

# USDA Smart Snacks in School

## Effective July 1, 2014

### Food Guidelines

#### Nutrition Standards for Foods (per item as packaged or served)

#### Any food sold on the school campus, during the school day must:

- Be a whole grain-rich grain product; **or**
- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, vegetable, dairy product, or protein food; **or**
- Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup fruit and/or vegetable; **or**
- Contain 10% of the Daily Value (DV) of a nutrient of public health concern in the *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber).\*

\* Effective July 1, 2016, foods may not qualify using the 10% DV criteria.

#### AND

#### Foods must also meet all of the specific nutrient standards (with accompaniments):

##### Calorie limits

Entrée items: ≤ 350 calories

Snack/side items: ≤ 200 calories

##### Sodium limits

Entrée items: ≤ 480 mg

Snack/side items: ≤ 230 mg\*\*

##### Fat limits

Total fat: ≤ 35% of total calories

- Exemptions: Reduced fat cheese (including part skim mozzarella), nuts and seeds and nut/seed butters, dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats, seafood with no added fat

Saturated fat: < 10% of total calories

- Exemptions: Reduced fat cheese (including part skim mozzarella), nuts and seeds and nut/seed butters, dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats

Trans fat: zero grams (<0.5g)

##### Sugar limit

Total sugar: ≤ 35% of weight from total sugars

- Exemptions: Dried/dehydrated fruits or vegetables with no added nutritive sweeteners, dried fruits with nutritive sweeteners for processing and/or palatability, products consisting of only exempt dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats

\*\* Effective July 1, 2016, snack/side items must contain ≤ 200 mg sodium.

#### Exemptions from meeting all nutrient standards:

- Fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water; or in the case of fruit, packed in 100% juice, extra light, or light syrup
- Canned vegetables that contain a small amount of sugar for processing purposes
- Entrée items offered as part of the lunch program or breakfast program on the day of service or the day after service (Entrée item is a combination food of M/MA and G, or combination of M/MA and F or V, or a M/MA served alone.)
- Sugar-free chewing gum

# USDA Smart Snacks in School

## Effective July 1, 2014

### Beverage Guidelines

Category	Elem	Middle	High
Plain or Carbonated Water	Any size	Any size	Any size
Low Fat Milk (1%), Unflavored	≤8oz	≤12oz	≤12oz
Non Fat Milk (Skim), Flavored or Unflavored*	≤8oz	≤12oz	≤12oz
100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice (plain or carbonated) with no added sweeteners	≤8oz	≤12oz	≤12oz
100% Fruit or Vegetable Juice, Diluted with Water (plain or carbonated) with no added sweeteners	≤8oz	≤12oz	≤12oz
Calorie-Free Beverages, Flavored and/or Carbonated ≤5 calories per 8oz, or ≤10 calories per 20oz	Not permitted	Not permitted	≤20oz
Low Calorie Beverages, Flavored and/or Carbonated ≤40 calories per 8oz, or ≤60 calories per 12oz	Not permitted	Not permitted	≤12oz

*\*including nutritionally equivalent milk alternatives as permitted by the school meal requirements.*

