

Does Your Student Eat A Hot School Lunch Or Cold Junk?

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By John Hart

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 mandates that high schools have a local wellness policy and program in place by July 1, 2006, to promote more healthful food choices by students.

However, a recent study of 271 public high schools by Penn State researchers, published in the February issue of the "Journal of the American Dietetic Association," names three reasons why some high school wellness programs already in place, aren't working.

The study says:

1. 25% of the wellness program directors report that lunch periods are scheduled before 10:30 a.m. Early lunch periods produce higher a la carte sales.
2. A la carte sales generate almost \$700 per day per school among schools surveyed, with \$450 of that income coming from a la carte items that do not meet federal school meal requirements.
3. The existence of soft drink machines owned by soft drink companies correlated with a higher number of vending machines per student. The study showed that more vending machines reduced participation in the school hot lunch program.

75% of sodas and 85% of snacks sold in school vending machines are junk foods. Many schools have found that replacing junk foods with healthier foods and beverages, such as bottled water, yogurt, fruit, juice, etc., has not hurt the school revenue, and in some cases has actually increased revenue.

What can parents do?

Make sure you know how healthy your local school environment is and what needs to be improved. Visit with food service directors and ask these four questions: 1) What do kids eat when they are at school, 2) Is junk food readily available? 3) How much time is provided for physical activity? And 4) What can be done to make the school environment healthier?

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Not all current school wellness programs restrict the sale of high-fat, high-sugar snacks and sodas during the school day. Know what your local school policy is, or will be, because proper nutrition greatly influences a student's learning ability. Which of the three reasons named in the Penn State study could you improve at your student's high school?

Mr. Hart is the author of "Killer Bird Flu...Get Ready Now!" and a medical journalist/researcher. He, and co-author Brook Andersen, recently attended the world's largest nutraceutical show, where the focus was on how to live a healthier and safer life with a better diet and nutrition. Learn more at

<http://www.buynanomask.com>

Office Lunches... Sans Sandwich

By News Canada

(NC)—If carrying lunch is too reminiscent of school days, maybe it's because you're packing the same old sandwiches.

If your office lunchroom has a fridge with a freezer and a microwave oven, bring something different - frozen, fully-cooked foods that you can heat and eat in about 3 minutes. By preparing your own hot meal, you'll eat better, save money, and still have time for a brisk walk at lunch time.

Here are some fresh lunch ideas that are easy to make when you start with new Schneiders Quick Serve fully-cooked chicken or pork. Heat these up and you are bound to be the envy of your colleagues:

- Teriyaki Chicken Wings heated with instant rice
- Hot sliced Chicken Breast Italian over crisp salad greens
- Chicken Parmesan; easily made by topping Grilled Chicken Breast with canned tomato sauce and Parmesan cheese
- Cordon Swiss; Breaded Chicken Breast topped with a slice of ham and some Swiss Cheese, heated until the cheese is bubbly. Enjoy with a fresh crusty roll.
- Heat Pork Loin Steak in the microwave and enjoy with a single-serving package of applesauce and raw baby carrots.

Break loose from traditional sandwiches and have a Quick Serve restaurant quality lunch at the office.

– News Canada

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Office Lunches... Sans Sandwich

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