USDA Walks Back Healthy School Lunch Policies

The United States Department of Agriculture has rolled back several healthy school lunch requirements. These changes include allowing schools to serve flavored milk, opt out of whole grain requirements, and more slowly reduce the sodium in their offerings. In the USDA's press release, Sonny Perdue, Secretary of Agriculture, cited their reasons for the changes, "Based on the feedback we've gotten from students, schools, and food service professionals in local schools across America, it's clear that many still face challenges incorporating some of the meal pattern requirements. Schools want to offer food that students actually want to eat. It doesn't do any good to serve nutritious meals if they wind up in the trash can. These flexibilities give schools the local control they need to provide nutritious meals that school children find appetizing."

Many of the issues cited by the USDA as problematic for school lunch providers are not actually a problem. A statement released by Center for Science in the Public Interest Vice President for Nutrition Margo G. Wootan:

> *Virtually 100 percent of schools are already complying with the final nutrition standards, including the first phase of sodium reduction…Nine out of 10 school-aged children are eating too much salt, which is why reducing sodium levels in school meals is so important. The USDA should be doubling down on helping schools reduce sodium, not slowing down progress, as the Trump administration proposed today."*

Diet is the foundation of health, and it's fitting that the government making it easier to serve schoolchildren less nutritious lunches is also the administration dismantling the

current healthcare system without a viable system to take its place. The USDA considers the school lunch program a part of its nutrition safety net. So why is it making it easier for vulnerable school children to eat poorly?

Nutrition Education and Healthy Choices

Today, one in five children between the ages of 6-19 is obese, and that number has tripled since the 1970s. More than one-third of Americans are obese. The healthcare costs for an obese person are nearly $1,500 higher for an obese person than a normal weight person. Our health nationwide is not improving because we are failing to properly educate kids about healthy food and healthy lifestyle choices. Only one in ten Americans eat enough vegetables. Combine that with a nutrition safety net willing to compromise health standards out of concern with program operators, school nutrition professionals, industry, and other stakeholders. It's no wonder kids don't know how important healthy food choices are, let alone how to make them.

Recommended Reading:

- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*
- *Start Eating Like That and Start Eating Like This – Your Guide to Homeostasis Through Diet*
- *How to Make the Healthiest Smoothies – 4 Recipes*

Sources:

- *Trump's USDA Just Made School Meals Less Healthy – Alternet*
- *USDA Publishes School Meals Rule, Expands Options, Eases Challenges – USDA.gov*
- *Trump Administration Announces Rule Rolling Back Progress on School Nutrition – Center for Science in the Public Interest*

- *Childhood Obesity Facts – CDC.gov*