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Kellogg Pulling Nutrition Claim Label

SAN FRANCISCO (MarketWatch) -- Kellogg Co. (K 51.80, +0.69, +1.35%) said Wednesday that it will discontinue the immunity statements on boxes of its Rice Krispies cereals. The company said it had started adding antioxidants to the cereal last year in response to parents wanting a more nutritious cereal. Labels on Rice Krispies boxes read "Now Helps Support Your Child's Immunity." Kellogg said the currently labeled boxes will remain on store shelves and that it will take a few months for the change to take effect. "While science shows that these antioxidants help support the immune system, given the public attention on H1N1, the company decided to make this change," Kellogg said in a statement.

Kellogg's Immunity Claims Draw Fire

Boxes of Krispies Cereals Say They Help Boost Kids' Immune Systems, but Critics Challenge Assertion

CBS) Kellogg, the nation's largest cereal maker, is making new, controversial claims that its Krispies cereals can help boost kids' immune systems.

A banner reading, "Now helps support your child's IMMUNITY" can be seen in bold letters on the front of boxes of Rice Krispies, Cocoa Krispies and Frosted Krispies.

The label also says Kellogg has increased the amount of Vitamins A, C and E the cereals contain from 10 percent of the recommended daily minimum consumption to 25 percent.

But some parents, health advocates and others are skeptical.

"I don't think it has that much nutrients in the cereals that kids need to be having," one mother in a Los Angeles mall told **CBS News**."

The city of San Francisco sent a letter this week to Kellogg and the Food and Drug Administration requesting evidence of the immunity claims, suggesting Kellogg "may mislead parents at a time when they are increasingly worried about the spread of the H1N1 virus."

And Kelly Brownell, of Yale University's [Rudd Center for Food Policy and Obesity](#),

observed to **CBS News Correspondent Kelly Wallace** that, "It simply defies logic to think that spraying on some vitamins and minerals to a cereal that's otherwise almost 40 percent of its weight in sugar makes a healthy product. It just doesn't add up."

Kellogg counters that the increase in vitamins means the cereals do promote good health.

In a statement, the company says, "These nutrients have been identified by the Institute of Medicine and other studies as playing an important role in the body's immune system. Therefore, we believe the claim ... is supported by reliable and competent scientific evidence."

Kellogg also disputes the claim that it's playing on parents' H1N1 fears, saying it began developing the line of cereals in focus more than a year ago, before most people even knew of H1N1, adding that the cereals have been on store shelves since May.

But **registered dietician Keri Glassman**, an "Early Show" contributor, was sharply critical of the Kellogg claims Tuesday, telling co-anchor **Maggie Rodriguez** simply adding some vitamins "absolutely" doesn't make the cereals healthier. "Fortifying healthy foods," Glassman says, "is important and actually is a way that many people in this country meet their nutrient needs. Fortifying a junk food, though, absolutely does not make it health food."

"The **second ingredient in Cocoa Krispies**, which is the one I have the real problem with, is **sugar**. It also has **high-fructose corn syrup**, another refined sugar, and **partially hydrogenated oils**, otherwise known as **trans-fats**. **Overdosing on sugar actually weakens our immune system**. So, although antioxidants are important to boost our immune system, slapping it on a sugared cereal, we can't slap immunity across it. It's very misleading to go parents out there, especially with what's going on in the world right now (H1N1)."

Glassman pointed to several widely-available foods that have been shown to help immunity.

They include:

Oranges, grapefruits and berries

These foods contain vitamin C. Increases the production of infection fighting white blood cells and antibodies that help prevent viruses.

Sunflower seeds, wheat germ and nuts

These foods contain vitamin E, another important antioxidant that stimulates production of cells that help destroy germs.

Garlic

Contains the active ingredien allicin, which fights infection and bacteria. Also, may help prevent cancer.

Fish

Salmon, mackerel, sardines and herring are rich in omega-3 fats, which reduce inflammation, increasing airflow and protecting lungs from colds and respiratory infections.

Tea

The amino acid that's responsible for tea's immune boosting abilities is L-theanine, and is found in both black and green tea--decaf versions have it, too.

Beef / Poultry

Zinc is an immune boosting mineral. Mild zinc deficiency can increase your risk of infection. Zinc in your diet is very important for the development of white blood cells, the immune system cells destroy invading bacteria and viruses. You can find zinc in oysters, beans, turkey and beef.

Sweet Potato

Your skin is part of your immune system; it's actually your first line of defense against bacteria and viruses. Beta carotene is a precursor to vitamin A which plays a major role in the production of connective tissue, a key component of skin. Think sweet potatoes, carrots and cantaloupe.

Mushrooms

Mushrooms have been used for centuries around the world to boost the immune system. Mushrooms increase the production and activity of white blood cells that fight infection.