



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

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Alexandria, VA
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May 22, 2003

SUBJECT: Pasteurized Juice

TO: Regional Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All Regions

RECOMMENDATION

This memorandum is to clarify the use of pasteurized juice in the Child Nutrition programs. **While there is no current regulation requirement, we strongly recommend that only pasteurized juice be used as part of a reimbursable meal/snack in the child nutrition programs.** The American Academy of Pediatrics supports the recommendation to use only pasteurized juice. Pasteurized juice is generally identified as such on the product label.

HEALTH RISK OF UNPASTEURIZED OR UNTREATED JUICE

The concern about unpasteurized or untreated juice, such as apple juice or cider and orange juice, is based on outbreaks of foodborne illnesses caused by pathogenic microorganisms present in these unpasteurized or untreated products. Children, pregnant women, the elderly, and persons with weakened immune systems are at particular risk for serious illnesses, and even death, caused by these harmful microorganisms. The unpasteurized or untreated juice is often referred to as “natural juice”.

FDA REGULATIONS FOR JUICE PRODUCTS

While most juice is pasteurized, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) does not require manufacturers to pasteurize their products or use other non-thermal methods, such as Ultra Violet (UV) light, to control foodborne pathogens.

When outbreaks of foodborne illnesses caused by unpasteurized or untreated juice occurred, FDA responded by requiring juice products to have warning labels to identify unpasteurized or untreated juice.

However, FDA recently enacted a new rule that requires juice products to be processed using the application of Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principles to reduce foodborne pathogens. **This rule eliminated the requirement for the warning label on unpasteurized juice processed with the HACCP principles.**

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We feel that a CNP sponsor or school district would have difficulty in determining a juice processor's compliance with the HACCP principles; therefore, our recommendation to use pasteurized juice would ensure that a safe product is selected. This policy is consistent with the current *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs, Revised November 2001*, page 2-43, that recommends using only pasteurized juice.

A handwritten signature in purple ink, reading "Stanley C. Garnett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

STANLEY C. GARNETT
Director
Child Nutrition Division