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GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	WELLNESS - HEALTHY EATING POLICY

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DEVELOPED BY: HUMAN RESOURCES

APPROVED BY: CMT

DATE: September 26, 2002

EFFECTIVE DATE: OCTOBER 1, 2002

LATEST REVISION: January 17, 2006

POLICY STATEMENT:

In order to promote the health and well-being of Regional employees, the Regional Municipality of Niagara will encourage and actively foster environments during work times and events that support accessibility and consumption of foods and beverages consistent with healthy eating (See definition).

POLICY RATIONALE:

The Regional Municipality of Niagara recognizes itself as a role model in combating preventable diseases and rising rates of obesity, and demonstrates its commitment in issuing this Healthy Eating Policy. The Policy's principles encourage healthy eating for all Regional employees, and its guidelines aid selection of healthier food and beverage options.

SCOPE:

All Regional Departments and events.

DEFINITIONS:

Healthy Eating:

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Healthy eating refers to patterns of eating that over time meet individuals' energy and nutrient needs, and that promotes health and minimizes the risk of nutrition-related conditions and diseases. All foods (and beverages) can be included, although it is important to balance choices for eating patterns to promote health.

The key tool for putting healthy eating into practice is Canada's Food Guide, in association with Canada's Guidelines for Healthy Eating. Accordingly, healthy eating includes:

- A wide variety of foods (and beverages) from each of the four Food Groups
- Most often making choices of "maximum" nutritional value, which are lower in
 - fat (especially saturated and hydrogenated-type fats)
 - salt/sodium
 - sugar
 - caffeine; and higher in
 - fibre (ex. whole grains, legumes, vegetables and fruit).
- Much less often and in small amounts making choices of "minimal" nutritional value, from the category of "Other Foods", which are foods not included in the food groups (examples include fats, oils, dressings; pastries, fried foods; chips, party-type crackers; sugar, candy, chocolates; salt, seasonings; alcoholic, caffeinated and soda beverages)

PRINCIPLES:

1. **Healthy Eating Standard.** Choices consistent with healthy eating (see definition) will be the standard for food and beverages offered at activities and events organized by any Regional worksite/employee, such as:
 - **Meetings**
 - **Workshops**
 - **Education sessions**
 - **Celebrations and special days**
 - **Breakfasts, lunches, dinners**
 - **Receptions**
 - **Fundraisers***

For healthier food and beverage suggestions/ideas, refer to Guidelines section.

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* **Fundraisers** should be consistent with Principles of this policy, especially consideration of featuring food items other than chocolate bars, hot dog or burger and pop meals, etc.. Many non-food fundraising ideas are available, for examples: magazine subscriptions, greeting cards, theatrical or music event tickets, car washes, pedometers, clear (recycling) or biodegradable garbage bags, flowers, etc.

2. **Cafeterias and Catering.** Regional facilities that serve food, such as cafeterias, will acquire and maintain an Eat Smart! award, AND first consideration in choosing caterers and locations for Regional events will go to Eat Smart! awarded facilities (ex. restaurants).
3. **Vending** machines or snack services – Foods and beverages available on or to Regional workplaces and employees should meet or exceed the following criteria:
 - **Cold beverages** – at least 50% of products will be healthier choices, such as water, 100% real juices, and milk (2% M.F. or less; chocolate acceptable)
 - **Foods/snacks** – at least 50 % of products will be healthier choices, such that per portion:
 - Calories – less than 300 calories;
 - Fat – no more than 30% of total calories (or less than about 15% Daily Value (DV)) from fat (may exempt nuts and seeds, peanut butter, and cheeses);
 - Saturated and Trans Fat – less than 10% of total calories (or less than about 15%DV);
 - Sugar – less than 35% by weight (may exempt dried fruit)
4. **Short-duration Events.** For shorter-duration Regional meetings, presentations, etc. (1 ½ hours or less), consideration should be given to NOT offering food.
5. **Appropriate Representation.** The Region will avoid representing food as a motivator/reward, such as not advertising and providing food at an occasion or at a time when it is not necessary or customary.
6. **Designated Eating Areas** in Regional worksites will provide a facility and equipment supportive of healthy eating, including at a minimum a sink, refrigeration, and a microwave oven. Wherever possible, additional equipment should be provided, such as tables and chairs, cupboards, counter space, toaster oven, kettle, and can opener. The resources to

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keep designated areas clean will be provided, including cleaning products, and dish cloths and towels.

7. **Promoting Healthy Eating.** The Region will promote and encourage healthy eating to employees by providing:

- a. Educational/skill-building sessions, workshops, etc., offered at least annually
- b. Awareness-raising and environmental support initiatives. Examples include campaigns such as Nutrition Month annually in March, challenges, events, food/cooking demonstrations, displays, posters, point-of-choice messaging (such as table tents), etc.

