CENTER FOR
Science IN THE
Public Interest
*The nonprofit publisher of Nutrition Action Healthletter*

September 30, 2009

Mrs. Michelle Obama
First Lady
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mrs. Obama:

We were delighted to read that you are teaching your daughters how to read the Nutrition Facts Panel required on food labels.[i] The Nutrition Facts Panel provides both children and adults with important information on calories and key nutrients, such as saturated fat, sodium, and sugars that they can use to choose healthier foods and reduce their risk of obesity and diet-related disease. The provision of such information is a key element of a health promotion program and should help reduce health-care costs.[ii] Your interest in teaching your children how to read and use such information sets an example for all American families.

But we suspect that teaching the First Family and other Americans how to use food labels is going to be a tougher task than you may have imagined. The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) Nutrition Facts Panel, first required in 1993, is woefully out-of-date, and the front labels of many food products are loaded with misleading claims that distract from the factual information provided on the back or side of the package.

**1) Improving Nutrition Labeling**

The Nutrition Facts Panel required by the FDA and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) needs to be reformed. As FDA Commissioner Dr. Margaret Hamburg recently stated, food labeling is:

> . . . an essential means for informing consumer about proper nutrition. It is an issue that's critical for the health and vitality of our nation, and yet it is a concern that has not been substantially addressed since the FDA implemented the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act, more than 16 years ago.[iii]

One of the biggest problems is that the amounts of key nutrients that a portion of a food contributes to a daily diet are expressed as percentages of "Daily Values" (DV). This format fails to effectively convey whether a portion of a food is high or low in calories, fats, sodium, and other nutrients (the FDA should have, but never developed a DV for refined sugars). Studies have shown that the use of this format is not understood by most Americans. According to an FDA focus group study discussed in *Calories Count: Report of the Working Group on Obesity*,[iv] this shortcoming results in too few consumers choosing a healthy diet. According to one leading

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study cited in the FDA report,[v] just 20 percent of Americans accurately calculated the contribution of a food to a daily diet. Other studies have shown similar problems.[vi]

**2) Halting misleading health-related claims on food packaging**

Further, even if parents and their children can decipher the Nutrition Facts Panel, they may be deceived by misleading claims on the fronts of food packages. As FDA Commissioner Dr. Hamburg recognized:

> Recently . . . we've seen the emergence of claims that may not provide the full picture of their products' true nutritional value. It will be important to re-establish a science-based approach to protect the public.[vii]

Indeed, the supermarket aisle is filled with products with misleading claims:

- Nestlé's Juicy Juice beverage claims to contain "DHA- a Building Block for Brain Development in children." An asterisk on the label indicates that the beverage is intended for use "in children under two years old." In fact, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children under six months old not be fed juice at all and that children aged 1 to 6 consume no more than 4 to 6 oz. of juice in a day, in part to reduce the risk of obesity.[viii] Furthermore, a serving of Juicy Juice contains only 16 mg of DHA, (as much as only ¼ teaspoon of salmon). There is little credible evidence that even higher levels of DHA improve any measure of brain function in children.[ix]

- Kellogg's Cocoa Krispies claims that it "now helps support your child's immunity" (a concern of many parents during flu season), because it is fortified with vitamins A, B, C, and E. While a deficiency in those vitamins could interfere with the proper functioning of the body's immune system, there is no evidence that Cocoa Krispies can help children ward off disease. Moreover, the cereal is almost 40% sugar, containing 12 grams per ¾ cup (31 grams) serving.

- Nestlé's classic "Drumstick" vanilla fudge ice cream cone proclaims "0g Trans Fat" in a banner on the front label, but contains 50% of the Daily Value of saturated fat, a fact disclosed only on the back of the package (both trans fat and saturated fat raise serum cholesterol levels, which increase the risk of heart disease).

