

[IMAGE]

Lightening Up School Lunches

By Editorial Staff

New, healthier snacks and drinks are slowly making their debut in schools. And it's about time. With 17 percent of Americans between the ages of 2 and 19 overweight, nutrition experts welcome this growing trend. While the following additions to school cafeterias probably don't represent ideal nutrition, they're an improvement over what most schools have offered for the past several decades.

In January 2007, Bravo! Brands Inc., in partnership with Coca-Cola Enterprises Inc., began selling a 150-calorie, 8-ounce bottle of flavored, vitamin-fortified milk in school vending machines. Bravo milk is currently distributed to approximately 8,000 schools, with plans to expand by the end of 2007. Other healthier school lunchroom additions include:

- Dannon Company Inc. is selling a variety of low-fat yogurts and smoothies.
- Pepsi is reformulating its Doritos, Cheetos and Quaker products.
- Dole Food Co. is testing placement of fresh fruit in school vending machines.
- Pepsi will launch Frito-Lay's Flat Earth fruit/vegetable crisps.

Since most teenagers are not going to change their eating habits overnight, the latest developments represent a small but important step in the right direction. Experts continue to push for additional regulations regarding school lunch options and an end to self-regulation by the food industry. If this trend continues, there is hope for future generations of healthier, happier young people.

Cafeteria tray full of food. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark

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