foods and beverages can influence the food choices of children and adults.

- It is preferred that the municipality and partners seek sponsorship from non-food companies however if food and/or beverage companies provide sponsorship funds, municipalities shall request sponsorship from those that primarily provide foods and beverages within maximum and moderate categories.

- Only foods and beverages within the maximum or moderate categories will be promoted and/or advertised.
- Only foods and beverages within the maximum or moderate categories will be used for play, art, or craft materials for children and youth.
- Sponsorship will not be accepted from corporations that primarily promote and sell foods and beverages in the minimum and do not serve categories.
- Signage provided (e.g. vending machine facades, score boards, boards at arenas) will promote corporations that are primarily associated with foods or beverages in the maximum or moderate categories.
- Items provided as tokens of appreciation or for participation will not promote or advertise products from the minimum or the do not serve categories.

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, Food Hub, Aboriginal communities, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Community Health Boards, 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

Local and Nova Scotia produces and harvests an abundance of produce and other foods

- When possible - local, seasonal foods and beverages harvested and/or produced in Victoria County, Cape Breton &/or Nova Scotia will be offered
- Addressing food security and accessibility issues

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. Food as reinforcement

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.

D. Sponsorship

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

Appendix A

Nutrient Criteria – Healthy Eating Guidelines

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

Gatorade (Pepsi cola) and Powerade (Coke-a-cola) are touted by their respective companies as energy drinks though they also rehydrate.

*If you require examples of maximum, moderate, and minimum foods, please refer to the following link: *(A link must be added here.)*