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Statement of the American Society for Nutrition on the Institute of Medicine's April 25
Report: Nutrition Standards for Foods in Schools

The American Society for Nutrition (ASN) commends the Institute of Medicine for developing recommendations outlining nutrition standards for competitive foods targeted for sale to children in schools. "The ASN applauds the Committee's recommendation that competitive foods offered in schools meet standards that are consistent with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans," said President Stephanie Atkinson, PhD. "Given that childhood obesity is a serious public health problem facing the U.S today, adoption of these recommendations by schools is an important measure to ensuring that our children and youth have healthy weights as they grow. Prevention of obesity in our nation's children is key to reducing the risk of associated chronic diseases such as Type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease and asthma."

The IOM recommendations emphasize the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat or nonfat dairy products, and other products that conform to the Dietary Guidelines. According to ASN Board member and past president Dennis Bier, MD, who served on the IOM Committee, "We believe that the Committee's recommendations can be readily met by the food industry since, as a whole, the food industry is putting considerable effort into providing great tasting food and beverage choices that are consistent with the Dietary Guidelines. We anticipate that increasing consumer demand for healthy products and this report, which builds on consistent expert committee recommendations that such products are important to public health, will encourage industry to continue to move down this positive path."

"Research has shown that when healthy eating habits are established in childhood, they usually continue into the adult years," said ASN member Janet King, PhD, who chaired the 2005 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. "When healthy food options are provided in the school setting, the stage is set for the development of healthy eating patterns that can last a lifetime."

Unfortunately, most Americans' diets do not follow the Guidelines, making it all the more critical that foods served through national nutrition and food assistance programs meet the science-based nutritional standards they set. While the traditional school lunch program must be in compliance, the presence of competitive foods that do not meet the

Dietary Guidelines undermines the nation's efforts to provide healthful, well-balanced meals and snacks to school children.

The American Society for Nutrition, with over 3000 members, is the premier research society dedicated to improving the quality of life through the science of nutrition. ASN represents and advances the views of clinical and research nutrition scientists and advocates for the development and application of knowledge in the field of nutritional science through research, education, and clinical practice.