

Sweetened Beverages and Obesity

In the September 2008 issue of the American Dietetic Journal, childhood obesity and the schools were addressed. Schools are well suited to address this issue. Children in the U.S. eat 50% or more of their main meal and more than 10% eat two meals at school, according to this study. As students moved from elementary to middle school the consumption of soft drinks increased.

There are several protective dietary factors that decrease the risk of obesity: (1) being breast fed, (2) eating more fruit and vegetables, (3) Increasing dietary fiber, (4) consuming low-fat dairy products, (5) consuming calcium-rich foods and, (6) eating breakfast. In this study the practice of drinking sweetened beverages “soft drinks” contributed to obesity.

How do we accomplish this: (1) restrict the availability of junk foods and sweetened beverages, (2) improve the appeal and nutritional quality of school meals, (3) increase availability of high density foods and beverages, (4) promote healthful choices and, (5) educate on what is nutritious food choices.

We here at the South Montgomery School Corporation Food Service are addressing the problem of childhood obesity by making changes in what we serve the children. The Institute of Medicine recommends that beverages with more than 35% of total sugars per serving be eliminated.

The food service at Southmont is trying to ensure that children are fed healthy, nutritious meals.