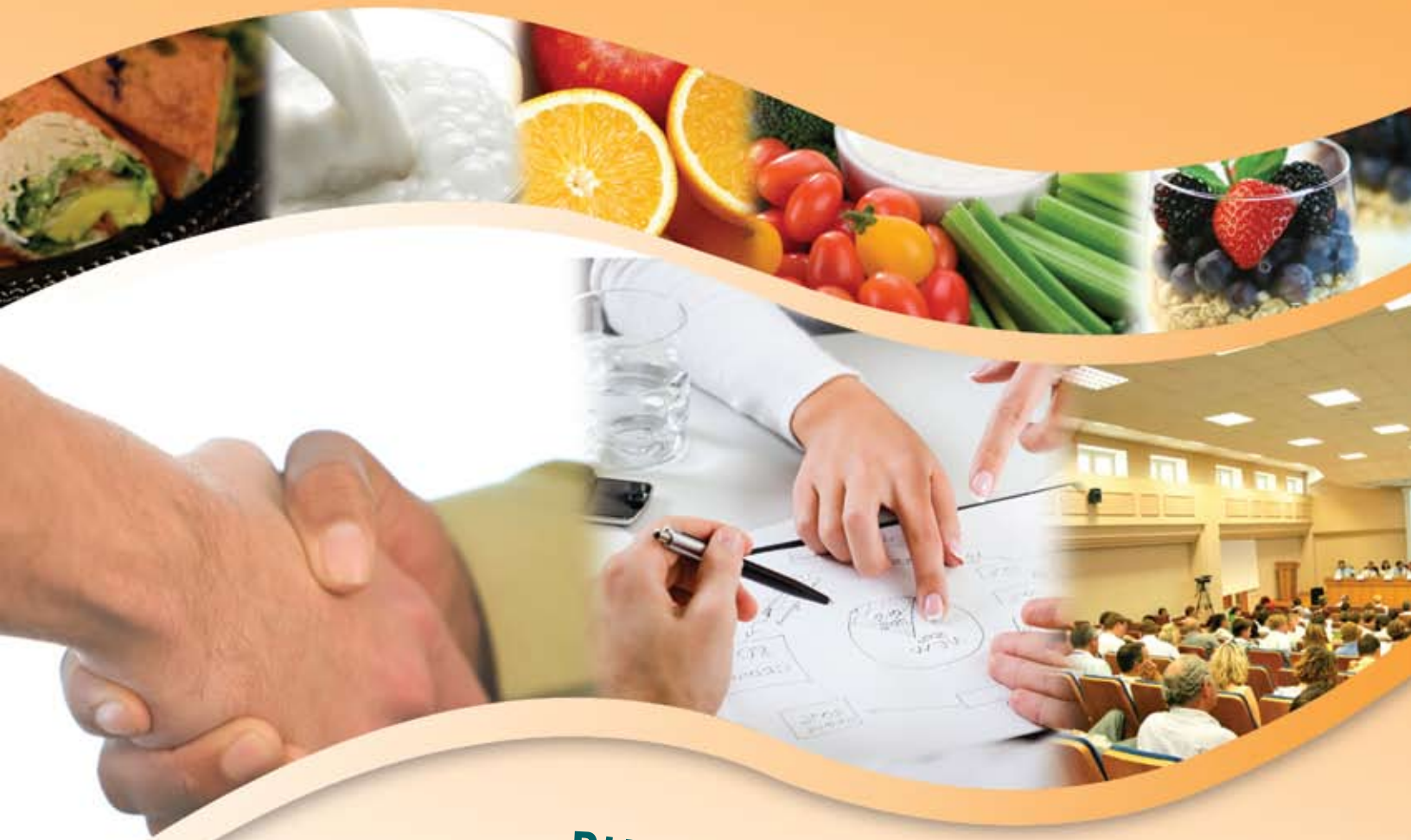

PUTTING HEALTH ON THE AGENDA

A Model Policy for Healthy Meetings and Events

Newfoundland Labrador

Go Healthy

Model Policy for Healthy Meetings and Events

Achieving Health & Wellness: A Provincial Wellness Plan for Newfoundland & Labrador, demonstrates government's commitment to improving the health and wellness of the people of our province. Promoting and supporting healthy eating is a priority in the Provincial Wellness Plan.

