

Sugary Drinks are Phased Out

On 21 February 2014 the ACT Government announced the removal of vending machines from ACT public schools and the phasing out of sugary drinks for sale in school canteens by the end of 2014.



Why were sugary drinks were phased out of public schools?

In November 2013, the *Health Status of Children in the Australian Capital Territory: Results from the 2007-10 ACT General Health Survey* reported the excessive consumption of sugary drinks by children and young people.

One out of four year six students in the ACT is overweight or obese. Consumption of sugary drinks has been identified as a substantial contributor to overweight and obesity in children, and for this reason, sugary drinks have been phased out of public schools. The school setting will provide a wide range of healthy food and drink choices for students to encourage lifelong healthy eating.

What did the phasing out include?

The ACT Education and Training Directorate are supporting ACT public schools to install water refill stations and have supplied them with reusable bottles to make it easier for students to drink tap water.

Parents are also encouraged to provide healthy drink options in lunchboxes. Visit www.health.act.gov.au or www.nutritionaustralia.org for healthy lunchbox ideas.

Sugary drinks have no nutritional value and contain a lot of sugar which can lead to tooth decay, weight gain and obesity; for this reason, school canteens should not provide or sell **RED** drinks. Obesity and being overweight can lead to health problems such as type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some types of cancer.

Fruit and vegetable juices have some nutritional benefits but can be high in kilojoules if consumed in large quantities. Juice that contains at least 99% juice and no added sugar (including sparkling varieties) with a maximum 250mL serve size belongs in the **AMBER** category. Juices that do not meet these criteria are **RED**.

Milk drinks also have nutritional benefits. Low and reduced fat milk and soy drinks (plain and flavoured) are categorised as **GREEN**. Full-fat milks and soy drinks (plain and flavoured) are **AMBER**.

GREEN and **AMBER** drinks offer nutritional benefits and may be sold or provided in schools.

What are sugary drinks?

Sugary drinks are those sweetened with any form of sugar including: sucrose, fructose, glucose and fruit sugar syrup. Examples are soft or soda drinks, energy drinks, flavoured mineral waters, sports drinks, cordials, iced teas, sweetened waters, sports waters, sugar sweetened crushed ice drinks and fruit drinks (fruit juice containing added sugar).

Why do sugary drinks harm health?

Sugary drink portion sizes have increased over the last decade and children are drinking more sugary drinks than ever before.

Tooth decay

All soft drinks are acidic and corrode the teeth by eroding enamel. The high amount of sugar consumed through soft drinks also leads to the development of bacteria that attack teeth.

Effect on Bones

In humans phosphoric acid, present in carbonated drinks, removes calcium from bones and weakens the structural integrity of growing children.

Effect of Caffeine

The addition of caffeine to carbonated drinks makes them addictive and caffeine is very readily absorbed in this form. Caffeine affects young people by stimulating their nervous system, and disturbs sleep, causes dehydration and heartburn.

National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines

Schools are encouraged to implement the National Healthy School Canteen Guidelines (NHSCG). The NHSCG provide guidance to school canteens to provide healthier food and drink choices using three categories:

GREEN Foods and drinks which should always be available at school

AMBER Foods and drinks should be selected carefully for the school

RED Foods and drinks not recommended for schools

Under the NHSCG and *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy 2015*, all sugary drinks are categorised as **RED** and may be sold at occasional fetes, fundraisers and school events no more than twice per term.

The following is a list of food and drinks which are consistent with the NHSCG and the *ACT Public School Food and Drink Policy 2015*.

GREEN drinks

- Tap or spring water with nothing added
- Mineral or sparkling water with nothing added
- Low or reduced-fat milk and soy drinks, plain and flavoured
 - May contain intense (artificial) sweeteners
 - Suggested 375ml serve size or less.
 - Coffee-style milk drinks (including flavoured) may be sold in secondary school only (maximum 375mL serve size)

AMBER drinks (Select carefully)

- Full-fat milk and soy drinks, plain and flavoured
 - May contain intense (artificial) sweeteners
 - Suggested 375ml serve size or less
 - Coffee-style milk drinks (including flavoured) may be sold in secondary school (maximum 375 ml serve size)
- Fruit and vegetable juice
 - At least 99% juice, including sparkling varieties, with no added sugar and maximum 250ml serve size
- Crushed ice drinks, at least 99% fruit juice and no added sugar, maximum 200 ml serve size
- Diet drinks

RED drinks

- Soft drinks
- Energy/sports drinks/flavoured waters
- Any product containing guarana
- Fruit drinks with added sugar
- Flavoured mineral/sweetened waters
- Cordials
- Iced teas
- Crushed ice drinks, sugar sweetened and/or greater than 20mL serve size
- Coffee-style milk drinks (including flavoured), mocha, latte, cappuccino or similar in primary school
- Coffee-style milk drinks greater than 375ml serve size in secondary school
- Fruit and vegetable juice, less than 99% juice and/or containing added sugar and/or greater than 250ml serve size

References and Resources

Sugary Drinks Frequently Asked Questions - <http://health.act.gov.au/freshtastes>

National Healthy School Canteens: Guidelines for healthy foods and drinks supplied in school canteens, updated 2013 www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/phd-nutrition-canteens

Nutrition Australia ACT information: <http://www.nutritionaustralia.org/act/act-school-programs>

Healthy Kids Association information for ACT school canteens: <http://healthy-kids.com.au/school-canteens/act-school-canteens>