MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education  
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities

FROM: Elizabeth Harding  
Director  
Policy and Program Branch

DATE: September 18, 2008

RE: Healthy Schools – Trans Fat Standards Reminder

As you know, the government is committed to making schools healthier places for students to learn. Research shows that a healthy school environment enhances learning and success in school and provides academic, social, emotional and physical benefits.

As part of the overall plan to develop healthier schools, as of September 1, 2008 any food or beverage (or ingredients used in their preparation) sold in a school must meet the prescribed amounts of trans fat set out in O.Reg. 200/08 – Trans Fat Standards.

*The trans fat content in vegetable oil and soft, spreadable margarine must not exceed 2% of the total fat content.*

*For all other food, beverages and ingredients, the trans fat content must not exceed 5% of the total fat content.*

The trans fat limits apply to all food and beverages sold in elementary and secondary schools for school purposes. This includes cafeterias, vending machines, tuck shops, canteens and any other area in a school where food or beverages are sold. The limits do not apply to food that students bring from home.

The regulation also states that a school principal may designate up to 10 (or a number fewer than 10 as determined by the school board) school-wide special event days per year when food and beverages sold in the school would be exempt from the trans fat prohibition. School principals will need to consult with their school councils, and should involve their students, in determining which events, if any, to exempt.

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Schools can hold as many special event days as appropriate, in accordance with any applicable board policies, if food and beverages sold at the events meet prescribed trans fat limits.

Ministry staff have also been consulting with education and health stakeholders and the food industry on school nutrition standards to align with the new Canada Food Guide. These standards may apply to food and beverages offered in school cafeterias, vending machines, tuck shops/canteens and other daily food services. If you have any ideas or suggestions on school-based nutrition standards, or have any success stories that you would like to share, please e-mail them to healthy.schools@ontario.ca. We hope to provide you with more information on next steps on school nutrition standards in the coming months.

I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage you to visit the new Healthy Schools section of the Ministry of Education’s web site at www.ontario.ca/healthyschools. The section includes information on the ministry’s new pilot project ‘Eating Well Looks Good on You’ that has been designed to bring healthier food to school cafeterias.

If you have any questions about the Trans Fat Standards regulation or any other healthy schools initiative, please contact your Ministry Regional Office. Thank you for your ongoing work to make schools healthier environments for students.

Elizabeth Harding

Attachment

c: Regional Managers, Ministry of Education Regional Offices