

Nutrition standards urged for foods sold in schools

WASHINGTON (AP) — Millions of America's children soon could be saying goodbye to regular colas, candy and salty snacks during school hours.

Concerned about the rise of obesity in young people, Congress asked the Institute of Medicine to develop a set of standards for foods that would be available in schools.

The Institute responded Wednesday with a two-tier system designed to encourage youngsters to eat more fruit, vegetables and whole grains and to avoid added sugars, salt and saturated fats.

"The alarming increase in childhood obesity rates has galvanized parents and schools across the nation to find ways to improve children's diets and health, and we hope our report will assist that effort," said Virginia A. Stallings, chair of the committee that prepared the report.

"Making sure that all foods and drinks available in schools meet nutrition standards is one more way schools can help children establish lifelong healthy eating habits," said Stallings, director of the nutrition center at Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

And don't think their recommendation applies only to children. The committee also urged that Parent Teacher Associations adhere to the same standards, as should food items sold at school fund raisers.

Foods sold in school cafeterias under federally assisted lunch programs already must meet nutritional standards. The IOM recommendation covers items considered competitive with those foods, such as items sold in vending machines and other food and drinks sold in the school but not under the federal pro-

gram. The standards would not apply to bag lunches that students bring from home.

The report now goes to Congress for consideration. Copies will also go to the Departments of Agriculture, Health and Human Services and Education and it will be available for state and local school boards and administrators and the food and beverage industry. Putting the recommendations into practice would involve federal, state or local laws and setting school standards and policies.

Foods listed as Tier 1 would be allowed at all grade levels during the school day and during after-school activities.

These foods would have to provide at least one serving of fruits, vegetables, whole grains or nonfat or low-fat dairy, would be limited to 200 calories for snacks and would have limits for fat, sugar and salt.

Examples of Tier 1 snacks were whole fruit, raisins, carrot sticks, whole-grain low-sugar cereals, some multigrain tortilla chips, some granola bars and nonfat yogurt with no more than 30 grams of added sugars. Entrees could include such items as fruit salad with yogurt or a turkey sandwich. Beverages would be limited to plain water, skim or 1 percent milk, soy beverages and 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice.

The IOM recommended that, because of their calorie content, juices be limited to 4-ounce servings for elementary and middle-school students and 8-ounce portions for high school students.

Tier 2 foods would be available only to high school students and only after school hours.

These foods would also be limited in calories, salt, sugar and fat

and the drinks could have just have five or fewer calories per portion and no caffeine; they are not vitamin- or mineral-fortified, but may be carbonated and may contain flavoring or a sugar substitute.

Examples include single servings of baked potato chips, low-sodium whole wheat crackers, graham crackers, pretzels, caffeine-free diet soda and seltzer water.

Sports drinks would be available to students engaged in an hour or more of vigorous athletic activity, at the discretion of coaches.

The committee said fortified water should not be available in either tier.

The Institute of Medicine is a branch of the National Academy of Sciences, an independent organization chartered by Congress to advise the government on scientific matters.

On the Net:
Institute of Medicine: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/iom>

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

2		5				7		
	8		6		9		1	
		6				3		
	5		3		4		2	9
				9				
	3	4	2	8	6	1	5	
		9				4		
		1				5		
			7	2	8			

©2007 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.

This is a logic-based number placement puzzle. The goal is to enter a number, 1-9, in each cell in which each row, column and 3x3 region must contain only one instance of each numeral. The solution to today's Sudoku puzzle is at the bottom of the page,

Organic baby food sales on the increase

NEW YORK (AP) — Pauline Amell-Nash worried that the pesticides and additives used to grow and preserve food were bad for her 1-year-old daughter Sophia, not to mention the earth itself. That's why the pureed carrots, sweet potatoes and fruits Sophia ate were purchased from makers of organic baby food.

"She is so small I just thought that the more pure, honest things she ate would be better for her," the Claremont, Calif., mother said. "I also thought it benefits the environment. I want to raise my child with an idea of social responsibility."

The environment has become a very hot topic these days, especially among parents who want to protect their children's health and the world they'll be inheriting. Parents like Amell-Nash are propelling a surge in organic baby food sales, and that has prompted more companies to either join or expand their offerings in the sector.

Organic food still accounts for a tiny portion of the overall baby food market, but it is definitely growing. Whole Foods Market Inc. said it has tripled the space allotted to organic baby products in the last five years. Last year, baby food institution Gerber Products Co. rebranded and broadened its organic line, while Abbott Laboratories introduced an organic version of its Similac baby formula.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture inspects food producers to insure they meet its standards for organic products.

They include banning the use of conventional pesticides, fertilizers made with synthetic ingredients or

sewage sludge for produce, and antibiotics or growth hormones for animals.

Organic baby food sales soared 21.6 percent to \$116 million in the 52 weeks ended Feb. 24, after jumping 16.4 percent a year earlier, according to The Nielsen Company. Meanwhile, overall baby food sales rose 3.1 percent to \$3.7 billion in the same period, after being essentially flat a year earlier. The data was gleaned from U.S. grocery, drug and mass market retailers, excluding Wal-Mart.

Gerber Products replaced its Tender Harvest brand last year with a line called Gerber Organics and added products such as cereals, juice and food for toddlers.

The change was meant to make it more evident that the food was organic, said Anna Mohl, vice president of marketing-infant nutrition at the baby food maker owned by Novartis AG and now being sold to Nestle SA.

"We needed to be more explicit," Mohl said. While Tender Harvest, which was introduced in 1997, was selling well, its growth wasn't matching the overall organic baby food category, she said.

Mohl said Gerber didn't consider leaving the category because she believed moms wanted to purchase organic baby food from a brand they trusted. She declined to give the brand's sales.

Big companies aren't the only ones addressing the demand for organic baby products. Two years ago, Gigi Lee Chang started Plum Organics, a line of frozen baby foods, now a very hot area, according to Whole Foods officials.

Answer

2	9	5	4	3	1	7	8	6
3	8	7	6	5	9	2	1	4
4	1	6	8	7	2	3	9	5
7	5	8	3	1	4	6	2	9
1	6	2	5	9	7	8	4	3
9	3	4	2	8	6	1	5	7
8	7	9	1	6	5	4	3	2
6	2	1	9	4	3	5	7	8
5	4	3	7	2	8	9	6	1

©2007 Conceptis Puzzles, Dist. by King Features Syndicate, Inc.