

# CHOCOLATE MILK: MORE HARMFUL THAN HEALTHFUL

By Jonathan Smith

Schools around the world serve chocolate milk—and kids love it. On a recent Australian newscast, investigative reporter Chloe Baker interviewed children about chocolate milk. “The only time I get chocolate milk is when I go to school only,” one youngster told Ms. Baker, as her friends nodded. In fact, many children only get to have chocolate milk at school—but they get to drink a lot of it there. Some children consume as many as 10 or even 15 cartons of chocolate milk in a week at school. Baker noted that “it’s an out-of-control problem.”

Chocolate milk has a sky-high sugar content. One tiny carton of chocolate milk has approximately 30 grams of sugar. That is more than a can of soda—and you wouldn’t see schools giving kids Coke. In fact, according to the Coca-Cola company, a mini-can, which contains 7.5 fluid ounces of soda, has only 25 grams of sugar. Thus, a small container of chocolate milk has approximately 20% more sugar than soda.

Jamie Oliver, a food lover and activist, has been leading a campaign against chocolate milk in schools. According to his website, “When kids drink chocolate and strawberry milk every day at school, they’re getting nearly two gallons of extra sugar each year. That’s really bad for their health.”

In an episode of his television show “Food Revolution,” Oliver filled a school bus with 57 tons of sand, representing the amount of sugar American children consume in one week just from drinking chocolate milk.

Ann Cooper, the head of nutrition services for the Boulder Valley School District in Louisville, Colorado, also champions the cause to ban chocolate milk from schools. “Chocolate milk is soda [dressed up],” stated the self-proclaimed Renegade Lunch Lady. “It works as a treat in homes, but it doesn’t belong in schools.”

Thanks to their relentless efforts, and highly publicized stunts, these champions of nutrition have caught the public’s eye. People are standing up and taking notice, especially as obesity remains a growing problem in the United States. John Deasy, the Superintendent of the Los Angeles Public Schools, announced that chocolate and strawberry milk would be banned from L.A.

schools. The Queensland Health Minister also stated that he would take the matter under advisement as they “pay attention to what Jamie Oliver does.”

So what should kids drink in school? Danielle Martin, Director of Jamie’s Ministry of Food, an organization started by Oliver in the UK, says, “Children need plain milk.” Plain milk also contains vitamins children need such as vitamin D.

Parents agree with Martin, stating that children would be more likely to choose plain milk over chocolate, if not given the choice.