

Smart Snacks: What you Need to Know

Kids spend the majority of their day at school. Schools should be places that support children to be healthy and achieve their full potential. Kids who eat healthy are more likely to perform better academically; therefore it is important that all school foods and beverages are healthy, including those sold to students separate from the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

[USDA Smart Snacks](#) set nutrition standards for snack foods and beverages sold to children in vending machines, school stores, snack carts, à la carte lines and in-school fundraising. Since Smart Snacks regulations went into effect Fall 2014, significant changes have been made to improve the types of foods and beverages available for students to purchase.

What do Smart Snacks Standards Mean for my School?

Snacks must fall within certain calorie, fat, sugar and sodium limits, and both snacks and beverages must meet specific serving size guidelines. These standards have resulted in healthier snacks, including:

- more whole grain products,
- fruits and vegetables,
- protein and dairy products,
- beverage options to only include: water, non/low-fat milk, and 100% juice

Because of Smart Snacks standards, you are likely seeing more healthy, creative snacks in schools, like carrots & hummus, fruit cups, and nuts & seeds. But you may also be surprised to see a number of popular snack food brands, like Doritos® and Cheetos®, still available for kids to purchase in schools. This is because many major food companies have reformulated a number of popular products to meet Smart Snacks nutrition standards. They have done this through modifying the ingredients or changing the serving/package size. Because these reformulated “copycat snacks” are not widely available for purchase outside of schools and oftentimes look the same as the original version, it can be difficult to distinguish them from their traditional counterparts.

What Can You do to Support Healthy School Snacks?

Smart Snack standards are an important part of promoting healthier options for kids in school and helping them to develop lifelong healthy eating habits. You can help to ensure your school is in compliance with Smart Snacks standards!

- ✓ Check to make sure the foods and beverages available for students to purchase meet the Smart Snacks standards by using the Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s [Smart Snacks Product Calculator](#).
- ✓ Browse compliant products with the Alliance’s [Smart Food Planner](#) to get ideas for new products that your school can offer.
- ✓ Talk to your district’s food service director about the importance of these standards and offer your support!
- ✓ Find out from students what types of healthy snacks they like. Hold taste tests and survey students to solicit opinions and incorporate their feedback.

For more information on the Smart Snacks standards, check out these resources:

- [A Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools](#) (USDA)
- [Smart Snacks in School infographic](#) (USDA)

Got questions? Want to learn more?

Contact: Alicia Evans, for more info

Email: Alicia.evans@commongroundhealth.org



Creating Healthy Schools
and Communities