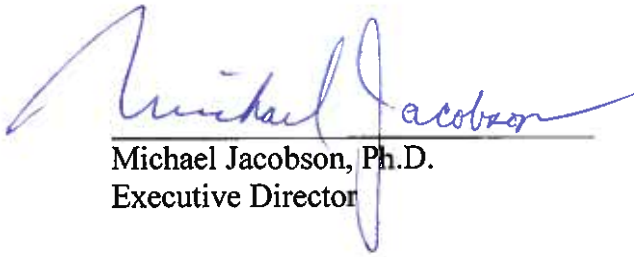
- Gerber "Graduates juice treats for preschoolers" is described on the front label as a "Fruit Medley" containing "natural cherry, grape, orange, pineapple, peach and raspberry flavors with other natural flavors." The product, however, contains no cherry, orange or pineapple juice, and less than 2% raspberry and apple juice concentrates and peach juice. The primary ingredients, listed in small print in the ingredient list, are corn syrup and sugar. The *U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans* considers the juice concentrates to be a form of added sugar.[x]

Thus, parents trying to teach their children how to read food labels have quite a challenge. Families have to become food label detectives to sort the wheat from the chaff and determine if a food can be part of a healthy daily diet.

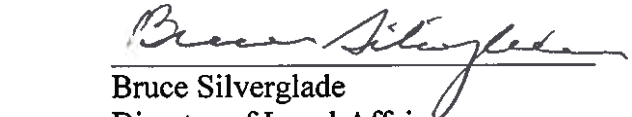
The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), which played a key role in the passage of the legislation requiring nutrition labeling, has been seeking to modernize the law's requirements so that the Nutrition Facts Panel is more useful to consumers. Also, for many years, CSPI has been encouraging FDA and USDA to establish new rules and enforcement policies to halt misleading claims. Leading health organizations, including the American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society, and the American Diabetes Association, are joining with us and calling for reform.[xi] Other countries, such as the United Kingdom, have already developed sets of universal symbols (such as red, yellow, and green "traffic lights") to indicate a food's nutritional value,[xii] and the European Union has instituted strict new controls on health-related claims for foods. Such steps should be aggressively pursued in the U.S.[xiii]

We are delighted that you are helping to inform American families about the importance of reading food labels. We would like to work with your office to continue that process and to help call attention to the full preventive health potential that food labeling reform efforts can produce.

Sincerely,



Michael Jacobson, Ph.D.
Executive Director



Bruce Silverglade
Director of Legal Affairs

Ilene Ringel Heller
Senior Attorney

Attachments:

1) Food labels illustrating misleading claims
2) Letter from health, medical, and consumer organizations to Congressman Henry Waxman, Chairman, House Energy and Commerce Committee (and original sponsor of the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act), March 16, 2009.

cc:

Susan Sher
Chief of Staff
Office of the First Lady

Jocelyn Frye
Deputy Assistant to the President For Domestic Policy
Director of Policy and Projects for the First Lady

Trooper Sanders
Deputy Director of Policy and Projects
Office of the First Lady

Melody Barnes
Director
White House Domestic Policy Council

Dr. Howard Koh
Assistant Secretary for Health
U.S. Department of Heath and Human Services

Michael Taylor
Senior Advisor to the Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration

Jerold Mande, M.P.H.
Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety
U.S. Department of Agriculture

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Endnotes

[i] Darlene Superville, *Trainer Spills Secrets of Michelle Obama's Arms,* Associated Press, September 7, 2009.

[ii] While cause and effect relationships are difficult to establish, consumer research has shown that many consumers use the Nutrition Facts Panel (NFP) and that the use of nutrition labelling is associated with healthier diets. *See* Nayga RM, *Do Nutrition Labels Affect Calorie Intakes and Diet Quality?* Prepared for the FDA Workshop: Exploring the Link Between Food Labeling and Weight Management, 2003 (finding that nutrition label users consume fewer calories from fat, less cholesterol and sodium, and more fiber, than non-label users); Kristal AR, Henderson MM, Patterson RE, Neuhauser ML. Predictors of Self-Initiated, Healthful Dietary Change. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2001:762-765 (finding that the use of food labels is strongly associated with fat reduction); Mathios, Alan D. The Impact of Mandatory Disclosure Laws of Product Choices: An Analysis of the Salad Dressing Market. *J Law Econ.* 2000:651-677 (finding that the addition of the Nutrition Facts Panel to food packages reduced the sale of high fat foods); The American Dietetic Association. *Nutrition Trends Survey 1997.* September 1997 (finding that approximately two-thirds of those reading the Nutrition Facts Panel reported that they stopped or started buying a food product because of something they read on the label, and 56 percent of consumers said the information on the nutrition label had caused them to switch brands).

[iii] Dr. Margaret Hamburg, M.D., Keynote Address, National Food Policy Conference, Washington, D.C. September 8, 2009.

