

## **KNOWING THE FACTS ABOUT SMART SNACKS IN SCHOOLS**

Starting in the school year 2014-2015 all foods sold at school during the school day will need to meet nutrition standards. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently published practical, science-based nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages sold to children at school during the school day. The standards, required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, will allow schools to offer healthier snack foods to children, while limiting junk food.

The health of today's school environment continues to improve. Students across the country are now offered healthier school lunches with more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The *Smart Snacks in School* standards will build on those healthy advancements and ensure that kids are only offered tasty and nutritious foods during the school day.

As part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, which set a deadline for the USDA to revamp its school snack standards (which had not been revised for 30 years), the Smart Snacks in School rules affect "competitive foods," which are snacks sold in vending machines, a la carte lunch lines, fundraisers, and in student stores. In Colorado, the State Department of Education has determined that schools can allow three fundraisers that are exempt from the Smart Snacks standards per school building per year.

Now in effect, the Smart Snack in School rules apply to any school that participates in the National School Lunch Program.

### **USDA "SMART SNACKS IN SCHOOL" STANDARDS AND RULES:**

#### **CALORIE LIMITS**

- Snacks must contain less than or equal to 200 calories
- A la carte entrees must contain less than or equal to 350 calories

#### **SUGAR LIMITS**

- Snacks must contain less than or equal to 35% sugar by weight
- There are exemptions for dried fruit without added sugars and even those with added nutritive sweeteners that are required for processing and/or palatability purposes (such as cranberries, tart cherries, and blueberries). Products that consist of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fat will also be exempt

#### **SODIUM LIMITS**

- Snacks must contain less than or equal to 230mg of sodium until July 1, 2016; thereafter, snacks must contain less than or equal to 200mg sodium
- A la carte entrees must contain equal or less than 480mg

#### **FAT LIMITS**

- Total fat must be less than or equal to 35% of calories
- Saturated fat must be less than or equal to 10% of calories
- There must be no trans fat in the package as served

- There are exemptions for nuts and seeds, nut and seed butters, seafood and part-skim mozzarella cheese

Beverage limits differ based on grade level allowable beverages for all students are limited to plain water (carbonated or uncarbonated), low fat milk (unflavored) and nonfat milk (including flavored), nutritionally equivalent milk alternatives (as permitted by the school meal requirements), and full strength fruit or vegetable juices and full strength fruit and vegetable juice diluted with water or carbonated water.

#### **BEVERAGE PORTION LIMITS:**

- 8 fluid ounces for elementary schools
- 12 fluid ounces for middle and high schools
- With the exception of trace naturally occurring caffeine, beverages must be caffeine-free for elementary and middle schools

#### **BEVERAGE PORTIONS LIMITS FOR HIGH SCHOOLS**

- Calorie-free beverages are allowed in up to 20 ounce containers (less than five calories per 8 ounce serving or less than or equal to 10 calories per 20 fluid ounces).
- Lower calorie drinks are accepted with up to 40 calories per 8 ounces or 60 calories per 12 ounces
- Caffeine is permitted in beverages

**NOTE:** The Smart Snacks in School rules do not apply to foods brought from home as bagged lunches or for birthday parties, off-campus fundraisers, athletic events and school plays or foods sold during non-school hours (30 minutes after school).

**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 American (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or dietary fiber).

#### **RESOURCES TO CONTACT & ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- National PTA ([schoolfoods@pta.org](mailto:schoolfoods@pta.org))
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Smart Snacks Calculator (<http://healthiergeneration.org/calculator>)
- United States Department of Agriculture, Smart Snacks Information (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/smart-snacks-school>)
- United States Department of Agriculture, Healthier School Day-Tools for Schools: Focusing on Smart Snacks (including Smart Snacks resources and policies) (<http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools-smart-snacks>)
- Alliance for a Healthier Generation Smart Snacks Product Database (<http://healthiergeneration.org/productnavigator>)