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Health Unit

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Healthy Food Choices in Public Places Policy

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Outline

- Why Healthy Food?
- Why Policy?
- Supportive Environments - Changing the defaults
- Review NWHU Citizens' Panel results
- What does the evidence say?
- Our Ask and Next Steps

Why talk about healthy food?

- Healthy eating lowers the risk of overweight/obesity and chronic diseases including type 2 diabetes, heart disease and hypertension, and certain cancers
 - Reducing health care costs
- Less than 1% of Canadians are following a diet consistent with Canada's Food Guide
 - 2.6% of students (grades 6-8), 0.74% of students (grade 9-12) met the recommended daily food servings in all 4 FG
 - 3.5% get enough vegetables and fruits
- Healthy eating habits developed at a young age continue into adulthood

Why talk about Healthy Food?

We have lost control of our food environment

Individual food choices are influenced by:

- Current food environment – not the same as 20-30 years ago
- Food availability – food is everywhere!
- Food marketing
- Normalization of junk food



- Not to mention...our go, go, go lifestyle and decrease in food skills

Why talk about Policy?

- If implemented well, policy can profoundly influence the way people live and the choices that they make
- Policy is long-lasting and difficult to change, once in place..

Healthy Food + Policy =
Supportive Environment

‘Make the Healthy Choice the
Easy Choice...’

Make the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice...

A supportive environment is more than making healthy choices available to individuals...

...in a supportive environment, the onus is not placed on individuals to resist the environment in order to maintain good health.

Current Defaults



Optimal Defaults



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Can we change the default to create a healthy environment?



Example – NWHU Healthy Meeting and Events Policy

- **Who/When:** community events, meetings, workshops, or educational sessions for NWHU employees, management, Board of Health members, volunteers, clients, guests, and partners
- Healthy choices are provided when food and beverages are offered
- Opportunities for physical activity are incorporated when meetings and events lasting longer than one hour
- Safe food handling practices and environmentally friendly options are considered

Example –Nova Scotia

- Yarmouth Municipal Policy- Healthy Eating in Municipal and Recreation Settings Policy
 - Applies to all foods and beverages served and sold at facilities, settings, programs, meetings and events
 - Includes groups renting facilities
- Halifax Capital Health Region – Healthy Options Only Policy
 - Began May 2009 – Deep fryers turned off
 - Applies to all foods and beverages served and sold in CH Region
 - Including Tim Hortons (4 locations)

What do NWHU residents think?

Citizens' Panel participants felt the health unit should be working on:

1. Community events healthy food policy
2. Workplace healthy food policy
3. Recreation centre healthy food policy

What does the evidence say?

Comprehensive Food Policy Evidence-Based Recommendations

1. Establish and promote healthy food policies for workplace, public buildings, and facilities
2. Establish policies to support the use of local foods in the community
3. Establish municipal planning and transportation policies that increase access to healthy food

Our ASK

Can we support Fort Frances to:

- Develop Comprehensive Food Policy; or
- Develop Comprehensive Events Policy; or
- Review existing event policies; procedures; application forms and add language that includes healthy food choices recommendations.

Is Fort Frances up for the challenge?

Healthy Food Policy Support

NWHU will support you to address:

- Definition of what constitutes a healthy food or beverage choice
- Availability/accessibility/affordability of healthy food choices (including local food)
- Promotion of healthy choices through messaging and information
- Education and training about healthy eating choices for staff/communities
- Food safety



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