*Note: Caffeinated beverages are only permitted at the High School level.*



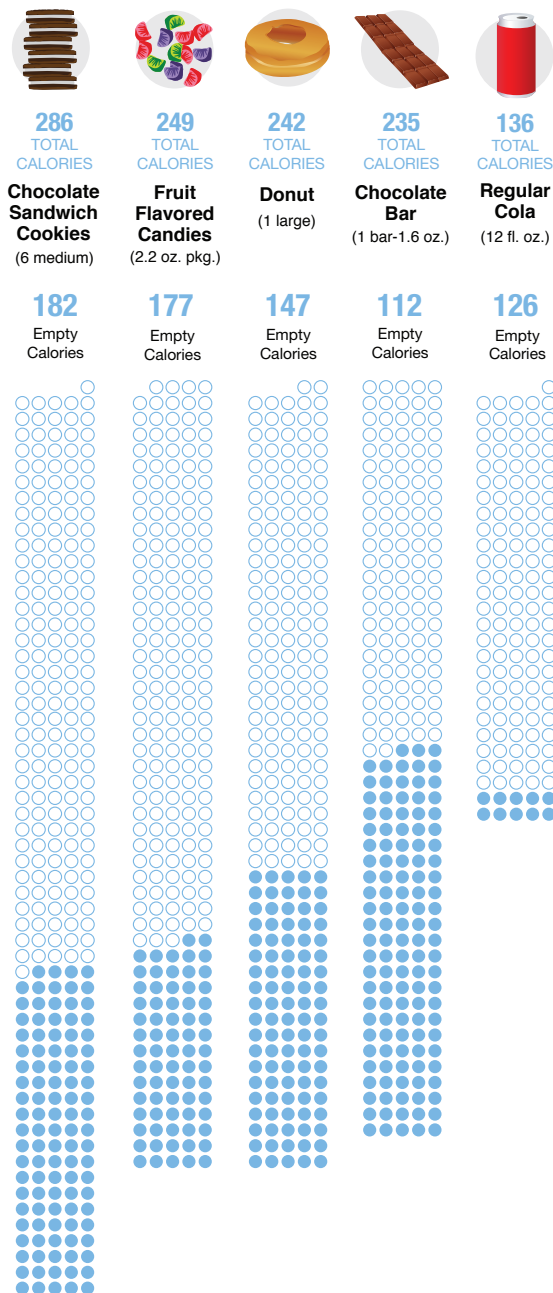
United States Department of Agriculture

# SMART SNACKS IN SCHOOL

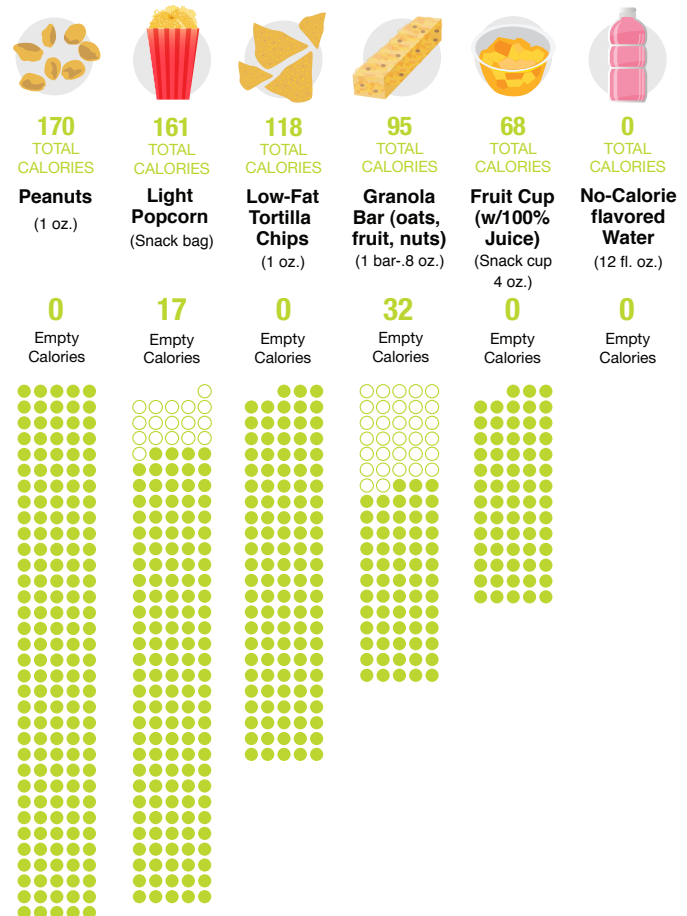
The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires USDA to establish nutrition standards for all foods sold in schools — beyond the federally-supported meals programs. This new rule carefully balances science-based nutrition guidelines with practical and flexible solutions to promote healthier eating on campus. 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.

● Equals 1 calorie ○ Shows empty calories\*

## Before the New Standards



## After the New Standards



\*Calories from food components such as added sugars and solid fats that provide little nutritional value. Empty calories are part of total calories.





United States Department of Agriculture

Food and Nutrition Service

Help make the healthy choice  
the easy choice for kids at school

# A Guide to Smart Snacks in School

For School Year 2019-2020



# Learn About Smart Snacks

Do you...

- ☐ Coordinate school fundraisers,
- ☐ Manage a school store or snack bar,
- ☐ Sell food during the school day on campus,
- ☐ Manage school vending machines, or
- ☐ Want healthier foods on your school's campus?

If you checked any of the boxes above, then the foods and beverages you're selling need to meet the Smart Snacks in School Standards. You play an important role in helping kids get the nutrition they need to grow and learn. Use this guide to learn how!