[iv] *Calories Count: Report of the Working Group on Obesity*, Food and Drug Administration 18, 41, note 3 (2004).

[v] Levy, Patterson, and Kristal. (2000). *How Well do Consumers Understand Percentage Daily Values on Food Labels?* American Journal of Health Promotion 14:157-60.

[vi] In the 1996 Food Marketing Institute/Prevention Magazine Survey, 82% of 1000 shoppers claimed to have seen the % DV information on nutrition information panels (FMI/Prevention, 1996). However, only 43% understood the meaning of a DV for fat of 5%. Even among the "healthy" eaters, only 50% could accurately interpret % DV for fat. The use and understanding of food label information among 27 women with non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus was investigated (Miller et al., 1997). Focus groups and face-to-face interviews were carried out. Participants did not consider % DV to be useful because of the belief the figures did not apply to them and that percentages were confusing.

[vii] *Supra,* note iii.

[viii] The American Academy of Pediatrics, Committee on Nutrition, *The Use and Misuse of Fruit Juice in Pediatrics,* 107 Pediatrics 1210-1213 (May 2001). *Reaffirmed* 119 *Pediatrics* 405 (Feb. 2007). "Juice should not be introduced into the diet of infants before 6 months of age. . . . Intake of fruit juice should be limited to 4 to 6 oz/d for children 1 to 6 years old. For children 7 to 18 years old, juice intake should be limited to 8 to 12 oz or 2 servings per day." *Id.* "Excessive juice consumption and the resultant increase in energy intake may contribute to the development of obesity." *Id.*

[ix] *See* e.g., N. Auestad, DT Scott, *et. al., Visual, cognitive and language assessments at 39 months: a follow-up study of children fed formulas containing long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids to 1 year of age*, Pediatrics 2003 Sept; 112 (3 Pt. 1):e 177-83. "...[N]o differences among the formula groups or between the formula and breastfed group were found." *Id.*

[x] Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005,* at 38 Table 14.

[xi] See attached letter to Congressman Henry Waxman, the original sponsor of the 1990 law that led to the Nutrition Facts label.

[xii] http://www.food.gov.uk/foodlabelling.

[xiii] The National Academy of Sciences Institute of Medicine has recently announced that it is forming a study committee for the Examination of Front of Package Nutrition Rating Systems and Symbols (Phase I). The FDA also held a public roundtable on the issue in December 2008.

Made with
NATURAL
Ingredients
Nestlé
Juicy Juice
FRUIT JUICE BEVERAGE
BEBIDA CON JUGO DE FRUTA
DHA - A BUILDING BLOCK for
BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
DHA
16mg Per Serving
NO SUGAR ADDED
apple
JUICE BEVERAGE FROM CONCENTRATE WITH ADDED INGREDIENTS / BEBIDA CON JUGO DE CONCENTRADO CON INGREDIENTES AGREGADOS

CONTAINS 70% JUICE
CONTIENE JUGO 70%

## Nutrition Facts
## Datos de Nutrición

Serv. Size/Tamaño por Ración
4 fl. oz (120 mL)

Servings per Container/Porciones por Envase About/Aprox. 8

Amount per Serving/Cantidad por Ración

| | |
|---|---|
| Calories/Calorías | 40 |
| Total Fat/Grasa Total | 0 g |
| Trans Fat/Grasa Trans | 0 g |
| Sodium/Sodio | 10 mg |
| Potassium/Potasio | 70 mg |
| Total Carb./Carb. Total | 10 g |
| Dietary Fiber/Fibra Dietética | 0 g |
| Sugars/Azúcares | 9 g |
| Protein/Proteínas | 0 g |

% Daily Value/% Valor Diario

| | |
|---|---|
| Protein/Proteínas | 0% |
| Vitamin/Vitamina C | 100% |
| Calcium/Calcio | 0% |
| Iron/Hierro | 0% |

*In children under two years old.

**INGREDIENTS:** APPLE JUICE (WATER, JUICE CONCENTRATE), WATER, AND LESS THAN 0.5% OF PECTIN, ASCORBIC ACID (VITAMIN C), FISH OIL (TUNA) [A SOURCE OF OMEGA-3], MALIC ACID, GELLAN GUM.

