

Smart Snacks in School Beverage Options

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 directed the USDA to establish science-based nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold to students in school during the school day. The new Smart Snacks in School nutrition standards will help schools to make the healthy choice the easy choice by offering students more of the foods and beverages we should be encouraging—whole grains, fruits and vegetables, leaner protein, low-fat dairy, while limiting foods with too much sugar, fat and salt.

Smart Snacks in School lays out targeted, science-based nutrition standards for beverages that reflect current nutrition science and progress being made in States and local communities across the country, as well as through existing voluntary efforts. The new standards allow variation by age group for factors such as portion size and caffeine content. While water is available on an unlimited basis, USDA has established reasonable, age-appropriate portion size standards for all other beverages in order to reinforce the important concepts of moderation and balance in student diets.

Highlights of the *Smart Snacks in School* nutrition standards include:

- **Healthier beverage options during the school day. All schools are allowed to sell:**
 - Plain water (carbonated or uncarbonated);
 - Unflavored low-fat milk;
 - Flavored or unflavored non-fat milk (and milk alternatives); and
 - 100 percent fruit and vegetable juices, and full-strength juice diluted with water, carbonated or non-carbonated, with no added sweeteners.
- **Portion sizes based on age.**

Elementary schools may sell up to 8-ounce portions of allowable milk and juice beverages, while middle and high schools may sell up to 12-ounce portions. In high schools, the standards limit the maximum container size to 12-ounces for lower calories beverages and 20 ounces for calorie-free beverages.
- **Additional options for older students.**
 - The new standards provide additional beverage options to high school students, recognizing their increased independence, relative to younger students, and the wide range of beverages available to high school students in the broader marketplace. Beyond water, milk and juice, Smart Snacks in School provides additional calorie-free and lower-calorie beverage options for high school students:
 - Calorie-free beverages, in up to 20-ounce portions; and
 - Lower-calorie beverages with up to 40 calories per 8 ounces or 60 calories per 12 ounces. These may be sold in up to 12 ounce portions.
- **Caffeinated beverages remain an option for high school students.**

The new nutrition standards do not restrict the sale of caffeinated beverages to high school students. USDA encourages school districts to exercise caution when selecting items for sale to their students. USDA will continue to monitor the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) work on caffeine and will consider revising the nutrition standards in the future as appropriate.

