

# Overview of the USDA Smart Snacks Rule

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## *GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS*

### **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
- School stores
- Snack bars
- Vending machines
- Fundraisers

## *HOW WILL THIS IMPACT MY SCHOOL?*

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### **Revenue**

This new rule may impact school revenue depending on each school's current food and beverage product selection and sales.

Child nutrition operations may not carry negative fund balances or debts of any kind and school districts are responsible for using non-federal funds at year end to ensure the child nutrition account has a positive balance. As availability of healthier options increases and greater student acceptance is achieved, any impact on revenue should decline over time. School groups (band, clubs, parent/teacher groups) are encouraged to explore selling non-food items or items not meant to be consumed at school.

### **Record-Keeping**

All schools must keep accurate documentation of compliance with the Smart Snacks rule. Local education agencies are to maintain records for competitive foods and beverages sold outside of the auspice of the school food service operation. School food operators are responsible for maintaining records of foods and beverages sold under the auspices of the nonprofit school food service operation. Compliance with the Smart Snacks rule will be determined during the time of a district's Administrative Review.

### **A Team Approach**

These nutrition standards also apply to all foods sold in schools, including fundraisers. Schools may use foods and beverages that meet the competitive foods standards to raise funds for school sponsored events, clubs, and activities. Fundraisers with food and beverage items that do not meet Smart Snacks may not occur at any time during the school day. It is important to communicate these new rules to parent organizations or extracurricular groups that sell food or beverages for fundraising purposes. It is also important to communicate with school leadership and staff, as well as the Local School Wellness Policy committee, which may choose to adopt stricter standards. A collaborative team approach can ensure compliance and, ultimately, promote a healthy school environment.

## 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, egg 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 <sup>(A)</sup>	≤ 8 oz.	≤ 12 oz.	≤ 12 oz.
Caffeinated beverages	Not allowed <sup>(B)</sup>	Not allowed <sup>(B)</sup>	Allowed
Calorie free <sup>(C)</sup> and low-calorie beverages <sup>(D)</sup>	Not allowed	Not allowed	Limited Allowability per State Regulation <sup>(E)</sup>

(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