



MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

SUBJECT: FOOD: PROMOTING HEALTHY CHOICES

POLICY NUMBER: 8-140

SECTION: Health and Safety

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IMPLEMENTATION DATE: November 8, 2006

APPROVED BY: Directors Committee

REVISION DATE: 2009 April 01*
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PURPOSE

To promote healthy food choices, safe food handling practices and local foods¹ at Health Unit business, educational and community functions.

To position the Health Unit as a model agency for healthy eating practices and to provide guidelines for staff who are involved in planning and organizing Health Unit functions (internal and external) where food will be served.

POLICY

The Health Unit is committed to supporting healthy eating food choices and safe food handling practices at Health Unit meetings, workshops, educational sessions, and other events.

For the purposes of food safety considerations, a distinction is made between official Health Unit business functions and internal social functions.

Official Health Unit business, educational or community functions attended by non-Health Unit employees, must serve food prepared at and /or purchased from a food premises approved under Ontario Regulation 562 (Food Premises). Home-prepared foods are permitted for Health Unit social gatherings attended only by Health Unit employees, volunteers, students, board members and their guests. For internal social functions, all home-prepared food should be prepared following safe food handling guidelines. Visit the Health Unit DineSafe Food Premises Inspection Disclosure website at www.dinesafemiddlesexlondon.com to determine the status of a food premises or caterer and to get further information about safe food handling practices.

When ordering or providing meals or refreshments for Health Unit functions, staff will select healthy food choices, that is, varied and nutritious food and beverages that are consistent with the four food groups of Eating Well With Canada's Food Guide. It is understood that some foods that provide taste and enjoyment to healthy eating but are not part of the four food groups (e.g. salad dressing, condiments and many desserts) may be present, but it is recommended these foods be offered in moderation.

When selecting healthy foods, staff should choose local foods over imported foods whenever possible. When requesting catering, staff should first select foods considered healthy and nutritious. Staff may utilize the *Get Fresh Eat Local* Middlesex-London farms' map available on www.healthylivinginfo.ca to access farm

¹ Local foods' definitions range from foods produced within the nearby community to those produced within Ontario to those produced in Canada, which may or may not be organic. Foods produced in Middlesex County, elsewhere in Ontario and Canada are considered local from most-to-least. Labels or markers such as "Foodland Ontario" and "Product of Canada" can be used as identifiers of locally produced foods. Local foods are fresher than foods shipped long distances, enhance the local economy and reduce pollution associated with extra packaging and transportation.

*Indicates date last reviewed by Directors Committee

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gate sales and local farmers markets. Staff may refer to the Savour Ontario website (www.savourontario.ca) to access information about the list of restaurants committed to serving local foods whenever possible. Not all local food providers are registered on this website. Staff should routinely enquire from the food providers about the availability of local ingredients as locally produced foods should be selected whenever possible.

Staff involved in the preparation and/or handling of food for Health Unit functions will adhere to safe food handling practices as outlined in **APPENDIX B, Safe Food Handling For Health Unit Functions**. Potentially hazardous food² that has been supplied at Health Unit events/meetings must be discarded if it has been left at room temperature (between 4° C and 60° C) for 2 hours or longer, as a precaution against causing food borne illnesses.

Food purchased for Health Unit functions must comply with the Financial Guidelines outlined in **APPENDIX A, Acceptable Food Expenses**.

PROCEDURE

1.0 Manager/Director Responsibility

- 1.1 Ensure that staff are aware of this policy and the corresponding financial guidelines for corporate business, educational and community functions.

2.0 Staff Responsibility

- 2.1 When planning an event, staff should refer to and follow, as appropriate, the Healthy Eating Practical Suggestions Checklist (**APPENDIX C, Healthy Eating Practical Suggestions Checklist**).
- 2.2 Staff must adhere to safe food handling practices (**APPENDIX B, Safe Food Handling For Health Unit Functions**).
- 2.3 Some food expenses are eligible for reimbursement by the Health Unit (**APPENDIX A, Acceptable Food Expenses**). If expenses are eligible, follow the outlined procedure to submit a claim for reimbursement.

² “Potentially hazardous food” means any food that is capable of supporting the growth of pathogenic organisms or the production of the toxins of such organisms.

**Indicates date last reviewed by Directors Committee*