

Overview of the USDA Smart Snacks Rule

Guidance for School Principals and Staff

Definitions

Competitive food

All food and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day, other than those meals reimbursable under the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program.

School campus

All areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that is accessible to students during the school day

School day

The period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day

A La Carte

Menu items sold individually and, therefore, not part of the school nutrition program's reimbursable meals

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act required the USDA to establish nutrition standards for competitive foods sold in schools. USDA's interim final rule "Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School," is **effective July 1, 2014**. These science-based nutrition standards promote a healthy school environment and apply to all foods and beverages sold outside of the reimbursable school nutrition program meals, such as:

- A la carte cafeteria sales
- Snack bars
- Fundraisers
- School stores
- Vending machines

HOW WILL THIS IMPACT MY SCHOOL?

Fundraisers

Schools may use foods and beverages that meet the competitive foods standards to raise funds for school sponsored events, clubs, and activities. These standards do not apply to items sold off-campus or during non-school hours. Schools may adopt stricter standards through their Local School Wellness Policy. Fundraisers for food and beverage items that do not meet Smart Snacks **may not** occur at any time during the school day. Parent organizations and extracurricular groups that wish to sell foods or beverages for fundraising purposes should be apprised of these standards.

Beverages

Allowable beverages for all grades include plain water, low-fat (1%) milk (unflavored), nonfat milk (flavored and unflavored) and 100% fruit and/or vegetable juice. Although federal regulations allow High schools the additional flexibility to sell other flavored and/or carbonated diet and low-calorie beverages, including those that contain caffeine, the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy does not currently allow carbonation of any kind. Additional state regulations are forthcoming to further clarify beverage requirements

Record-Keeping

Schools must keep accurate documentation of compliance with the Smart Snacks rule. Compliance will be determined during the time of the district's Administrative Review.

A Team Approach

These nutrition standards extend beyond the scope of the school food service operation. It is important for school leadership and staff to partner alongside school nutrition professionals in order to communicate information about the new standards, as well as develop a plan to ensure compliance.

NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR FOOD

The following food items are exempt from all competitive food nutrient standards, and therefore may be sold:

- Fresh, canned or frozen fruits with no added ingredients except water or packed in 100% juice, extra light syrup or light syrup
- Fresh vegetables and canned vegetables with no added ingredients except water or sugar for processing
- **NSLP/SBP Entrée** items are exempt when they are sold on the day of service or the school day after service
- Sugar-Free Chewing Gum

All other food items must meet the following criteria, for all age/grade levels:

General Criteria (must be *one* of these 4 items)

1. Whole grain-rich (50% or more whole grains by weight or first ingredient whole grain); **OR**
2. Have as the first ingredient fruit, vegetable, dairy or protein (meat, beans, nuts, eggs etc.); **OR**
3. A combination food with at least ¼ cup fruit and/or vegetable; **OR**
4. Contain 10% of the Daily Value of one of the four nutrients of public health concern: calcium, potassium, vitamin D, dietary fiber

AND meet the following additional nutrient standards

Nutrient	Standard
Calories	Entrée: ≤350 calories per item Snack/Side Dish: ≤200 calories per item
Sodium	Entrée: ≤480 mg sodium per item Snack/Side Dish: ≤230 mg sodium per item (≤200 mg after July 1, 2016)
Total Fat	≤35% of total calories from fat per item as packaged/served
Saturated Fat	≤10% of total calories per item as packaged/served
Trans Fat	Zero (<0.5 g) grams of trans fat per portion as packaged/served
Total Sugar	≤35% of weight from total sugars per item (dried/dehydrated fruits/vegetables exempt)

NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR BEVERAGES

Beverage	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
Plain water, with or without carbonation	No size limit	No size limit	No size limit
Low fat milk (1%), unflavored	≤ 8 oz	≤ 12 oz	≤ 12 oz
Nonfat milk, unflavored or flavored	≤ 8 oz	≤ 12 oz	≤ 12 oz
100% fruit/vegetable juice ^(A)	≤ 8 oz	≤ 12 oz	≤ 12 oz
Caffeinated beverages	Not allowed ^(B)	Not allowed ^(B)	Allowed
Calorie free ^(C) and low-calorie beverages ^(D)	Not allowed	Not allowed	Limited Allowability per State Regulations ^(E)

(A) 100% fruit/vegetable juice and 100% fruit/vegetable juice diluted with water, with or without carbonation, and no added sweeteners

(B) Foods and beverages must be caffeine-free, with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine substances

(C) Other flavored and/or carbonated beverages (≤20 fl oz) that are labeled to contain ≤5 calories per 8 fl oz, or ≤10 calories per 20 fl oz

(D) Other flavored and/or carbonated beverages (≤12 fl oz) that are labeled to contain ≤40 calories per 8 fl oz, or ≤60 calories per 12 fl oz

(E) Texas regulations do not allow certain calorie free and low calorie beverages to be sold during the school day

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