If you didn't check a box and still want to learn more about encouraging kids to choose Smart Snacks in school, see the resources on page 14.



---

## Why are Smart Snacks important?

- 1 More than a quarter of kids' daily calories may come from snacks.
- 2 Kids who have healthy eating patterns are more likely to perform better academically.
- 3 Kids consume more healthy foods and beverages during the school day. When there are Smart Snacks available, the healthy choice is the easy choice.
- 4 Smart Snacks Standards are a Federal requirement for all foods sold outside the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.



# Which food and beverages sold at school need to meet the Smart Snacks Standards?

- 1 Any food and beverage sold to students at schools during the school day,\* other than those foods provided as part of the school meal programs.
- 2 Examples include à la carte items sold in the cafeteria and foods sold in school stores, snack bars, and vending machines.
- 3 Foods and beverages sold during fundraisers, unless these items are not intended for consumption at school or are otherwise exempt by your State agency.

\* The school day is defined as the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day.



The Smart Snacks Standards apply only to locations on the school campus that are accessible to students. So, this does not include places like the teachers' lounge, although you may choose to vend healthy snacks there too.

# How can I tell if my snack meets the Smart Snacks Standards?

1

See if your snack is listed in the Products section of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Smart Foods Planner (<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/products>). These products were determined to meet the Smart Snacks Standards based on the product's ingredient statement and Nutrition Facts panel.

2

Enter information from the food or beverage's Nutrition Facts panel and ingredients list into the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Smart Snacks Product Calculator (<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator>). It is important to note that the standards are for the food items as packaged and sold. Therefore, if the item is labeled as having two servings per package, then the information in the Nutrition Facts panel must be multiplied by two. The Smart Snacks Product Calculator does this math for you.

3

If your snack doesn't have a nutrition label because it is made from scratch, then you may need to calculate the nutrition information. Your school nutrition program may have nutrient analysis software approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA; <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/usda-approved-nutrient-analysis-software>) which can be used to evaluate recipes.

Look for the blue information icons in the Smart Snacks Product Calculator! These helpful bubbles include additional information and regulatory guidance so you can enter product information correctly and get an accurate result.

