

Connecticut's Healthy Snack Standards for Foods and Beverages at School

Connecticut's healthy snack standards focus on decreasing fat and sugar, increasing nutrient density and moderating portion sizes for snack foods and beverages in school. The Connecticut State Department of Education encourages schools to use these standards to determine what snacks are available at school, including a la carte sales in the cafeteria, vending machines, school stores, fundraisers, classroom parties and other school events. The standards do not apply to reimbursable meals served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) school nutrition programs, since standards already exist for school meals.

These standards were developed as part of Connecticut's Healthy Snack Pilot, funded by a 2003-2005 USDA Team Nutrition grant to the State Department of Education. The Healthy Snack Pilot was conducted by Connecticut Team Nutrition (a partnership of the Connecticut State Department of Education and the University of Connecticut), in collaboration with the Yale Center for Eating and Weight Disorders, and the State Department of Public Health. During the 2004-2005 school year, five pilot schools sold only those snack items which met the nutrition standards, both in the cafeteria and vending machines. The results of the pilot project can be obtained by contacting the Connecticut State Department of Education.

Recommendations: Foods sold during the school day will meet USDA standards and the Connecticut healthy snack standards. The school day begins with the arrival of the first child at school and ends after the last scheduled instructional period. Foods that do not meet these standards will not be available anywhere on school grounds until the end of the last scheduled instructional period.

Snack Categories: The healthy snack standards group snack items into three categories, including (1) Beverages; (2) Snacks and Desserts; and (3) Fruits and Vegetables.

Beverages

Acceptable beverages include:

- **Milk** – No more than 32 grams total sugar per 8 ounce serving (4 grams per ounce) for skim or 1% flavored milks (includes both naturally occurring lactose or milk sugar and added sugar). Serve low-fat dairy products (skim and 1% milk). Milk may not contain artificial sweeteners.
- **Dairy Alternatives** such as soy milk and rice milk – No more than 32 grams total sugar per 8 ounce serving (4 grams per ounce). No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat and no more than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat per serving. Dairy alternatives may not contain artificial sweeteners.
- **Fruit or Vegetable Juice (100%)** – 100 percent juice is exempt from the sugar standard.
- **Water** – Includes flavored waters without added sugar, artificial sweeteners or caffeine, and water with added juice but no added sugars, sweeteners or artificial sweeteners.

Portion Sizes – Limit portion sizes of all beverages to no more than 12 ounces (except water without added juice).

Snacks and Desserts

This category addresses chips, crackers, popcorn, cereal, trail mix, nuts, seeds, peanut butter and other nut butters, jerky, cookies, animal/graham crackers and cereal bars, granola bars, bakery items (e.g., pastries, toaster pastries, muffins, soft pretzels), frozen desserts, ice cream, cheese, yogurt and smoothies (made with low-fat yogurt or other low-fat dairy alternatives and/or fruit/juice).

- **Fat** – No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat **and** 7 grams maximum per serving (with the exception of nuts, seeds, peanut and other nut butters and cheeses).
- **Saturated Fat and Trans Fat** – No more than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat and/or trans fat **and** 2 grams maximum per serving.
- **Added Sugar** – No more than 35 percent by weight **and** 15 grams maximum per serving (excludes sugars naturally occurring in fruits, vegetables and dairy). For smoothies (made with low-fat yogurt or other low-fat dairy alternatives and/or fruit/juice), yogurt and pudding, no more than 5 grams **total** sugar (added and naturally occurring) per ounce. Snacks may not contain artificial sweeteners.
- **Whole-Grain Foods** – Encourage the availability of whole grains and foods containing fiber. Provide choices of whole grains and naturally occurring grains (those with minimal/trace amounts of added fat and no added sugar). Limit grain-based snack items made from enriched flour.



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Portion Sizes – Serve reasonable portion sizes. If products meet the preceding standards for snacks and desserts, they may be served in single-serving portion sizes **or** in a package that does not exceed the serving size limits specified below.

Baked chips, popcorn, rice cakes, puffed snacks.....	1.25 oz.
Crackers, hard pretzels, pita chips, snack mix.....	1.75 oz.
Peanut butter-filled crackers and cheese-filled crackers	1.5 oz.
Trail mix, nuts, seeds, soy nuts	1.75 oz.
Jerky	1.25 oz.
Cereals.....	2 oz.
Cookies, animal crackers, graham crackers, cereal bars, granola bars.....	2 oz.
Bakery items, e.g., pastries, toaster pastries, muffins, bagels, soft pretzels.....	3 oz.
Frozen desserts, ice cream.....	4 oz.
Pudding.....	4 oz.
Yogurt.....	8 oz.
Smoothies (made with low-fat yogurt or other low-fat dairy alternatives and/or fruit/juice).....	10 oz.
Cheese (low-fat recommended)	2 oz.
Nut butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, soy butter	No more than 4 Tbsp.
Entrée items or other protein sources	No larger than the portion size typically provided for each age/ grade group under the USDA meal pattern

Fruits and Vegetables

Make **quality fruits and vegetables** available at any place snack items are sold. For example, dried fruit in vending machines, fresh fruit like pineapple slices or melon cubes or fresh vegetables like baby carrots in a la carte lines and school stores. (“Quality” means fruits and vegetables prepared and packaged without added fat, sugar, or sodium.)

- **Fat** – No more than 35 percent of total calories from fat **and** 7 grams maximum per serving.
- **Saturated Fat and Trans Fat** – No more than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat and/or trans fat **and** 2 grams maximum per serving.
- **Added Sugar** – No more than 35 percent by weight **and** 15 grams maximum per serving.

Portion Sizes – If products meet the preceding standards for fruits and vegetables, they may be served in the following portion sizes:

- ½ cup minimum for quality fruits and vegetables
- ½ cup or 1 ounce for vegetables or fruits with added fat
- 1.5 ounces for dried fruit

This document summarizes the information contained in *Connecticut's Healthy Snack Standards for Foods and Beverages in Schools*. The standards will be evaluated and revised as needed to reflect changes in nutrition science and the availability of new healthy snack products. A list of snack items that meet the standards is available at www.state.ct.us/sde/deps/Student/NutritionEd/index.htm. For additional information, contact:

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