



MI164472

Office of the Minister for Health

Mr David Gillespie
Email: david@sweetpoison.com.au

4 JAN 2010

Dear Mr Gillespie

I write in response to your email dated 30 July 2009, regarding your suggestion that foods and drinks high in fructose should be classified in the RED category of the *Smart Choices Healthy Food and Drink Supply Strategy for Queensland Schools*. The Deputy Premier has asked that I respond on his behalf and apologise for the delay.

The intent of the *Smart Choices* strategy is to improve the availability of healthy food and drink choices and decrease the availability of unhealthy food and drink choices in Queensland schools. The strategy requires that schools offer students a range of healthy food and drinks, consistent with the National Health and Medical Research Council's *Australian Dietary Guidelines for Children and Adolescents*.

Within the strategy foods and drinks have been classified into three categories based on their nutritional value:

- GREEN foods and drinks have high nutrition value and these foods should be encouraged and promoted in the school environment.
- AMBER foods and drinks have some nutritional value; however they contain moderate amounts of fat, sugar and/or salt. These products should not dominate the choices and should be served in small amounts.
- RED foods and drinks lack nutritional value and are high in fat, sugar and/or salt. The availability of these foods is limited to no more than two occasions per term.

The findings of the research papers you presented were reviewed. These confirmed the views of Queensland Health nutritionists that diets high in *added* fructose are undesirable, as they may lead to excess energy consumption and high circulating plasma lipid levels and an increase in weight which can lead to the development of chronic disease. These papers all supported the ongoing consumption of naturally occurring fructose in fruits and vegetables.

The research papers recommended avoiding excess consumption of food and drink products with *added* fructose; the main sources of added fructose in the diet are sweetened beverages such as soft drinks and fruit drinks.

All foods and drinks with added sugars, including fructose, are already limited in supply as part of the *Smart Choices* strategy, by either being classified in the RED category where they are only made available twice per term or being classified in the AMBER category where restrictions are placed on the serve size that can be made available. Most sugar sweetened drinks will fall within the RED category.

While dried fruit and fruit juice are high in naturally occurring fructose, these products are considered AMBER because they contribute nutritional value to the diet in terms of fibre and micronutrients and are relatively nutrient dense. Under the *Smart Choices* strategy it is recommended that both these products be served in small amounts, as in large quantities they can contribute to excess energy consumption.

The evidence that emerges as part of the development of the revised National Health and Medical Research Council's dietary guidelines expected mid 2010 would be used to underpin any review of the *Smart Choices* strategy.

Should you have any queries regarding my advice to you, Dr Amanda Lee, Manager Nutrition and Physical Activity, Health Promotion Branch, Queensland Health, will be pleased to assist you and can be contacted on telephone (07) 3328 9245.

Yours sincerely



CAMERON CROWTHER
Principal Advisor to the
Deputy Premier and Minister for Health