**INGREDIENTES:** JUGO DE MANZANA (AGUA, CONCENTRADO DE JUGO), AGUA, Y MENOS DEL 0.5% DE PECTINA, ACIDO ASCÓRBICO (VITAMINA C), ACEITE DE PESCADO (ATÚN) [UNA FUENTE DE OMEGA-3], ACIDO MALICO, GOMA GELANA.

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ESTE PRODUCTO ESTÁ PASTEURIZADO.

GLUTEN FREE

Nestlé
Juicy Juice
DHA - A BUILDING BLOCK for BRAIN DEVELOPMENT
LET'S TALK NUTRITION
Good to Know
This product has no added sugar; all sugars are naturally occurring from fruit juice.
Questions? ¿Preguntas?
Call/Llame al 1-800-510-6763 M-F/L-V 8AM-to/a 8PM ET/Hora del Este. Visit/Visite NestleUsa.com
Good to Remember
The human brain triples in volume between birth and two years, so it's never too early to start good nutrition habits.
VISIT JuicyJuice.com

For best quality, use by date stamped on container.
Para una mejor calidad, consumir antes de la fecha grabada en el envase.
DHA may cause product to appear cloudy. This is normal.
DHA puede causar que el producto se vea turbio. Esto es normal.
Shake well before opening. After opening, keep refrigerated and use within five days.
Agitar bien antes de abrir. Una vez abierto, mantener refrigerado y utilizar en los próximos cinco días.

