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1 (2)

15.3.2006

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GREEN PAPER

Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases

IV.3 Health across EU policies

- Concrete means of promoting healthy choices:

Allowing more extensive use of health claims, so that consumers receive more information on foods and their possible effects on the body. In addition to specific health claims, claims on healthy foods in general should be developed.

- Measures to increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables:

Lowering VAT to bring down prices. Price is the quickest way to influence the consumption of fruit and vegetables.

- More research work:

Understanding the choices of consumers and how these choices are influenced. This information could be used, for example, to develop easier ways, which would be motivating for the consumer, to measure and analyse daily energy consumption and energy intake which can also guide consumer choices.

IV.4 The public health action programme

- Obesity in school-age children is probably correlated to obesity in the family as a whole (and dietary habits and lifestyle). As part of school health care, it is easy to organise uniform monitoring of the development of children's weight and growth (weight, height, BMI, age and sex) throughout the EU.

V.1 Consumer information, advertising and marketing

- Major nutrients and categories of products to be considered

The energy content, type of fat, NaCl, Ca and fibre content of nutrients should be considered.

- Education begins at school and is absorbed through different teaching materials

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V.2 Consumer education

- Possibility of making informed choices

Allowing more extensive use of health claims can guide consumer choices.

V.3 A focus on children and young people

- Improving the nutritional value of school meals

Nutritional criteria should be established for school meals and training should be provided for school meals. Adequate resources should be set aside for the preparation of school meals which satisfy the criteria. In addition, in many countries the image of school foods needs to be improved among parents as well.

- Snacks

The provision of healthy, tasty and varied snacks during school time reduces the consumption of unhealthy snacks. Snacks should be available at a good price (or even free). In addition, the environment in which the snack is eaten should be inviting.

- Public-private sector partnerships

The media can support health education by making it "cool" for example by using familiar figures and/or popular TV cartoons.

The public-private sector barrier should be lowered to conduct different campaigns. These could be aimed at exploring the preferences of children and this information used for example in planning healthy snacks.

V.4 Food availability, physical activity and health education at the workplace

- Healthy meals in staff canteens

The concept of what constitutes a healthy meal, as a whole, should be defined and a "healthy" meal should be provided at a lower price than a "normal" meal. It should be possible for employers to provide canteen facilities in all EU countries.

V.7 Socio-economic inequalities

- Disadvantaged socio-economic groups

Promoting healthy diets requires time and changes in attitude. Promoting a healthy lifestyle should be integrated into the teaching programme at every level. Price can play a role in the time it takes to bring about changes in attitude.