

Response ID ANON-5MB4-H3SV-V

Submitted to Proposed changes to the promotion and provision of healthy drinks in schools
Submitted on 2022-05-16 14:11:42

Consultation questions

1 In what capacity are you providing feedback? For example, are you responding as a parent, student, organisation, principal, teacher, or other interested person? Please specify your role and, if applicable, the type of school you work in.

Answer:

Professor of Nutrition, Auckland University of Technology
Scientific Director, New Zealand Nutrition Foundation

2 Do you agree with our view of the problem? If not, why not?

Answer:

There is a long standing problem with tooth decay...and this is associated with consumption of sugary drinks from early life
Rush, E., Obolonkin, V., Young, L., Kirk, M., & Tseng, M. (2017). Under 5 Energize: tracking progress of a preschool nutrition and physical activity programme with regional measures of body size and dental health at age of four years. *Nutrients*, 9(5), 456.
Sugar and water should not be considered a food particularly for young children. It displaces other healthier foods and in particular the imported, not well regulated, sugary drinks add to the additives that children consume and waste that NZ accumulates in the form of plastic packaging

3 What other problems, if any, do you think should be taken into consideration in assessing options?

Answer:

The nutritional quality of foods should be considered - not just the "food safety" with respect to acute disease. Potable water should be freely available in all schools and public places and next to vending machines.

4 Are these the right objectives? Can you think of any others to add?

Answer:

All education facilities should be included - it is a lifecourse health problem - there is a societal responsibility (human right) to protect children

5 Are there any other options that you think should be considered?

Answer:

There should be education alongside the change - including how to clean teeth....as occurred in the Waikato with Under 5 Energize

6 Do you agree with this definition of healthy drinks? Are there any other drinks you think should be allowed, or any included in this definition that shouldn't be? If so, what are your reasons for including or excluding these drinks?

Answer:

Water and milk are the best drinks for children - no exceptions. Artificial sweeteners have not been research in sufficient depth to say that they are safe. e.g for gut health

Christofides, Elena A. "Point: Artificial sweeteners and obesity—not the solution and potentially a problem." *Endocrine Practice* 27, no. 10 (2021): 1052-1055.

We do not know what we do not know

7 Can you think of any difficulties primary schools might have in only providing healthy drinks? Would a 'lead-in' period be helpful for schools to transition to the new duty?

Answer:

It worked with Project Energize - in early education and primary schools and is happening already in many schools. Best to be clear about the policy. Should action against bullying or harassment have a lead in? - the damage is occurring now...the time to act is now.

8 If you are an area and/or composite school, are there particular difficulties you may face implementing this duty?

Answer:

NA

9 Can you think of any benefits and/or challenges that secondary schools would face in meeting a new legal duty to only provide healthy drinks?

Answer:

Water provided free of charge is a human right.... upgrade the water supply and safety

10 Do you agree that we should replace the current guidance to promote healthy food and nutrition with Regulations that require school boards to continue doing this? Please explain the reasons for your agreement or disagreement.

Answer:

It has been voluntary for many years and not worked... do not need more evidence. Like wearing seatbelts, child restraints and anti-smacking - this is for the children and their future health

11 What do you think about these circumstances? Are any of them unnecessary? Can you think of any other circumstances where it would be reasonable to not have the duty? If so, why?

Answer:

It has to be across the board....there are alternatives and these should be promoted.

12 Do you feel that the high-trust light-touch compliance approach is appropriate? If not, why not?

Answer:

Parents and caregivers trust the school to look after their children.... schools must comply for children's safety