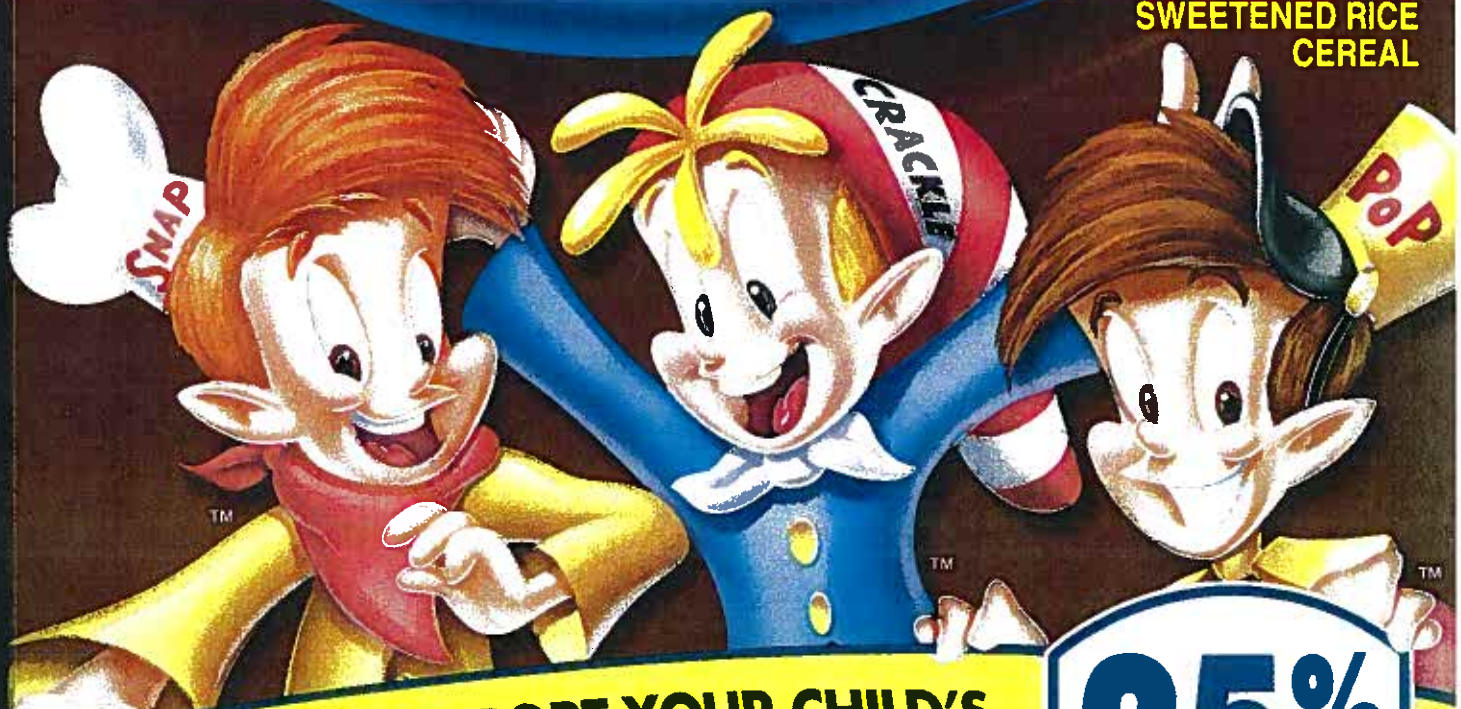
Kellogg's

6% 2% 6% * 25% 25%

See side panel for more informatio

# COCOA KRISPIES

CHOCOLATEY, SWEETENED RICE CEREAL




NOW HELPS SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S

# IMMUNITY

25% DAILY VALUE OF ANTIOXIDANTS & NUTRIENTS

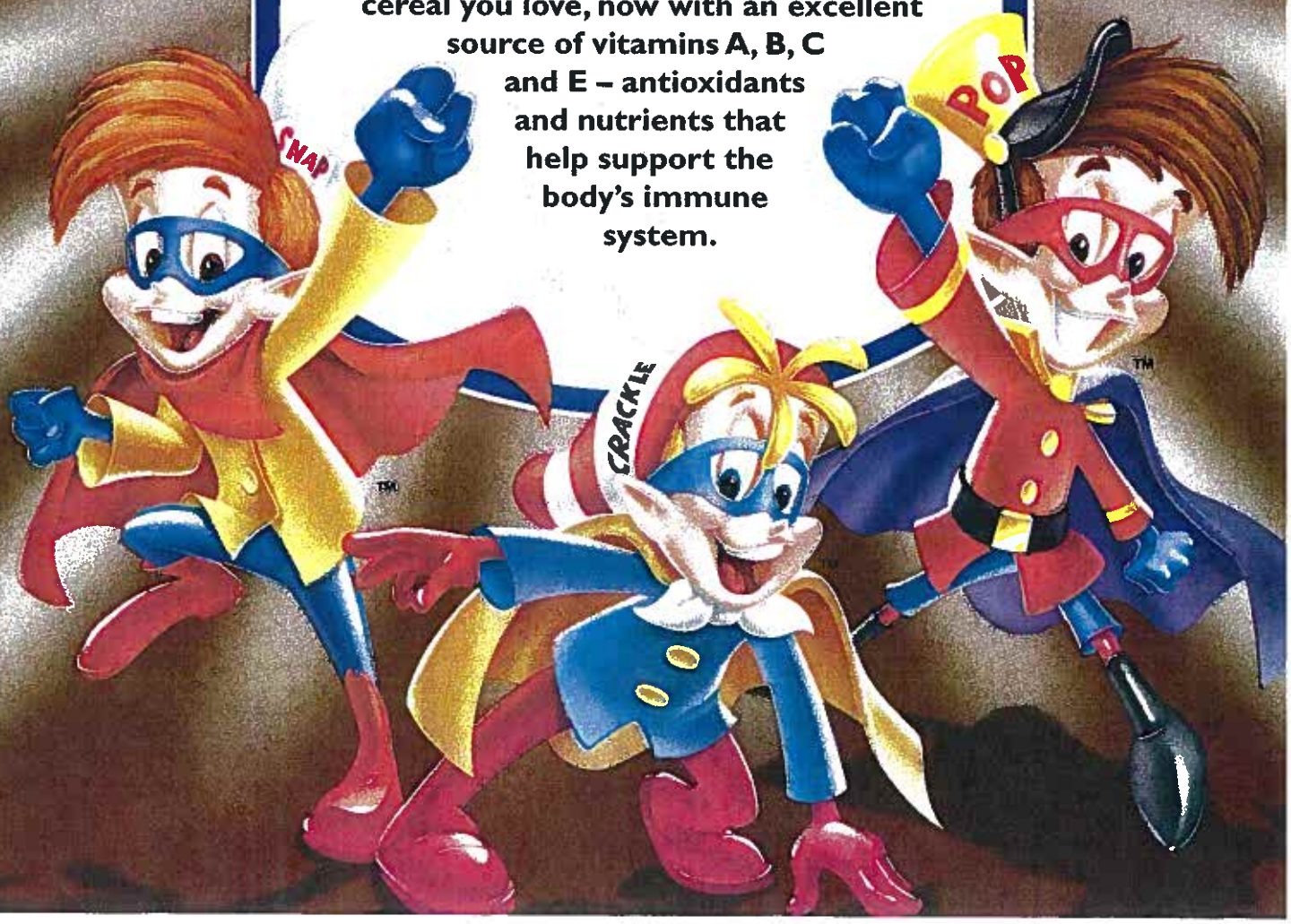
VITAMINS A,B,C & E

WITH ANTIOXIDANTS AND NUTRIENTS

# Helping to support your family's IMMUNITY

*Kellogg's*® *Cocoa Krispies*® has been improved to include antioxidants and nutrients that your family needs to help them stay healthy.

*Cocoa Krispies*® is still the same delicious cereal you love, now with an excellent source of vitamins A, B, C and E – antioxidants and nutrients that help support the body's immune system.



Kellogg's

# COCOA KRISPIES

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 3/4 Cup (31g/1.1 oz.)
Servings Per Container About 15

| Amount Per Serving | Cereal | Cereal with 1/2 Cup Vitamins A&D Fat Free Milk |
|---|---|---|
| **Calories** | 120 | 160 |
| Calories from Fat | 10 | 10 |
| | **% Daily Value**** | |
| **Total Fat** 1g* | 2% | 2% |
| Saturated Fat 0.5g | 3% | 3% |
| *Trans* Fat 0g | | |
| **Cholesterol** 0mg | 0% | 0% |
| **Sodium** 150mg | 6% | 8% |
| **Potassium** 60mg | 2% | 8% |
| **Total Carbohydrate** 27g | 9% | 11% |
| Dietary Fiber less than 1g | 1% | 1% |
| Sugars 12g | | |
| Other Carbohydrate 15g | | |
| **Protein** 1g | | |
| Vitamin A | 25% | 30% |
| Vitamin C | 25% | 25% |
| Calcium | 4% | 15% |
| Iron | 25% | 25% |
| Vitamin D | 10% | 25% |
| Vitamin E | 25% | 25% |
| Thiamin | 25% | 30% |
| Riboflavin | 25% | 35% |
| Niacin | 25% | 25% |
| Vitamin $B_6$ | 25% | 25% |
| Folic Acid | 25% | 25% |
| Vitamin $B_{12}$ | 25% | 35% |
