
Cleaner Labels for Healthier Students

The School District of Janesville is the largest member district in the Wisconsin School Nutrition Purchasing (WiSNP) Buying Group which includes 57 school districts in the State of Wisconsin. WiSNP member districts geographically range from Wausau to West Bend to Janesville. Local districts are Clinton, Milton, Jefferson, Deerfield, Verona, Mt Horeb, Middleton-Cross Plains, Sun Prairie, McFarland, and Monona Grove. WiSNP has the largest student enrollment total in the state of Wisconsin.

In the 2018-19 school year WiSNP undertook a project to provide cleaner label foods for our children taking part in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Area Eligible After School Snack Program and Summer Food Service Program. We evaluated every food item that was purchased by the group of 57 districts annually and used the criteria listed below to make choices on what we ask our vendors to stock for our districts to order to prepare meals. After hundreds of hours, a preferred item list was created and is being continually managed to ensure quality options are available. In August, 2019 the School District of Janesville began purchasing our foods from this list of preferred products, many of which we had been using for years.

Why are we doing this? Our Goal is to focus our buying power to improve the quality of foods served in the School District of Janesville and streamline order guides for better pricing and identify preferred products stocked at our Prime Vendor. The following is a list of benefits from our project.

1. Focus on products of high nutritional quality and cleaner labels.
2. Focus purchasing decisions for better pricing.
3. Influence items that Prime Vendor stocks for the school market.
4. Identify product lines for future creation of a shared database including nutrition info and Buy American compliance.
5. Ensure USDA meal component compliance and Smart Snack compliance.
6. Identify and eliminate allergens where possible.
7. Simplify ordering for new director members of WiSNP.

Eliminating the Dirty 7 **7 Ingredients you don't want in your food.** (Anika DeCoster, RD, CPT, CISSN)

The following ingredients of concern are listed followed by the reason for concern of having this in your food.

HFCS (High Fructose Corn Syrup) (non-alcoholic fatty liver, digestive distress, increased triglycerides, increased risk for type II diabetes or metabolic syndrome)

Trans Fats (No safe level, linked to raising LDL (Bad) and lowering HDL (Good), increasing obesity, Type II diabetes, premature heart attacks and cancer)

Artificial Preservatives (Highly processed foods. Synthetic food additives have been linked to hyperactivity, cancer tumors, skin and eye irritation and asthmatic problems. Avoid the following items on labels; nitrites, nitrates, benzoates, sorbates, propionates, sulfites, BHA, and BHT)

Hormones / Antibiotics (Farming of animals has drastically changed over time. Hormones are used to increase mass and antibiotics are used because animals are raised in close quarters where disease spreads rapidly. (Avoid using products that use hormones and antibiotics.)

Bleached Flour (Bleached flour or chemical flour is an industry standard in America. The problem is a byproduct when bleaching flour is alloxan, which can remain in the flour and is toxic and used to produce diabetes in laboratory animals.)

Artificial Colors (Used to improve the look of food, found in candy, desserts, soda, chips, etc., linked to hyperactivity, increased risk for tumors, cancer, and allergy-like reactions. Avoid Yellow 5, Yellow 6, Red 40, Red 3, Blue 1, Blue 2, Orange B, Citrus Red 2 and Green 3.)

Added / Processed Sugars (Average American consumers 90-180# annually and less than 1# 100 years ago. Sugar leads to health problems, obesity, and diabetes. Available in sweet and processed items. Sugar appears in many forms; agave nectar, fructose syrup, and juice concentrate to name a few.)

The School District of Janesville's School Nutrition Program is working toward an outcome where we increase consumption of whole foods and help to educate everyone on how to read labels to be a smarter, healthier shopper.

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