

Smart Snacks

Overview

Nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day were established under the direction of The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). As a result, the “Smart Snacks in School” (Smart Snacks) regulation was published in June 2013 by the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) with the standards effective on July 1, 2014. The Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards are codified by 7CFR §210.11 under “Competitive food service and standards”.

Terminology

Accompaniments - Edible items, such as condiments, designed to supplement or complement a food or meal component. Any accompaniments to competitive foods must be included in the nutrient analysis of the food item served. The average amount of the accompaniment used per food item may be used in order to calculate the contribution of the accompaniment to the nutrient analysis of the food item served.

à la carte – Food items that are priced and sold separately from a reimbursable meal.

Combination food - A product containing two or more components representing two or more recommended food groups: fruit, vegetable, dairy, protein, or grain. Combination foods must meet the specific nutrient requirements described in the Smart Snacks standards.

Competitive foods - All food and beverages other than meals reimbursed under programs authorized by the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act and the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day which include snacks sold in vending machines, a la carte lunch lines, fundraisers, and in student stores.

Compliant fundraiser – Funds raised for school-related purposes by selling competitive food and/or beverage items during the school day that meet the Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards.

Entrée item - A main dish food item within one of these categories: 1) A combination food of meat or meat alternate (m/ma) and whole grain-rich food; 2) A combination food of vegetable or fruit and m/ma; or 3) A m/ma alone, with the exception of yogurt, low-fat or reduced fat cheese, nuts, seeds and nut or seed butters, and meat snacks (such as dried beef jerky).

Exempt foods - Certain nutrient dense foods that are not required to meet all of the specific nutrient requirements of the Smart Snacks standards in order to encourage students to consume more of these foods. Examples include fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables that contain no additional ingredients and nut butters that primarily consist of healthier fats.

Exempted fundraiser - Funds raised for school-related purposes under a special exemption that allows for the occasional sale of food and/or beverages during the school day that do not meet the Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards. Exempted fundraiser limitations are established under fundraiser restrictions defined by the State agency.

Fundraiser -Event or activity which raises funds for a school or school-related activity that includes the exchange of currency, tokens, tickets, or other such items, for the acquisition of a product. Suggesting a donation for any product is also considered to be a fundraiser as is the use of a vending machine if the profits benefit a school-related club or activity. For further guidance, see compliant fundraiser, exempted fundraiser, and fundraiser restrictions.

Fundraiser restrictions - Per Idaho state policy, up to ten (10) exempted fundraisers, for a maximum of four (4) consecutive school days, per school may be approved by the school administrator. All exempted fundraisers beyond the ten (10) locally approved exempted fundraisers must be pre-approved by the State agency. **All fundraisers**, both compliant and exempted, **must be tracked**. No exempted fundraiser foods or beverages may be sold in competition with school meals in the food service area during the meal service.

Paired exemptions - Items that have been designated as exempt from one or more of the nutrient requirements individually and packaged together without any additional ingredients. Paired exemptions retain their individually designated exemption for total fat, saturated fat, and/or sugar when packaged together and sold. However, they are still required to meet the calorie and sodium limits for Smart Snacks.

School campus - For the purpose of the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, school campus encompasses all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day.

School day - For the purpose of the Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards, school day is the period from the midnight before, to 30 minutes after the end of the instructional day.

What are the Smart Snacks nutrition standards?

The Smart Snacks in School standards are nutrition guidelines for foods and beverages sold in school outside of the school meals programs such as vending machines and a la carte lines. These nutrition standards promote healthier choices by offering healthier snack foods to students while limiting junk food. Smart Snacks nutrition standards limit fat, sugar, and sodium while promoting fruits and vegetables, leaner protein, low-fat dairy and whole grains. The rule draws on recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, existing voluntary standards already implemented by thousands of schools around the country, and healthy food and beverage offerings already available in the marketplace.

Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards do not apply to foods or beverages brought to school from home for lunch, parties, or special events. The standards also do not apply to items provided at no cost at school such as food at parties or given as incentives. However,

many local school wellness policies prohibit providing foods and beverages that do not support the standards.

Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards require that foods sold in schools meet **one** of the following criteria:

- Have a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food as a first ingredient
- Be a whole grain-rich grain product
- Be a combination food containing at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fruit and/or vegetable

In addition to the criteria listed above, food items must meet defined nutrient requirements that limit calories, sodium, fats, and sugars.

