

Nut-aware policy OK'd for rec centre, Bayshore



By [Denis Langlois](#), Sun Times, Owen Sound

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The Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre

City council has approved a policy aimed at keeping peanuts and tree nuts out of Owen Sound's two main indoor recreation facilities.

The target date for implementing the new anaphylaxis – or “nut-aware” – policy for the Harry Lumley Bayshore Community Centre and Julie McArthur Regional Recreation Centre is May 1.

“I think it's neat that we're one of the first communities to come up with a policy and we're ahead of the game,” Mayor Ian Boddy said in an interview, following Monday's council meeting.

“Other communities no doubt will be snooping into Owen Sound and stealing our policy so it's nice to be in front of it.”

The city began discussing the policy after Jennifer Trenbeth and Elly Ward, both parents of children with severe nut allergies, asked Owen Sound in e-mails to approve nut-free policies for the recreation centre and Lumley-Bayshore.

The requests came on the heels of an Ontario Human Rights Commission decision last fall that officially recognized food-related anaphylaxis as a disability.

Under the Ontario Human Rights Code, service providers, like Owen Sound, have a “duty to accommodate” the needs of people with disabilities to ensure they can equally benefit from and take part in services, such as those available at recreation centres and arenas.

The city received legal advice on its proposed anaphylaxis policy, which says “all reasonable efforts will be made to control the environment at these recreation facilities in order to minimize the exposure of” peanuts and tree nuts.

The policy states that the city is committed to phasing in a policy where peanuts and tree nuts – including almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, hazelnuts, macadamia nuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio nuts and walnuts – or any products containing nuts will not be sold by any vendor at the two facilities.

Pam Coulter, the city's director of community services, said the third-party businesses and organizations – Buff Bistro and the local YMCA at the recreation centre and Owen Sound Attack at the Lumley-Bayshore – have been “really supportive” of the new rules.

The policy also includes an educational component, which includes putting up “nut-aware” facility signs at the centres and making available pamphlets with information on anaphylaxis and the city's policy to not sell nuts or nut products and the request that people not bring nuts or nut products into the buildings.

The city will also offer training to its staff and others on how to recognize an anaphylactic reaction and administer an epinephrine autoinjector when health and safety training courses are offered.

The policy does not apply when people rent rooms at the Lumley-Bayshore for private functions like weddings.