

## Title: Nutrition Standards for School Meals

The Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 required the USDA to update federal nutrition standards for school meals. These changes went into effect on July 1, 2012 and require:

**More fruits and vegetables:** Schools must offer students fruits and vegetables with every lunch and increase the portion sizes. Vegetable choices at lunch must include a weekly offering of: legumes, dark green, and red/orange vegetables. Every school breakfast must offer students a full cup of fruit or vegetables. Students K-12 are required to take at least one half-cup serving of fruits or vegetables with every school breakfast and lunch.

**Whole grains:** At least 80% of the weekly grains offered at breakfast and lunch must be whole grain rich. Grains that are not whole grain rich must be enriched and cannot exceed 20% of the offered grains.

**Sodium limits:** Schools must gradually reduce sodium levels in school meals over a ten year period to meet the following limits:

- School Breakfast Program
  - K-5: ≤ 540 mg
  - 6-8: ≤ 600 mg
  - 9-12: ≤ 640 mg
- National School Lunch Program
  - K-5: ≤ 1230 mg
  - 6-8: ≤ 1360 mg
  - 9-12: ≤ 1420 mg

**Calorie limits:** School meals must meet age-appropriate calorie minimums and maximums:

- School Breakfast Program
  - K-5: 350-500 calories
  - 6-8: 400-550 calories
  - 9-12: 450-600 calories
- National School Lunch Program
  - K-5: 550-650 calories
  - 6-8: 600-700 calories
  - 9-12: 750-850 calories

**Limits on unhealthy fat:** Meals cannot contain added trans-fat and no more than 10% of calories can come from saturated fat.

**Low-fat and fat-free milk:** Every school meal offers one cup of fat-free or 1% milk. Flavored milk must be fat-free. A minimum of 2 choices of low-fat milk will be offered at breakfast and lunch.

**Free water:** Free drinking water must be available in the cafeteria during lunch and breakfast.

## Smart Snacks in School

### Nutrition Standards for Foods

Any food sold in schools 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.

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Food must also meet several nutrient requirements:

- Calorie limits:
  - Snack items  $\leq$  200 calories
  - Entree items  $\leq$  350 calories
- Sodium limits:
  - Snack items  $\leq$  200 mg
  - Entree items  $\leq$  480 mg
- Fat limits:
  - Total fat  $\leq$  35% of calories
  - Saturated fat  $\leq$  10% of calories
  - Trans fat 0 grams
- Sugar limits:
  - $\leq$  35% of weight from total sugars in foods

Nutrition Standards for Beverages

All schools may sell:

- Plain water (with or without carbonation)
- Unflavored low-fat milk
- Unflavored or flavored fat free milk or milk alternatives permitted by NSLP/SBP
- 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, while middle schools and high schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions of milk and juice. There is no portion size limit for plain water.

Beyond this, the standards allow additional “no calorie” and “lower calorie: beverage options for high school students.

- No more than 20-ounce portions of
- Calorie-free, flavored water (with or without carbonation); and
- Other flavored and/or carbonated beverages that are labeled to contain  $<$  5 calories per 8 fluid ounces or  $\leq$  10 calories per 20 fluid ounces.
- No more than 12-ounce portions of
- Beverages with  $\leq$  40 calories per 8 fluid ounces, or  $\leq$  60 calories per 12 fluid ounces.

Other Requirements

Fundraisers:

- The sale of food items that meet nutrition requirements at fundraisers are not limited in any way under the standards.
- The standards do not apply during non-school hours, on weekends and at off-campus fundraising events.
- The standards provide a special exemption for infrequent fundraisers that do not meet the nutrition standards. The State of Iowa does not allow any exemptions.

Approved: July 25, 2006

Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_

Revised: July 26, 2011

May 23, 2017

March 28, 2023