

Community Healthy Eating Framework

Congratulations! You've just adopted a Healthy Eating policy and are well on your way to creating a healthy food environment for your community. A healthy food environment is one that promotes healthy eating through the life cycle beginning with breastfeeding and continuing through to healthy eating for seniors. Wondering how to put your policy into practice? Check out the steps below for ideas on how to promote and support your policy at the community level:

1. Establish a committee to support the implementation of your healthy eating policy.

Committee members could include town councilors, recreation practitioners, community volunteers, regional nutritionists or other local dietitians, public health nurses, food service providers, coaches, parents, teachers, private business owners, youth and/or anyone with an interest in promoting healthy eating. This committee can develop an action plan to leverage your healthy eating policy to help create healthier food environments in your community. The action plan could include specific actions/goals; roles and responsibilities of committee members; and resources required and timelines.

2. Perform a food and beverage assessment of your community facilities, programs and events.

A food and beverage assessment will help determine the current state of the food environment in your community. This process will help you identify and prioritize actions and can serve as a baseline when conducting future assessments. Areas that could be included in the assessment are canteens/concessions; vending machines; community programs, events and fundraisers; staff meetings; and promotions and marketing.

3. Determine priority areas to focus on as you move toward creating healthier food environments in your community.

Examples of priority areas include: high traffic facilities, programs, events; facilities with assets that support healthy eating such as adequate kitchen space, food preparation, storage equipment, and staff/volunteers to prepare food; designated breastfeeding-friendly spaces for parents/families; and/or menu items to reduce or eliminate the sale of such as deep-fried foods or sugar-sweetened beverages (e.g., pop, sports drinks, slushies, etc.).

Here are some suggestions for providing and promoting healthier food and beverages options in your community:

a. Canteen/concessions:

- i. provide healthy food and beverage options based on Canada's Food Guide
- ii. price and promote healthy menu options appropriately (e.g., healthy meal specials during tournaments/special events; increase price of unhealthy options; replace one low-selling unhealthy menu item with a healthier one)
- iii. include language in food services' request for proposals encouraging provision of healthy food and beverage options

- b. *Vending:*
 - i. work with vending companies to provide healthy vending machine options (i.e., water and/or milk-only beverage vending; cereal bars, cheese strings; yogurt tubes; trail mix; etc.,)
- c. *Programs:*
 - i. provide healthy food and beverage options whenever food is provided for participants (e.g., youth summer recreation programs)
- d. *Events:*
 - i. ensure healthy options from Canada's Food Guide are provided at town-operated events;
 - ii. make EGaP print resources available
 - iii. make external food providers aware of your healthy eating policy and work with them to determine which healthy options to serve
 - iv. provide a space for community organizations/private groups to host events and meetings. Highlight any amenities available for food prep and storage, and provide a copy of your healthy eating policy along with Eat Great and Participate's *Community Healthy Eating Guide*.
- e. *Staff:*
 - i. lead by example and provide healthy food and beverage options during internal meetings, training and celebrations;
 - ii. provide a place for staff to refrigerate and re-heat foods from home
- f. *Promotions/Marketing:*
 - i. make community members aware of healthy menu options via posters, newsletters, social media, and websites
 - ii. discourage marketing of unhealthy options through company sponsorships
- g. *Fundraising:*
 - i. use healthy food fundraisers such as vegetable hampers, bags of citrus fruits, or frozen food items like fish cakes, soups or casseroles
 - ii. try non-food fundraisers such as events (open mic, talent shows, winter carnival, silent auctions), walk-a-thons, used book sales or sell seasonal flowers or potted plants.

- 4. Build partnerships to help support your work and encourage partners and other community organizations to adopt their own healthy policies:**
- a. partner with local farmers to sell vegetable hampers/other local products as a fundraiser
 - b. approach local businesses (e.g., grocery/convenience stores) for food and/or kitchen equipment donations in exchange for ad space in community publications
 - c. share your successful partnerships with the community via websites, social media, etc.

- 5. Explore opportunities to develop programs that focus on food literacy and increasing access to healthy food in the community such as:**

Community gardens
Bulk buying clubs
Composting programs
Community kitchens
Farmer's Markets
Healthy snack clubs for community organizations and/or sport groups
Healthy cooking classes (for seniors or youth)
Education session for coaches and young athletes

*Sources:
Stay Active Eat Healthy Food and Beverage Initiative, British Columbia*