This **Healthy Meetings and Events Policy** promotes the integration of healthy eating into the work setting by providing an easy-to-follow plan to create and support healthier meetings and events.

We all have opportunities to create healthier environments where we live, learn, work and play. Let's work together to support and promote healthy living for all for life.

For additional information on providing healthy foods and beverages in the workplace or to answer any questions, please visit our website **www.gohealthy.ca** or contact a nutritionist at your local Regional Health Authority.

March 2010

Table of Contents

Healthy Meetings and Events	1
Healthy Foods and Beverages	3
Additional Healthy Meetings and Events Suggestions	7
Implementing a Healthy Meetings and Events Policy	8
Sample Healthy Meetings and Events Policy	10
Contact Information	11

Healthy Meetings and Events

The workplace offers an ideal setting to promote healthy eating. Healthy eating contributes to overall health and well being. Support for a **Healthy Meetings and Events Policy** will demonstrate your organization's interest in the health of your employees, committee members and the larger community making it easier for all to make healthy choices. The following pages outline steps your organization can take to create healthier and supportive work environments.

Why are Healthy Meetings and Events Important?

- More and more people are interested in choosing healthier foods, being physically active, staying tobacco-free, caring for our environment and supporting local products.
- What we eat and our level of physical activity can be positively influenced by healthy and supportive policies where we live, learn, work and play.
- Foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lower fat milk products and leaner meats help to prevent many chronic diseases.
- A work environment supportive of healthy choices helps to create and maintain healthy people and healthy communities.

Healthy Meetings and Events Suggestions

The following suggestions will help to create a healthier meeting or event:

- Serve vegetables and fruit more often
- Offer a variety of whole grain products
- Offer skim, 1% or 2% milk
- Offer lower fat milk alternatives (yogurt, cheese)
- Provide smaller portion sizes
- Serve plain water in pitchers
- Buy local products when possible
- Consider special dietary needs and food allergies
- Ensure food safety
- Include physical activity opportunities
- Choose greener options when possible
- Choose tobacco-free facilities
- Encourage healthy options in vending services

Healthy Foods and Beverages

- Choose foods and beverages based on Canada's Food Guide. The Guide can be found on our website at **www.gohealthy.ca**
- When ordering or preparing food for meetings and events, aim for four food groups for meals and two food groups for snacks.
- Canada's Food Guide food groups include:
  - Vegetables and Fruit
  - Grain Products
  - Milk and Alternatives
  - Meat and Alternatives

The following suggestions will help with your meal and snack planning:

Beverages

- Serve tap water in pitchers
- Serve 100% vegetable or fruit juices
- Offer skim, 1% or 2% white or chocolate milk
- Have fortified soy beverages available
- Serve coffee and tea with skim, 1% or 2% milk

Breakfast

- Offer fruit whole or cut up, fresh, frozen, canned or dried
- Include yogurt
- Serve hot or cold whole grain cereals with skim, 1% or 2% milk
- Offer a variety of whole grain bagels, 3½" diameter or less or cut in half
- Include nut butters such as peanut or almond
- Offer hard-boiled eggs
- Include a variety of muffins; small, mini or cut in half; lower fat, whole grain and fruit options

Snacks

- Serve fruit whole or cut up, fresh, frozen, canned or dried
- Offer raw vegetables cut up with or without low-fat dressing or dip
- Try yogurt
- Offer lower fat cheeses (21% milk fat/M.F. or less)
- Provide lower fat whole grain crackers
- Consider smoothies made with fruit and yogurt

Desserts

- Offer fruit crumbles or fruit breads
- Serve small cookies made with whole grains and fruit
- Prepare yogurt parfaits
- Choose pudding made with milk as the first ingredient
- Consider whole fresh fruit or fruit cups
- Offer frozen yogurt with fruit

