

Requirements for Beverages Containing Water and Juice

Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes (<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pub/Chap170.htm#Sec10-221p.htm>) specifies five categories of beverages that are allowed for sale to students in public schools, including “beverages that contain *only* water and fruit or vegetable juice and have no added sugars, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners.” However, no water and juice beverages actually meet the criteria specified in the statute because all of the currently available products contain *additional ingredients* besides water and juice, such as natural flavors, vegetable color, vitamin C and other nutrients.

Based on the intent of the statute to have beverages available in this category, the state committee responsible for revising the Connecticut Nutrition Standards has developed specific standards for the category of water and juice beverages. These standards will be in effect as of **July 1, 2009**. They apply to all water and juice beverages sold to students on school premises, including, but limited to, the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores and fundraisers.

Requirements for Water and Juice Beverages

“Water and juice beverages” are beverages that are made with some portion of 100 percent juice mixed with water. To be allowed for sale to students in schools, all water and juice beverages must meet the following criteria:

1. Must contain only water and fruit or vegetable juice and have no added sugars, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners.
2. Portion size is no larger than 12 fluid ounces.
3. No more than 100 percent vitamin C.
4. No more than 10 percent of calcium, vitamin D and fiber (e.g., maltodextrin, inulin).
5. No other fortification of vitamins and minerals other than those nutrients listed above.
6. No nutrition supplements such as amino acids (e.g., taurine, glutamine, lysine, arginine), extracts (e.g., green tea extract, gotu kola extract) and herbs or other botanicals (e.g., ginseng, ginkgo biloba).
7. May contain vegetable or fruit extracts only, used for color or flavor, such as pomegranate extract, beet extract or red cabbage extract.
8. May contain natural flavors, as defined by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) food labeling requirements (Title 21 Code of Federal Regulations Section 101.22) and natural colors (such as fruit or vegetable juice).

Beverages that meet these requirements will be listed on the Connecticut State Department of Education’s *List of Acceptable Food and Beverages* (see “Resources” on next page).

Rationale

National science-based nutrition recommendations, such as the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (<http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines/>), have a basic premise that nutrients should come primarily from foods. Foods contain not only the vitamins and minerals that are often found in supplements, but also hundreds of naturally occurring substances (such as carotenoids, flavonoids and isoflavones and protease inhibitors) that may protect against chronic health conditions. Consumption of fortified foods and beverages that are not already nutrient rich does *not* provide the same health benefits as consuming naturally nutrient-rich food sources, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy, lean meats and legumes.

The Connecticut Nutrition Standards (see “Resources” on next page) promote the consumption of needed nutrients through naturally nutrient-rich healthy food choices, not through fortified products that would otherwise have little nutritional value. Significantly fortified products are not approved for use in schools unless they are already nutrient-rich products that are fortified with nutrients at levels based on scientifically documented health needs, such as milk fortified with vitamins A and D,

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breakfast cereals fortified with iron, orange juice fortified with calcium, soy beverages fortified with calcium or grain products fortified with folic acid.

The Dietary Guidelines indicate that fortified foods and beverages are only advantageous if they 1) provide additional sources of certain nutrients that might otherwise be present only in low amounts in some food sources; 2) provide nutrients in highly bioavailable forms; or 3) address a documented public health need. Manufacturers often fortify nutrient-poor beverages (such as water and juice beverages) with a variety of vitamins and minerals that do not meet any of these criteria.

The committee allowed water and juice beverages fortified with a small level of calcium and fiber, since these nutrients address a documented public health need and are currently contained in some juices. The committee also allowed fortification with a small level of vitamin D because it enhances calcium absorption. Since many juices are currently fortified with 100 percent vitamin C, the committee decided to allow this level in water and juice beverages.

The committee chose not to allow fortification of water and juice beverages with any nutrients that are not based on a documented public health need or that are not commonly found in juice (e.g., niacin, riboflavin, B₆, B₁₂). The committee also chose not to allow fortification with nutrients that will not be well absorbed by the body in this form (e.g., iron).

Resources

- *Allowable Beverages in Connecticut Schools:*
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/Allowable_Beverages.pdf
- *Requirements for Beverages in Connecticut Public Schools (PowerPoint):*
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Standards>
- *Summary of Connecticut Nutrition Standards:* <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/SummaryCTnutritionStandards.pdf>
- *Connecticut Nutrition Standards for Food in Schools:*
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/CTNutritionStandards.pdf>
- *Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Food and Beverages:*
http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/HF_Q&A.pdf
- *List of Acceptable Food and Beverages:*
<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754#Healthy>

For additional information, visit <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320754> or contact: Susan S. Fiore, MS, RD, Nutrition Education Coordinator, Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457
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