



## **FOODS AND BEVERAGES CONTAINING SWEETENERS**

Following the implementation of the Framework Policy *Going the Healthy Route at School*, can educational institutions offer students artificially sweetened foods (e.g. yogurt) and beverages (e.g. chocolate milk)?

The Framework Policy has two orientations that aim to provide students with a variety of foods of good nutritional value and to eliminate foods of low nutritional value from all school food supplies.

### **Orientation 1:**

Offer a variety of foods and give priority to foods of good nutritional value

- One priority element (PE) of this orientation is:
  - ⇒ Provide a variety of 100% pure (unsweetened) fruit juices and vegetable juices, in addition to milk and water (PE 4)

### **Orientation 2:**

Eliminate foods of low nutritional value from all school food supplies

- Two priority elements of this orientation are:
  - ⇒ Eliminate sugar-sweetened and artificially sweetened (diet) soft drinks as well as sugar-sweetened beverages (PE 10)
  - ⇒ Eliminate products in which sugar or a sugar substitute is the first ingredient listed (PE 11)

### **Pamphlet 1 *Healthy school menus* recommends the following:**

- Encourage students to drink water regularly throughout the school day and make it easy for them to do so.
- Offer students a wide variety of milk products, such as flavoured milk (containing less than 30 grams of sugar per 250 ml).

Artificial sweeteners make foods taste very sweet and cause consumers to develop a preference for them over naturally sweetened nutritious foods; this contributes to unhealthy eating habits. Moreover, sugar substitutes are not part of a varied school food supply, which should promote foods of good nutritional value.

It is therefore recommended that educational institutions offer foods and chocolate milk that contain no artificial sweeteners. It is also recommended that they not offer foods marked as "diet" or "low calorie" in order to discourage their consumption but also to prevent the development of or increase in weight-related health issues among certain students.

Given the above and in keeping with priority element 10, artificially sweetened foods and beverages should be eliminated from all school food supplies.