



BC Recreation and Parks Association:

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Frequently Asked Questions Food and Beverage Industry

Question #1: What is the Stay Active Eat Healthy initiative?

- *Stay Active Eat Healthy* is an initiative co-lead by the BC Recreation and Parks Association (BCRPA) and the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) with funding provided by the [BC Healthy Living Alliance \(BCHLA\)](#).
- *Stay Active Eat Healthy* supports the Healthy Eating Strategy that includes several initiatives undertaken by the BC Healthy Living Alliance.
- The *Stay Active Eat Healthy* approach involves working with key stakeholders in the food and beverage industry, recreation facilities and with local governments to become 'healthy choice facilities' by making healthier food and beverages available for sale.
- The supportive involvement of the food and beverage and vending industries are critical to helping make healthier choices available to consumers and in promoting healthy active living.

Question #2: Are there guidelines supporting the Stay Active Eat Healthy initiative?

- The guidelines used for *Stay Active Eat Healthy* are consistent with the Guidelines for Healthier Choices in Vending Machines in BC Public Buildings and are available online at: www.lcs.gov.bc.ca/healthierchoices/pdf/policy.pdf

Question #3: Where is Stay Active Eat Healthy in place?

- *Stay Active Eat Healthy* was piloted in 10 BC communities and will be in place in at least 70 communities across the province by March 2010.
- The long-term objective is to see all local government buildings and community recreation centres become healthy choice facilities.
- *Stay Active Eat Healthy* is supporting the Provincial goal of being the healthiest jurisdiction to host an Olympic and Paralympic Games by 2010 with the vision that long-term participation will be occur across the province.

www.stayactiveeathealthy.ca



AN INITIATIVE OF THESE BC HEALTHY LIVING ALLIANCE MEMBERS



Question #4: Why is Stay Active Eat Healthy important?

- **It's good for health.** A healthy diet contributes to overall mental and physical health and well-being.
 - In children learning improves.
 - In the workforce, absenteeism is reduced and productivity increases.
 - For everyone, vitality improves and the risk and onset of a number of chronic diseases and illness is reduced.
 - Better health from a nutritious diet enables people to be more active where they live, work, learn and play and costs to the health care system are reduced.
- **It's good for business.** The Canadian food and beverage industry has a Statement of Commitment that involves promoting healthy active living, producing a wider selection of healthier food products, responsible marketing and informing and educating consumers about healthier choices.
 - An Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada report states that “consumers are now actively seeking lower calorie alternatives.”
 - A Canadian Food Trends to 2020 report says four in five Canadians expressed an interest in learning more about foods that have health benefits beyond basic nutrition and foods that may reduce the risk of disease or other health concerns.

Question #5: Is there support for companies that participate in Stay Active Eat Healthy?

- Important resources include the *Stay Active Eat Healthy* website at: www.stayactiveeathealthy.ca and the Brand Name Food List website at: www.brandnamefoodlist.ca and www.Dial-a-Dietitian.ca
- Effective marketing of new products and the *Stay Active Eat Healthy* message is critical to the success for industry and participating facilities. To that end, *Stay Active Eat Healthy* has a range of promotional materials to inform and promote healthy food and beverage choices. You can find a list of marketing materials and resources on the www.stayactiveeathealthy.ca website. There's a special section on the site for industry.

Question #6: Is there a business case for providing healthy food and beverage options?

- Research shows healthy food and beverage products quickly gain in popularity when they are effectively promoted.
- An Ontario study of community arenas shows a vast majority of patrons (91%) wanted healthier choices available in vending machines and concessions. The study also showed that people who brought food from home chose healthier food, suggesting a business case for making healthier food options available for sale.
- The top five foods people said they would buy if offered at arenas included fresh fruit, vegetables, sandwiches, cheese (& crackers) and low fat muffins. The average purchase was \$5 or less.
- An audit by the BCRPA of the municipal recreation food environment shows recreation staff and facilities are motivated to make changes in the food and beverage choices offered for sale.
- A California study involving 20 schools with cafeterias, showed that 90% of the schools that implemented nutrition standards for competitive foods and beverages (those similar in type to other food options) benefited financially by an increase of more than 5% in total sales.

Question #7: How can we get involved?

- Actions you can take include:
 1. Becoming familiar with the provincial policy paper on [Healthier Choices in Vending Machines in BC Public Buildings](#).
 2. Talking with your clients about options and to identify healthy foods and beverages that meet Nutritional Guidelines for Vending Machines in BC Public Buildings.
 3. Working with facilities to prominently display “healthy choice” vending machines to make them the “easy choice” to promote marketing and increase sales.
 4. Monitoring the sale volume of the healthier food and beverage options to determine the ‘best sellers’.
- Cooperation and partnership are the keys to success. Managers in healthy choice facilities are consulting with their food and vending industry suppliers to identify healthy food and beverage options that meet nutritional guidelines and effective ways to introduce healthy choices for consumers.

Question #8: How can I identify products that meet the nutritional guidelines?

- Check the Brand Name Food List website at: www.brandnamefoodlist.ca.
- If you need help in developing a procurement strategy, contact the [Purchasing Services Branch](#) of the Ministry of Labour and Citizens’ Services.
- Nutritional criteria information is also available through the Ministry of Labour and Citizen’s Services or the Ministry of Education at: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/guidelines_sales07.pdf
- *Stay Active Eat Healthy* nutritional guidelines are similar to those for the Healthy Schools initiative that was introduced in BC schools in 2008.

Question #9: Does the food service industry say about making healthier food and beverage choices available for sale?

- The Canadian Food and Beverage Industry (Food & Consumer Products of Canada) strongly promotes healthier food and beverage options and healthy eating. The industry says it makes good business sense. A Canadian Council of Food and Nutrition study that found for 93% of Canadians, maintaining good health is ‘very or somewhat influential’ in their food choices.
- One of Canada’s largest vending machine companies states in its mission:

“We are agents of change within the vending industry, constantly introducing new healthier food alternatives.”

Question #10: From an industry point-of-view, how can we educate the public and promote the Stay Active Eat Healthy message?

- The BCRPA has developed a range of *Stay Active Eat Healthy* marketing materials available to recreation facilities and local government buildings. These include tested marketing messaging and branding. You can find these resources on the www.stayactiveeathealthy.ca website.
- Facility managers are working with their suppliers to maintain a partnership approach to marketing as it is in everyone’s best interest for healthier foods and beverages to become the preferred choice of consumers. Talk to your clients about what you can do to support their marketing efforts.

Question #11: Is Stay Active Eat Healthy a voluntary program?

- Yes. Participation is strongly encouraged, but is voluntary. Guidelines are available to provide support for suppliers and facilities choosing to become a healthy choice facility.

Question #12: Where can I get more information?

- Check the www.stayaactiveeathealthy.ca or www.bcrpa.bc.ca websites for current information and resource links or contact:

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BC Recreation and Parks Association

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References cited in this FAQ

1. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Report: 2006
2. Arena Survey Report: Durham Region Health Department; Feasibility Study into Healthier Drinks Vending in Schools: UK Health Education Trust; Centre for Weight & Health, University of California, Berkley: The Financial Impact of Selling Healthier School Foods
3. Nutritional criteria are the same whether obtained the Ministry of Labour and Citizen's Services or the Ministry of Education's Health Schools program
4. Eat Well. Live Better. Food and Consumer Products of Canada advertising supplement: Globe and Mail, February 26, 2007
5. Statement taken from Ryan Vending website