

ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

**SUBJECT:** Food: Promoting Healthy Choices  
**SECTION:** Health and Safety

**POLICY NUMBER:** 8-200  
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**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** November 8, 2006

**APPROVED BY:** Directors Committee

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## PURPOSE

To promote healthy food choices, safe food handling practices and local foods<sup>1</sup> at Health Unit business, educational and community functions.

To provide requirements for healthy eating and safe food handling practices for staff who are involved in planning and organizing Health Unit functions (internal and external) where food and/or beverages will be purchased using Health Unit funds.

## POLICY

The Health Unit is committed to supporting healthy food selection 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 to determine the status of a food premises or caterer and for additional 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; however, these foods are to be offered in moderation, on the side, in small portion sizes, and alongside healthier options (e.g., fruit as a dessert choice).

When selecting healthy foods, staff should choose locally produced foods over imported foods whenever possible. When requesting catering, staff must first select foods according to *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* that are considered healthy, nutritious, and safe. Staff may utilize the *Get Fresh Eat Local* Middlesex-London Local Food Guide available on [Middlesex County's website](#) to access farm gate sales and local farmers markets. Staff may refer to the [Savour Ontario website](#) to access information about the list of restaurants committed to serving local foods whenever possible. Not all local food providers are registered on

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

# MIDDLESEX-LONDON HEALTH UNIT

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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 A, Safe Food Handling for Health Unit Functions**. Potentially hazardous food<sup>2</sup> 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.

### PROCEDURE

#### 1.0 Manager/Director Responsibility

- 1.1 Ensure that staff are aware of and adhere to this policy and related appendices for corporate business, educational and community functions where food and/or beverages will be purchased using Health Unit funds.

#### 2.0 Staff Responsibility

- 2.1 Food and beverages purchased using Health Unit funds must comply with **Acceptable-Non Acceptable Expenses (APPENDIX E to Policy 4-080, Expense Claim Forms)**.
- 2.2 Staff must adhere to safe food handling practices for Health Unit functions (**APPENDIX A, Safe Food Handling for Health Unit Functions**).
- 2.3 Staff will refer to and follow, as appropriate, the healthy eating checklist (**APPENDIX B, Healthy Eating Checklist for Health Unit Functions**) when purchasing food and/or beverages using Health Unit funds.

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<sup>2</sup> “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. Examples of potentially hazardous food include meat, fish, milk, yogurt and cheese.