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Brown E (Ernie)

From: Richard Laming [rlaming@britishsoftdrinks.com]
Sent: 28 July 2006 14:56
To: School Nutrition
Subject: improving the health and nutrition of scotland's children



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- 1. Are you responding: (please tick one box)

- (b) on behalf of a group/organisation? go to Q3 and then Q4

ON BEHALF OF GROUPS OR ORGANISATIONS:

3. The name and address of your organisation will be made available to the public (in the Scottish Executive library and/or on the Scottish Executive website). Are you also content for your response to be made available? Yes

SHARING RESPONSES/FUTURE ENGAGEMENT

4. We will share your response internally with other Scottish Executive policy teams who may be addressing the issues you discuss. They may wish to contact you again in the future, but we require your permission to do so. Are you content for the Scottish Executive to contact you again in the future in relation to this consultation response? Yes

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A choice of drinks leads to improved hydration

Comments in response to the consultation by the Scottish Executive by the British Soft Drinks Association.

The British Soft Drinks Association represents UK producers of soft drinks, including carbonated drinks, still and dilutable drinks, fruit juices and bottled waters.

The first 6 questions in the consultation focus on how to implement any new standards; this response is addressed to question 7, and discusses what those new standards might be.

1. About the soft drinks industry

1.1 The soft drinks industry fully supports initiatives to raise nutritional standards in schools, to improve the availability of drinks and to ensure that children are eating a balanced diet. It is committed to contributing to this process by offering an appropriate range of products and by contributing to educational activities.

1.2 The soft drinks industry has always believed in offering choice to consumers and in providing on-pack information so that consumers can select the product most appropriate for their tastes and needs on the basis of clear information about ingredients and nutritional value.

1.3 As concerns about obesity and sugar intake have increased, the industry has responded by developing its range of no added sugar and sugar-free drinks. These are proving extremely popular and now account for more than two thirds of the soft drinks market. The industry is therefore in a position to provide a very wide selection of drinks without added sugar including bottled waters, flavoured waters, fruit juices, fruit drinks, low calorie carbonates and still drinks to meet the objective of reducing added sugar intake for those who need to make dietary changes. It strongly recommends that this range of products, which is popular and in accordance with official targets, has a logical and helpful role to play in schools.

2. The importance of hydration

2.1 In drawing up new rules for the provision of food and drink in school, BSDA would emphasise the importance of taking account of the essential need for adequate fluid intake during the school day for children's performance, behaviour and well-being. Children's nutritional requirements are important; their hydration requirements are also important and should not be neglected. Drinks perform an important hydrating function and supplement food rather than replace it.

2.2 The 2005 Sodexo School Meals and Lifestyle Survey found that children aged 8-16 are only drinking about 350 ml of fluid during a school day which can be at least 7 hours if not longer. This becomes a stark deficit when set against the recommendation to drink 1.5 to 2 litres of fluid a day. Indeed, data from the National Diet and Nutrition Survey for Children aged 4-18 suggest that 40% of 11-18 year olds are consuming less than the FSA minimum of 1.2 litres per day.

2.3 Research into school practices in relation to encouraging fluid intake undertaken by the Expert Group on Hydration revealed that, of the 82 schools surveyed, only 13% had any specific policy on hydration. Significantly, those schools which are working to encourage fluid intake report that children are calmer, better behaved generally, have better concentration, fewer headaches and “sore tummies”, are less lethargic and their work has improved.

2.4 According to the Expert Group on Hydration, even marginal dehydration produces symptoms such as headaches, digestive problems, lack of concentration and tiredness which obviously affect a child’s mental and physical performance.

2.5 BSDA strongly recommends that recommendations are made to schools about how to achieve adequate fluid intakes during the school day and these should take into account that restricting choice of drinks can lead to lower fluid consumption and the risk of dehydration and its attendant symptoms.

3. The importance of a range of drinks

3.1 If children are to be encouraged to drink enough, then a range of drinks is essential. It is not correct to assume that children will automatically consume what is on offer if it does not appeal to them. There is a strong risk that either children will not drink enough or they will leave the premises to buy their preferred drink. If schools are to aspire to targets for fluid intake then a range of drinks will be of considerable assistance.

3.2 A leading researcher on this question is Dr Oded Bar-Or, of the Children’s Exercise & Nutrition Centre, Department of Pediatrics, McMaster University, and Chedoke Hospital Division, Hamilton Health Science Corporation, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. His paper “Fluid balance and physiologic and behavioural control of fluid intake in physically active children”, a chapter in “Hydration throughout life” (M J Arnaud ed, John Libby Eurotext, 1998), looked at the fluid intake of children undertaking different amounts of exercise in different temperature conditions, offered different types of drink, over different periods of time (to account for the novelty of a new flavour). Children offered flavoured drinks drank more than those who were not, and “One can conclude that the beneficial effects of flavouring and of adding NaCl plus carbohydrate are consistently reproducible.”

3.3 The weight of scientific evidence supports the contention that a choice of drinks is more likely to improve hydration levels.

4. The role of sports and functional drinks

4.1 Certain types of drinks, notably sports drinks, functional drinks and low glycaemic index drinks, have been specifically developed to meet the nutritional and hydration needs of active people. These drinks can provide and sustain energy as well as other essential nutrients and also assist rehydration in the context of physical activity and sports.

4.2 As the Scottish Executive is encouraging greater levels of physical activity in order to promote balanced lifestyles, it is important that schools are able to provide the necessary type of refreshment to meet the dietary needs of more active children.

4.3 In the context of functional drinks, juice drinks with a significant juice content offer children nutritional benefits in an appealing format.

5. The role of vending machines

5.1 Access to drinks, as well as providing a choice of drinks, is vital in ensuring that children drink sufficiently during the school day. Vending machines provide quick and easy access to drinks during the school day when the cafeteria might not be open and can also take pressure off the catering service at peak times. However, if a range of drinks which appeals to children is not available then it is likely that the machine will become financially unviable and would be removed. This would deprive children access to drinks and a source of hydration.

RACL
28.07.06