

IHP-08

Patricia Daniels, Director
Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Services
USDA
3101 Park Center Drive, Rm 520
Alexandria, VA 22302

MONTEFIORE



December 15, 2003

Dear Ms. Daniels,

I am a pediatrician in the Bronx, NY and am writing in response to your solicitation of comments on redesigning WIC food packages (Federal Register, September 15, 2003). Specifically I write to encourage removal of fruit juice from WIC packages and substitution of allowances for fresh fruits and vegetables.

Obesity is epidemic among US children, and fruit juice consumption has been associated with overweight and obesity (Pediatrics, January 1997). Fruit juice consumption by preschoolers has increased, and 11% of preschoolers consume more than 12 ounces of fruit juice per day (Journal of the American College of Nutrition, October 1996). Fruit juice accounts for at least 50% of the fruits and vegetables consumed by children ages 2 to 18 (ibid). The American Academy of Pediatrics, recognizing the nutritional risks of excess juice consumption, now recommends limiting fruit juice consumption by children ages 1-5 years to only 4-6 ounces per day; the Academy also recommends that juice not be given to infants under 6 months of age.

From personal experience pediatricians know that parents in the inner city believe that WIC provides only nutritionally beneficial foods – “if WIC gives me Juicy Juice, it must be good for my baby”. Substitution of fruit juice with fruits and vegetables will encourage parents to fulfill the “5-a-day” recommendation in a healthier way.

By eliminating juice from its packages, WIC can play a vital role in reducing the epidemic of obesity among inner city children

Thank you for the opportunity to share these comments.

Sincerely,

Reva E. Snow, M.D.

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