| Phosphorus | 2% | 15% |
| Zinc | 10% | 15% |

* Amount in cereal. One half cup of fat free milk contributes an additional 40 calories, 65mg sodium, 6g total carbohydrates (6g sugars), and 4g protein.

** Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

| | Calories | 2,000 | 2,500 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Fat | Less than | 65g | 80g |
| Saturated Fat | Less than | 20g | 25g |
| Cholesterol | Less than | 300mg | 300mg |
| Sodium | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Potassium | | 3,500mg | 3,500mg |
| Total Carbohydrate | | 300g | 375g |
| Dietary Fiber | | 25g | 30g |

Calories per gram: Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

**INGREDIENTS:** RICE, SUGAR, COCOA PROCESSED WITH ALKALI, SEMISWEET CHOCOLATE (SUGAR, CHOCOLATE, ANHYDROUS DEXTROSE), PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED VEGETABLE OIL (ONE OR MORE OF: COCONUT, SOYBEAN AND/OR COTTONSEED)†, SALT, MALT FLAVORING, CALCIUM CARBONATE, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, ASCORBIC ACID AND SODIUM ASCORBATE (VITAMIN C), IRON, ALPHA TOCOPHEROL ACETATE (VITAMIN E), NIACINAMIDE, ZINC OXIDE, VITAMIN A PALMITATE, PYRIDOXINE HYDROCHLORIDE (VITAMIN $B_6$), RIBOFLAVIN (VITAMIN $B_2$), THIAMIN HYDROCHLORIDE (VITAMIN $B_1$), FOLIC ACID, BHT (PRESERVATIVE), VITAMIN D, VITAMIN $B_{12}$.

† LESS THAN 0.5g *TRANS* FAT PER SERVING.

**Distributed by Kellogg Sales Co.**
**Battle Creek, MI 49016 USA**
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**Exchange:** 2 Carbohydrates
The dietary exchanges are based on the *Exchange Lists for Meal Planning*, ©2003 by The American Diabetes Association, Inc. and The American Dietetic Association.