In planning the above, first consideration will be given to utilizing Regional resources, including relevant programs and expert staff, particularly Public Health Dietitians and Public Health Inspectors.

8. **Supporting Local Products.** The Region will promote and select Niagara and Ontario food products whenever possible.
9. **Environmentally Responsible.** The Region will strive to be environmentally friendly by minimizing waste from food, food packaging, and disposable dishware and utensils, and by participating in recycling practices.
10. **Food Safety.** All Regional worksites will follow safe practices and ensure compliance with the Ontario Food Premises Regulation where applicable.

(See attached "Guidelines" section)

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GUIDELINES:

1. Order/offer moderate portions of food, and appropriate amounts for expected numbers of persons.

This supports healthy eating and energy balance for healthy weights, and reduces costs and waste. Examples include smaller entrée sizes, less fillings in sandwiches, mini muffins or mini bagels, reduced amounts of desserts relative to main courses or other dishes, etc. Avoid “supersizing”; especially, ask restaurants/caterers to limit portion sizes. As a useful reference, Canada’s Food Guide provides examples of serving sizes.

2. Suggestions for healthier food (& beverage) choices include the following:

Beverages

- Water (tap)
- Bottled spring or sparkling water – regular or flavoured with no sugar
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices (not fruit “punch”, “cocktail”, “drink” or “beverage”, or containing only a percentage of real juice) – avoid containers holding more than 1 cup (250 ml)
- Skim, 1%, or 2% milk – chocolate or white
- Yogurt- or soy-based beverages
- Hot beverages –decaffeinated as well as regular if coffee and tea are offered; alternatives such as cereal-based hot beverages (ex. Postum, Caflib), or herbal-type teas (safe varieties such as from recognized brands)
- Milk/“milkers” (2%, 1% or skim) for hot beverages (coffee or tea)

Breakfasts

- Fresh fruit – whole or cut-up
- Lower-fat yogurt and cheeses

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- Whole grain cereals, with milk
- Bagels – whole grain; 3-1/2" diameter or less; serve with low-fat cream cheese, jam or jelly
- Muffins (lower-fat if possible) – small or mini; try for whole grain or bran types
- Low-fat meats/alternatives ex. hardboiled or poached eggs; lean, baked ham, reduced-fat peanut butter

Snacks

- Fruit – with low-fat yogurt dip
- Raw vegetables – with low-fat dressing or salsa as dip
- Muffins (lower-fat if possible) – small or mini; try for whole grain or bran types
- Granola bars – look for varieties made without trans/hydrogenated' fats
- Tortilla chips (baked) - offered with salsa as dip
- Cheese, lower-fat types (cut into 3/4" squares or smaller), with whole-grain crackers
- Hummus (chickpea spread) with whole-grain crackers

Lunches & Suppers

- Emphasize vegetables and fruit amongst choices
- When ordering from restaurants/caterers, request no added fats or salt, and "on the side" for dressings, spreads, sauces, gravies, etc.
- Sandwiches -- made with whole-grain breads, wraps, buns, pitas, etc., and no or very little added regular margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressings, etc.
- Select low-fat sandwich fillings of lean meats (turkey, ham, chicken or beef), or tuna/salmon/chicken salad with minimal mayonnaise added, beans (hummus or 'refried' beans), and topped with lots of vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, onions, lettuce, etc.
- Pizza – topping of vegetables and fruit, such as green peppers, onions, mushrooms, pineapple; avoid fatty meats such as pepperoni and salami; request whole grain crust
- Hot entrées -- Prepared by low-fat cooking methods (baked, broiled, roasted, poached, barbecued, steamed, microwaved, etc.). Recommendations:

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- Choose fish more often, such as salmon
- Consider vegetarian dishes such as chili, vegetarian lasagna, tofu stir-fry, baked beans
- Lean beef, chicken or turkey
- Pasta entrees in tomato-based sauces
- Include at least one vegetable item – fresh or cooked, with no butter or cream sauces added

Sides

- Salads -- Lettuce, vegetable, bean, fruit, or pasta-based -- serve with dressing on the side – offer at least one low-fat or fat-free dressing
- Soups – vegetable rather than cream-based types
- Whole-grain breads, buns, bagels, flatbreads, etc.; offer un-buttered, with butter or margarine on the side
- Request substitutes for French fries, such as baked potato, rice, vegetables, fruit, salad, etc.

Desserts

- Choose lower fat/lower calorie desserts, such as fruit cup or fresh fruit with low-fat fruit yogurt dip, low-fat ice cream or frozen yogurt, sherbet or sorbet, angel food cake with fruit topping, rice or milk pudding, etc.
- If serving cake or other baked goods – cut into small (2 inch) squares