



Smart Snacks in School

Effective July 1, 2014, schools must meet the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Smart Snacks in School rule, which requires all foods and beverages sold outside school meal programs to meet nutrition standards. These "**competitive foods**" are sold during the school day in vending machines, snack bars and a la carte lines, in competition to the reimbursable school meal.

Under Smart Snacks in Schools, competitive foods must:

- Be a "whole grain-rich" grain product; or
- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food; or
- Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable; or
- Contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of one of the nutrients of public health concern in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber).

Foods must also meet several nutrient requirements:

Calorie limits:

- Snack items: ≤ 200 calories
- Entrée items: ≤ 350 calories

Sodium limits:

- Snack items: ≤ 230 mg (≤ 200 mg in 2016)
- Entrée items: ≤ 480 mg

Fat limits:

- Total fat: ≤ 35% of calories
- Saturated fat: < 10% of calories
- Trans fat: zero grams

Sugar limit:

- ≤ 35% of weight from total sugars in foods

Nutrition Standards for Beverages: All schools may sell:

- Plain water (with or without carbonation), no portion limit
- Unflavored low fat milk
- Unflavored or flavored fat free milk and milk alternatives (e.g. soy milk, lactose-free milk)
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice and
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation), and no added sweeteners.

Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions, middle/high schools up to 12-ounces of milk and juice.

Beyond this, the standards allow additional "no calorie" and "lower calorie" beverage options, including caffeinated beverages, in high school: No more than 20-ounce portions of calorie-free, flavored water (with or without carbonation); and other flavored and/or carbonated beverages that contain < 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces or ≤ 10 calories per 20 fluid ounces. No more than 12-ounce portions of beverages with ≤ 40 calories per 8 ounces, or ≤ 60 calories per 12 ounces.

Fundraisers: The proposed rule exempts food and beverages brought from home, and allows states to establish exemptions for items sold at infrequent fundraisers or bake sales. The rule would not apply to items sold during non-school hours, weekends or off-campus events (e.g. concessions during sporting events and school plays).

Local Flexibility: States and/or local schools have the flexibility to maintain or establish their own more stringent standards for competitive foods, as long as they meet the minimum federal standards.