*No percentage for sugar is given since the % DV for sugars has not been established. The Institute of Medicine suggests that less than 25% of daily calories come from added sugars to help minimize the consumption of foods with empty calories (IOM, 2002/2005). For a 2,000 calorie diet, this would equal 125g of added sugar per day.

Visit **www.kelloggsnutrition.com** to learn how to

## Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Drumstick (98g)
Servings Per Container 4

| Amount Per Serving | |
|---|---|
| **Calories** 340 Calories from Fat 170 | |
| | **% Daily Value*** |
| **Total Fat** 19g | **29%** |
| Saturated Fat 10g | **50%** |
| Trans Fat 0g | |
| **Cholesterol** 20mg | **7%** |
| **Sodium** 100mg | **4%** |
| **Total Carbohydrate** 36g | **12%** |
| Dietary Fiber less than 2g | **8%** |
| Sugars 23g | |
| **Protein** 6g | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Vitamin A 4% | • | Vitamin C 0% | |
| Calcium 8% | • | Iron 2% | |

Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

| | Calories: | 2,000 | 2,500 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Fat | Less than | 65g | 80g |
| Sat Fat | Less than | 20g | 25g |
| Cholesterol | Less than | 300mg | 300mg |
| Sodium | Less than | 2,400mg | 2,400mg |
| Total Carbohydrate | | 300g | 375g |
| Dietary Fiber | | 25g | 30g |

INGREDIENTS: MILKFAT AND NONFAT MILK, CONE (BLEACHED WHEAT FLOUR, SUGAR, SOYBEAN OIL, PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED SOYBEAN AND COTTONSEED OIL, SALT, SOY LECITHIN) PEANUTS, FUDGE CORE (SUGAR, WATER, CORN SYRUP, SWEETENED CONDENSED MILK, COCONUT OIL, COCOA, SALT, VANILLIN ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, CARRAGEENAN, MONO AND DIGLYCERIDES, SOY LECITHIN), CONE COATING (COCONUT OIL, SUGAR, COCOA POWDER, PARTIALLY HYDROGENATED SOYBEAN OIL, SOY LECITHIN, HYDROGENATED PALM OIL, VANILLIN ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR), SUGAR, HEAD COATING (COCONUT OIL, PALM OIL, SUGAR, COCOA, REDUCED MINERALS WHEY, MILK, CHOCOLATE, SOY LECITHIN, ARTIFICIAL VANILLA FLAVOR), CORN SYRUP, WHEY, STABILIZER (MONO AND DIGLYCERIDES, GUAR GUM, CALCIUM SULFATE, CELLULOSE GUM, CARRAGEENAN), NATURAL FLAVOR, INVERT SUGAR, ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, ANNATTO COLOR

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Gerber

NEW LOOK!

# GRADUATES®

for preschoolers

## juice treats™

naturally flavored

preschooler

NO PRESERVATIVES

- Developmentally appropriate
- Good source of VITAMIN C
- FUN fruit shapes and flavors with unique soft texture

## Fruit Medley

natural cherry, grape, orange, pineapple, peach and raspberry flavors with other natural flavors

ENLARGED TO SHOW TEXTURE

6 POUCHES

6-1 OZ (28g) pouches NET WT 6 OZ (170g)

### For Preschoolers

**Nutrition Facts**

Serving Size 1 Pouch (28g)
Servings Per Container 6

| Amount Per Serving | |
|---|---|
| **Calories** 100 | |
| Calories from Fat 0 | |
| **Total Fat** | 0g |
| Saturated Fat | 0g |
| Trans Fat | 0g |
| **Cholesterol** | 0mg |
| **Sodium** | 25mg |
| **Potassium** | 15mg |
| **Total Carbohydrate** | 24g |
| Dietary Fiber | 0g |
| Sugars | 17g |
| **Protein** | 0g |
| **%Daily Value** | |
| Protein 0% • Vitamin A 0% | |
| Vitamin C 20% • Calcium 0% | |
| Iron 0% | |

INGREDIENTS: CORN SYRUP, SUGAR, WHITE GRAPE JUICE CONCENTRATE, CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF: CARRAGEENAN, NATURAL FLAVORS, DEXTROSE, ASCORBIC ACID (VITAMIN C), CORNSTARCH, HYDROGENATED COCONUT OIL, RASPBERRY AND APPLE JUICE CONCENTRATES, PEACH JUICE, RED CABBAGE EXTRACT COLOR, CARNUBA WAX, BEESWAX, PAPRIKA EXTRACT COLOR, ANNATTO EXTRACT COLOR, ELDERBERRY JUICE CONCENTRATE COLOR, CITRIC ACID

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THIS PRODUCT SHOULD ONLY BE FED TO SEATED, SUPERVISED CHILDREN WHO ARE AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF AGE.