Sandwiches

- Choose whole grain breads, pitas, wraps or buns
- Choose lean meats e.g. roasted beef, chicken, turkey or ham
- Include vegetarian sandwich options
- Include a selection of lower fat cheeses
- Ask for sandwiches with little or no mayonnaise, butter or margarine or ask that they be served on the side
- Ask for other low-fat options on the side such as mustard, chutney, hummus or relish
- Offer toppings like shredded lettuce, mixed greens, chopped tomatoes or sliced peppers

Hot Meals

- Choose leaner meats, fish and poultry grilled, broiled, roasted or steamed instead of fried
- Offer meat portions consistent with Canada's Food Guide (2½ oz or 75g portions)
- Serve cooked vegetables
- Offer pasta dishes with lower fat toppings like tomato sauce rather than butter, cream or cheese sauces
- Consider broth-based or pureed vegetable-based soups instead of cream-based soups
- Offer vegetarian options
- Consider a vegetable, bean, mixed greens or spinach salad with the meal

Buy Local Products

- Serve fresh, locally grown and produced foods when possible as they are less expensive when in season
- Buy local. It supports farmers and producers and reduces shipping costs and environmental impacts
- Ask caterers what local healthy foods they can supply
- Choose foods in season such as berries in the summer and apples in the fall

Ensure Food Safety

- Tips to keep meeting foods safe:
  - Foods need to be served at recommended temperatures:
    - Keep hot foods hot - 60° C (140° F) or higher
    - Keep cold foods cold - 4° C (40° F) or lower
  - Minimize the time between food delivery and food service
  - Use proper serving utensils
  - Wash or sanitize hands before eating
  - Ensure food is prepared in a licensed facility
  - Discard food left at room temperature for more than two hours

- If you have questions or concerns about food safety, call your local Government Service Centre to speak with an Environmental Health Officer. See contact information on page 12.

- Ask participants about food allergies and special diets when planning your event. Most caterers will accommodate your requests if asked in advance.

Additional Healthy Meetings and Events Suggestions

Look for Opportunities for Physical Activity

Physical activity helps to reduce stress, increase energy levels and keep people focused. Consider the following suggestions for your meetings and events:

- Replace a coffee break with an activity break. Let people know about the planned activity in advance so they can bring a jacket and comfortable shoes
- Respect comfort levels. At a meeting, let participants know the physical activity is optional. Encourage participants to go at their own pace
- Ensure the environment is safe for the planned activity
- Meet or have a networking break while you walk (Walk and Talk)
- Include stretch breaks on the agenda. Five minutes of physical activity can re-vitalize participants

Choose Greener Options

- Help care for our environment by reducing packaging and waste
- Use regular dishes and utensils, if proper washing and storage facilities allow, or choose disposable dishes that can be composted
- Serve water and other beverages in pitchers rather than individual bottles or cartons
- Choose nametags that can be returned and re-used
- Provide blue boxes to collect glass, cans and paper
- Walk, wheel or cycle to a meeting
- Encourage carpooling to meetings and events
- To save paper, use e-mail and file sharing to distribute agendas, minutes and reports
- When printing documents, choose two-sided printing

Choose Tobacco-Free Locations

- Host meetings and social events in smoke-free locations (inside and out) to protect participants from exposure to second-hand smoke
- Accommodations and transportation, if provided, should be smoke-free
- All government and public buildings are smoke-free in Atlantic Canada
- When arranging a meeting with participants from outside the region, share this information on your website or in your literature

Implementing a Healthy Meetings and Events Policy

Consider the following steps:

Raise Awareness and Gain Leadership Support

Work with senior leaders to gain support for a **Healthy Meetings and Events Policy**. Their encouragement and role modelling is important to successful policy adoption.

Inform and Build Partnerships

Widen your base of support to ensure success. Consult a local Registered Dietitian to provide support and expertise on healthy food and beverage options. Larger organizations could form a Healthy Meetings and Events Advisory Committee and include: occupational health and safety representatives, food service providers, support or administrative staff who organize catering for meetings, and where possible, a Registered Dietitian.

Review Issues and Supports

Determine if there are issues (existing contracts for unhealthy foods or beverages) and supports (staff champions) that will affect the implementation of a **Healthy Meetings and Events Policy**. Work to address the issues and to foster support.