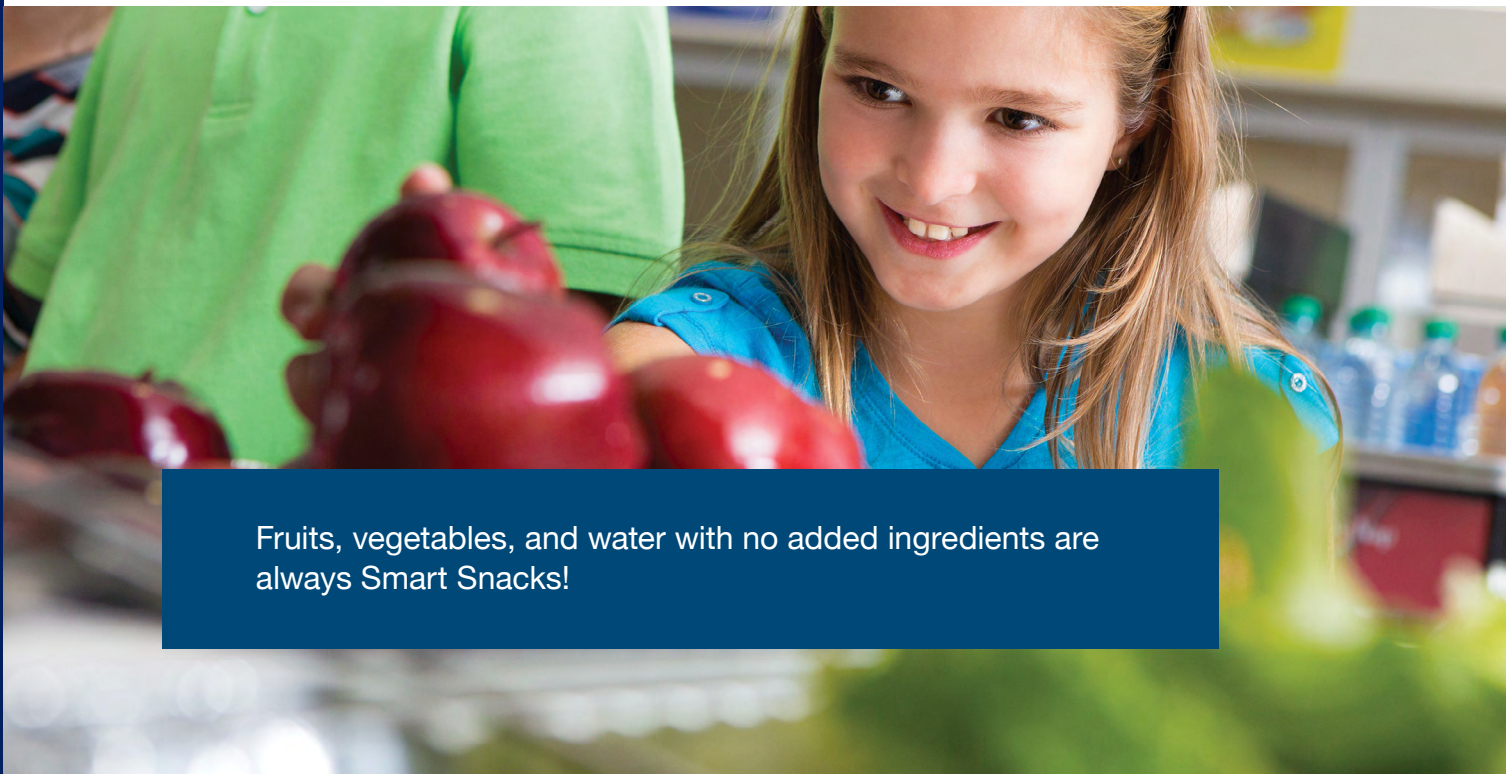




---

## Does USDA have a list of approved foods and beverages?

- 1 USDA does not approve individual foods or beverages. Even if a food says “Smart Snacks approved,” you should still evaluate the Nutrition Facts panel and ingredients list.
- 2 You can find examples of foods and beverages that meet the standards by browsing the Products section of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Smart Foods Planner (<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/products>).
- 3 If you still have questions about a food or beverage, contact your State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>).



Fruits, vegetables, and water with no added ingredients are always Smart Snacks!





## How do I find out if my granola bar is a Smart Snack?

Granola bars and other snack bars that have as a first ingredient a whole grain (e.g., whole grain rolled oats), protein food (e.g., nuts), dairy, fruit, or vegetable will meet the general standards. Then, the product must be measured against the nutrient snack standards for calories, sodium, sugar, and fats. You can use the Smart Snacks Product Calculator to assist you with evaluating the product against the snack standards.



### Tip:

When checking to see if your snack meets the standards, be sure to consider both how it is packaged as well as how it is sold, including all accompaniments. For example, if butter is added to popcorn, or ranch dressing is sold along with veggies, be sure to count the nutrition information for these condiments when determining if your snack meets the standards.



---

# What are the Smart Snacks Standards for foods?

To qualify as a Smart Snack, a snack or entrée must first meet the general nutrition standards:

- Be a grain product that contains 50 percent or more whole grains by weight (have a whole grain as the first ingredient); 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  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of fruit and/or vegetable; and
- The food must meet the nutrient standards for calories, sodium, sugar, and fats:

Nutrient	Snack	Entrée
Calories	200 calories or less	350 calories or less
Sodium	200 mg or less	480 mg or less
Total Fat	35% of calories or less	35% of calories or less
Saturated Fat	Less than 10% of calories	Less than 10% of calories
Trans Fat	0 g	0 g
Sugar	35% by weight or less	35% by weight or less



---

# What is an entrée?

For purposes of Smart Snacks, an entrée is defined as the main course of a meal that has a combination of:

- meat/meat alternate + whole grain-rich food;
- vegetable + meat/meat alternate;
- fruit + meat/meat alternate;
- meat/meat alternate alone, except for meat snacks (e.g., beef jerky), yogurt, low-fat or reduced fat cheese, nuts, seeds, and nut or seed butters; and
- a grain only, whole grain-rich entrée that is served as the main dish of the School Breakfast Program reimbursable meal.





# Finding Information on the Nutrition Facts Panel and Ingredients List

Enter this information into the Smart Snacks Product Calculator (<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator>) to see if your snack meets the standards.