Gerber

## START Healthy STAY Healthy™

Nutrition Guide

birth+ | supported sitter | sitter | crawler | toddler | preschooler

Our Start Healthy Stay Healthy™ Nutrition Guide gives you the information you need to provide your child with the best possible nutrition for healthy growth and development.

Our unique color-coded symbols will help you choose the right products – from infancy to preschool. Visit *gerber.com* for more information.

Your child may be ready to start using this product if he or she can ...

- Run well without falling
- Sit in a booster seat or child seat at family meals
- Chew more skillfully and efficiently
- May use spoon and fork well

### Good to Know

- ✓ **No** artificial sweeteners
- ✓ **No** artificial flavors
- ✓ Perfect size pouch for little hands
- ✓ Taste preschoolers love

### Good to Remember

- ✓ Preschoolers need about 1,000 calories per day – same as when they were toddlers.
- ✓ Good for a once in a while treat.
- ✓ If your child loves juice treats, try our new Fruit Twists made with 99% real concentrated fruit and juice.
- ✓ Try our other preschooler meals, snacks and treats.

Gerber Parents Resource Center™

1-800-4-GERBER www.gerber.com
Anytime, day or night.

March 16, 2009

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
2204 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-0530

Attn: Karen Nelson

Dear Chairman Waxman:

The undersigned organizations would like to meet with you to discuss legislation to modernize the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 (NLEA). Many of our organizations worked closely with your office in 1989 when you introduced legislation that eventually became the NLEA and would welcome the opportunity to do so again.

We know that even in these economically troubled times we must keep working on long-term health promotion efforts, focusing especially on matters such as improving food labeling that do not require increased funding, yet produce great returns in terms of health care cost savings. Food labeling is a key component of a comprehensive public health promotion strategy to combat both childhood and adult obesity and diet-related diseases such as diabetes, cancer and heart disease.

However, to continue the positive process and fulfill the health promotion potential that your previous food labeling initiative produced, the NLEA must be updated. Because many changes and new discoveries have occurred since the NLEA was enacted in 1990, the current law does not match today's health priorities. Further, since its enactment, some companies have taken advantage of certain areas in the 1990 law where guidance is missing or incomplete, leading to unintended consequences. This has reduced the positive impact that food labeling can have on the public's health.

While FDA has the authority to address certain aspects of this problem, the nature and scope of the needed reforms indicate the necessity for Congress to take the lead. We hope that you will once again champion this issue by holding hearings and supporting legislation that would bring the NLEA into step with today's health priorities.

We look forward to meeting with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA
Executive Vice President, CEO
American Medical Association

Daniel E. Smith
President
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network

Sue A. Nelson
Vice President, Federal Advocacy
American Heart Association

Martha Archuleta, PhD, RD
President
Society for Nutrition Education

Shereen Arent
Executive Vice President Government
Affairs and Advocacy
American Diabetes Association

James L. Bland, MD, JD
President
American Society of Bariatric
Physicians

Michael F. Jacobson, PhD
Executive Director
Center for Science in the Public Interest

Carolyn W. Jackson, CFCS
Executive Director
American Association of Family and
Consumer Sciences

Georges C. Benjamin, MD, FACP,
FACEP (Emeritus)
Executive Director
American Public Health Association

Michael A. Barry
Executive Director
American College of Preventive
Medicine

Richard Fiesta
Director of Government & Political Affairs
Alliance for Retired Americans

Chris Waldrop
Director, Food Policy Institute
Consumer Federation of America

Mary Louise Embrey
Director of Government Affairs
National Association of School Nurses

Harrison C. Spencer, MD, MPH, CPH
President and CEO
Association of Schools of Public Health

Urvashi Rangan Ph.D.

Dr. Urvashi Rangan
Senior Scientist/Policy Analyst
Consumers Union