Phase In Your Policy

Develop a plan to introduce the **Healthy Meetings and Events Policy**. Larger organizations may wish to initially pilot the policy with an interested group. Implementation plans should be phased in for best results.

Implement the Healthy Meetings and Events Policy

Ensure support is available as you begin to implement the policy. Provide guidance and support to meeting and event planners and administrative staff.

Monitor and Evaluate Your Progress

Develop a plan to evaluate and regularly monitor your **Healthy Meetings and Events Policy**.

Additional Considerations for a Healthy Work Environment

Promoting and supporting healthy meetings and events are important steps towards creating a healthier work environment. To enable people to eat healthier overall, think about incorporating healthier items at onsite cafeterias and canteens. Vending machines can be stocked with healthy options such as lower fat grain products (baked snacks), dried fruit, nuts, water and 100% fruit or vegetable juices.

Sample Healthy Meetings and Events Policy

_____ (name of organization)

is concerned with the health of our _____ (employees, members, etc.)

- People are interested in choosing healthier foods, being physically active, staying tobacco-free, caring for our environment and supporting local products.
- What we eat and our level of physical activity can be positively influenced by healthy and supportive policies where we live, learn, work and play.
- Foods such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, lower fat milk products and leaner meats help to prevent chronic diseases.
- A work environment, supportive of healthy choices, helps to create and maintain healthy people and healthy communities.

Therefore, effective _____ (date), when food is served at meetings and events

organized or sponsored by this organization, we will follow our **Healthy Meetings and Events Policy**.

We will:

- Serve vegetables and fruit more often
- Offer a variety of whole grain products
- Offer skim, 1% or 2% milk
- Offer lower fat milk alternatives (yogurt, cheese)
- Provide smaller portion sizes
- Serve plain water in pitchers
- Buy local products when possible
- Include physical activity opportunities
- Choose tobacco-free facilities
- Ensure food safety
- Choose greener options when possible
- Encourage healthy options in vending services

_____

Signature Title Date

Contact Information

Regional Nutritionists

EASTERN
Regional Nutritionist
Health Promotion Division
Eastern Health
St. John's - Avalon Region
Phone: (709) 752-4911 Or (709) 752-4422
Fax: (709) 752-4833

Regional Nutritionist
Health Promotion Division
Eastern Health
Holyrood – Avalon West Region
Phone: (709) 229-1575 (no voice mail)
Or (709) 229-1605
Fax: (709) 229-1591

CENTRAL
Regional Nutritionist
Central Health
Gander
Phone: (709) 651-6222
Or (709) 651-6335
Fax: (709) 651-3341

WESTERN
Regional Nutritionist
Western Health - O'Connell Drive
Corner Brook
Phone: (709) 632-2920
Fax: (709) 632-2636

Regional Nutritionist
Western Health - O'Connell Drive
Corner Brook
Phone: (709) 637-5000, Ext: 5257
Fax: (709) 637-5160

LABRADOR/GRENFELL
Community Dietitian
Labrador-Grenfell Health
St. Anthony
Phone: (709) 454-0320
Fax: (709) 454-2464

Regional Nutritionist
Labrador-Grenfell Health
Labrador City
Phone: (709) 944-9361
Fax: (709) 944-9224

Visit our website for additional information on healthy eating ideas
www.gohealthy.ca

Environmental Health Officers

ST. JOHN'S
Environmental Health Officer
Phone: (709) 729-3699
Fax: (709) 729-2071

HARBOUR GRACE
Environmental Health Officer
Phone: (709) 945-3107
Fax: (709) 945-3114

CLARENVILLE
Environmental Health Officer
Phone: (709) 466-4060
Fax: (709) 466-4070

GANDER
Environmental Health Officer
Phone: (709) 256-1420
Fax: (709) 256-1438

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR
Environmental Health Officer
Phone: (709) 292-4206
Fax: (709) 292-4528

CORNER BROOK
Environmental Health Officer
Phone: (709) 637-2204
Fax: (709) 637-2681

HAPPY VALLEY-GOOSE BAY
Environmental Health Officer
Phone: (709) 896-5428
Fax: (709) 896-4340

Visit our website for additional information on healthy eating ideas
www.gohealthy.ca

Newfoundland Labrador

Go Healthy