

School Snack & Beverage Policies

A few states and many school districts nationwide have instituted policies specifying minimum nutritional content of snack foods and vended beverages. What follows is a summary of specific recommendations that have been widely adopted:

Beverage Policy Recommendations

Fruit-based drinks composed of no less than 100% fruit juice with no artificial sweeteners, artificial flavors or colors

Drinking water with essences that are pure flavor and aroma products with a maximum dilution of 0.5-1 per 1000 and contain no artificial sweeteners, flavorings or colors

Pasteurized fluid types of unflavored or flavored low-fat (1%) or skim (fat-free) milk which meet USDA, state, and local standards and regulations of milk. All milk should contain vitamins A&D at levels specified by the FDA.

Caffeinated beverages only if naturally occurring caffeine in cocoa with less than 15 milligrams per 8 ounce serving. No artificial sweeteners, flavors or colors

Beverage products, except for drinking water, in grades K-8 not to exceed 12 ounce serving sizes; in high schools not to exceed 16 ounces.

Electrolyte replacement drinks that do not contain more than 20 grams of added sweetener per 8 ounce serving. Sodium should not exceed 110 milligrams per 8 ounces, potassium should not exceed 60mg per 8 ounce. No artificial flavorings or sweeteners.

Allowable sweeteners: sugar, dextrin, sucrose, honey, corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, cane juice, xylitol, sorbitol, fructose & Splenda

Snack Policy Recommendations

Total fat content \leq 7 grams per serving

Saturated fat content \leq 2 grams per serving

Sodium content \leq 360 milligrams per serving

Sugar content \leq 15 grams per serving

Candy will not be sold during the school day

Rationales & Talking Points

Young children should not have the opportunity to make unhealthy food choices at school

The school environment should model healthy choices

Water is an essential nutrient and a healthy beverage choice

Low-fat milk availability promotes calcium consumption without contributing unnecessary calories from fat

Districts should eliminate beverages with little nutritional value that replace more healthful alternatives

Schools should not promote the consumption of habit-forming substances (e.g. Caffeine)

High-fat foods add unnecessary calories to the diet

Foods that are high in unsaturated fat increase the risk of coronary artery disease by raising blood cholesterol

Foods high in sugar are also high in calories, and promote the development of dental caries

Schools should preferentially vend drinks that are sugar-free or low in sugar to lessen the risk of kids becoming overweight

Schools should not be contradicting health and nutrition messages taught by parents & teachers

Did You Know?

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that:

- * Soft drinks should not be sold as part of or in competition with the school lunch program (as per USDA regulations)
- * Vending machines should not be placed within the cafeteria space where lunch is sold
- * Vending machines should be turned off during school hours, and for 30 minutes before and after
- * Vended soft drinks & fruit-flavored drinks should be eliminated in all elementary schools
- * Incentives based on the amount of soft drinks sold per student should not be included as part of exclusive soft drink contracts.