**Current Label**

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 cups (30g) Servings Per Container 1	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 140	Calories from Fat 36
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 4g	6%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 170mg	7%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 25g	8%
Dietary Fiber 2g	8%
Sugars 8g	
<b>Protein</b> 1g	
Vitamin A	0%
Vitamin C	0%
Calcium	0%
Iron	0%

**INGREDIENTS:** Popcorn, sugar, canola oil, salt

First Ingredient

Serving Size  
& Servings  
Per Container

Calories

Total Fat

Saturated Fat

Trans Fat

Sodium

Sugars

**New Label**

Nutrition Facts	
1 serving per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2 cups (30g)</b>
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>140</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 170mg	7%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 25g	9%
Dietary Fiber 2g	7%
<b>Total Sugars</b> 8g	
Includes 8g Added Sugars	16%
<b>Protein</b> 1g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 0mg	0%
Iron 0mg	0%
Potassium 0mg	0%

**INGREDIENTS:** Popcorn, sugar, canola oil, salt

First Ingredient















## Why Two Labels?

Manufacturers still have time to begin using the new and improved Nutrition Facts label, so you will see both label versions for a while. Full implementation is expected by January 1, 2021. For more information visit <https://www.fda.gov>.

# Are there healthy exemptions to certain nutrient requirements?

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 table below for examples of these exemptions. For additional information, refer to the Smart Snacks Summary Chart at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-all-foods-sold-school-summary-chart>.

Food	Smart Snacks Standards Exemptions
  	<p>Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, with no added ingredients</p> <p>Canned fruits packed in 100% juice or light syrup, with no added ingredients except water</p> <p>Canned vegetables (no salt added/low sodium), with no added fats</p> <p>Exempt from all nutrient standards</p>
    	<p>Reduced-fat cheese (including part-skim mozzarella)</p> <p>Nuts, seeds, or nut/seed butters</p> <p>Apples with reduced-fat cheese*</p> <p>Celery with peanut butter (and unsweetened raisins)*</p> <p>Whole eggs with no added fat</p> <p>Exempt from the total fat and saturated fat standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards</p>
	<p>Seafood with no added fat (e.g., canned tuna packed in water)</p> <p>Exempt from the total fat standard, but must meet all other nutrient standards</p>
 	<p>Dried fruits with no added sugars</p> <p>Dried cranberries, tart cherries, or blueberries, sweetened only for processing and/or palatability, with no added fats</p> <p>Exempt from the sugar standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards</p>
	<p>Trail mix of only dried fruits and nuts and/or seeds, with no added sugars or fats</p> <p>Exempt from the total fat, saturated fat, and sugar standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards</p>

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

# What are the Smart Snacks Standards for Beverages?

## Water



Plain, with or without carbonation

No Limit

## Milk

Unflavored or flavored low-fat and fat-free milk; milk alternatives as permitted by the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program



Elementary School



Middle School



High School

## Juice

100% fruit or vegetable juice, with or without carbonation



Elementary School



Middle School



High School

## Diluted Juice

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



Elementary School



Middle School



High School

## Low- and No-Calorie Beverages (High School Only)

Low- and no-calorie beverages, with or without caffeine and/or carbonation; calorie-free, flavored water



Low Calorie Maximums:\*

40 calories/8 fl oz

60 calories/12 fl oz

\*Equivalent to 5 calories per fluid ounce.



No Calorie Maximum:\*

10 calories/20 fl oz

\*Less than 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces.



**Do you have questions about Smart Snacks Standards?**

Contact your State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>).



# How do the Smart Snacks Standards affect school fundraisers?

- 1 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.
- 2 Fundraising activities that occur during nonschool hours, on weekends, or at off-campus events are not limited under the Federal policy.
- 3 Fundraisers selling foods that are intended to be consumed outside the school day are not limited under the Federal policy.
- 4 Some State agencies allow a certain number of in-school fundraisers to be exempt from the Smart Snacks Standards. Contact your State agency for more information.



---

## What if my school district wants to have stricter standards?

These Federal standards are the minimum requirements. State agencies and/or local school districts can establish stricter standards, if desired. Consult your school's Local School Wellness Policy for more information.

---

## What are some other resources?

### Team Nutrition

<https://teamnutrition.usda.gov>

*Access free nutrition education resources like this Guide to Smart Snacks in School handout.*

### Local School Wellness Policy

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>

*Your local school wellness policy is a written document that includes standards and nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold to students on the school campus during the school day. It also includes policies about food and beverage marketing at school. Look for the school wellness policy on your school or school district's website.*

**U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Food and Nutrition Service**

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

FNS-623 | July 2016  
Slightly revised July 2019