Foods

Snack items and Entrée items have different limitations for the nutrient requirements. These requirements are as follows:

- Calorie Limits
 - Snack items \leq 200 calories
 - Entrée items \leq 350 calories
- Sodium Limits
 - Snack items \leq 200 mg
 - Entrée items \leq 480 mg
- Fat Limits
 - Total fat \leq 35% of calories
 - Saturated Fat $<$ 10% of calories
 - Trans fat zero grams
- Sugar Limit
 - \leq 35% of weight from total sugars

The Smart Snacks Standards reflect practical and flexible solutions for healthy eating. A few foods or combinations of foods are exempt from certain nutrient standards. Refer to the information below for examples of these exemptions. For additional information, visit the Smart Snacks Summary Chart at the USDA website.

- Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, with no added ingredients
- Canned fruits packed in 100% juice or light syrup, with no added ingredients except water
- Canned vegetables (no salt added/low sodium), with no added fats
- Exempt from the total fat and saturated fat standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards:
 - Reduced-fat cheese (including part-skim mozzarella)
 - Nuts, seeds, or nut/seed butters
 - Apples with reduced-fat cheese*
 - Celery with peanut butter (and unsweetened raisins)*
 - Whole eggs with no added fat

*Paired exemptions are always required to meet the calorie and sodium limits for Smart

Snacks

- Exempt from the total fat standard, but must meet all other nutrient standards:
 - Seafood with no added fat (e.g., canned tuna packed in water)
- Exempt from the sugar standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards:
 - Dried fruits with no added sugars
 - Dried cranberries, tart cherries, or blueberries, sweetened only for processing and/or palatability, with no added fats
- Exempt from the total fat, saturated fat, and sugar standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards:
 - Trail mix of only dried fruits and nuts and/or seeds, with no added sugars or fats

Beverages

- Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards sets standards by grade level for the following allowable beverages: unflavored low fat milk, unflavored or flavored fat free milk and milk alternatives permitted by National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program, 100% fruit or vegetable juice and 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation) and containing no added sweeteners
 - Elementary schools may sell up to 8oz portions milk and juice
 - Middle School and high school may sell 12oz portions of milk and juice
- Calorie free beverages, flavored and/or carbonated and labeled to contain ≤ 5 calories per 8oz, or ≤ 10 calories per 20oz
 - Not permitted in elementary and middle school
 - Portion size is limited to ≤ 20 fluid ounces in high school
- Low calorie beverages, flavored and/or carbonated labeled to contain ≤ 40 calories per 8oz, or ≤ 60 calories per 12oz
 - Not permitted in elementary and middle school
 - Portion size is limited to ≤ 12 fluid ounces in high school
- Plain or carbonated water
 - There are no restrictions for any grade
- Caffeinated beverages are only permitted at the high school level

Fundraisers

The Smart Snacks standards apply to fundraisers that involve food and beverages sold to students during the school day.

- Sales of foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks Standards and sales of nonfood items (e.g., wrapping paper and apparel) are not limited under the Federal policy.
- Fundraising activities that occur during non-school hours, on weekends, or at off-campus events are not limited under the Federal policy.
- Fundraisers selling foods that are intended to be consumed outside the school day are not limited under the Federal policy.

The USDA has provided some flexibility with exemptions and Idaho State Department of Education has set a limit of ten (10) exempted fundraisers per school year, per school site to be approved by the school administrator. Each exempted fundraiser must not be longer than four (4) consecutive school days of duration and cannot be sold in competition with school meals in the food service area during the meal service. Exempt fundraisers in excess of four (4) consecutive school days will be counted as two or more fundraisers. **Federal Regulation requires all fundraisers, both exempted and Smart Snacks compliant, to be tracked.** Pre-approval from the State agency is required for all exempted fundraisers beyond the ten (10) locally approved exempted fundraisers. This approval requires the tracking documentation used by the school administrator for all fundraisers held during the year.

Marketing

Per the Local Wellness Policy Final Rule, only those foods and beverages that meet the competitive food requirements may be marketed on school campus during the school day. This rule was finalized July 29, 2016, with the requirement that districts be in full compliance by June 30, 2017.

Why are Smart Snacks nutrition standards important?

The Smart Snacks in School standards provide science-based standards that promote fruits and vegetables, leaner protein, low-fat dairy and whole grains while limiting fat, sugar, and sodium. These standards are important because they make it easier for students to select healthier choices by giving them greater access to healthier foods. Healthier foods enhance the health and wellbeing of students which can make them better learners. The standards also support the efforts of parents, schools, and communities in encouraging healthy habits in students.

Resources

Additional resources may be available for this topic. Please check the Idaho School Nutrition Reference Guide website for copies of manuals, user guides, and helpful links to relevant subject matter.