



A PTA's Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools



On July 1, 2014, the Smart Snacks guidelines—which originated from the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010—went into effect. All schools enrolled in the National School Lunch Program must comply with the nutrition guidelines for what is considered “competitive foods”—more commonly referred to as “Smart Snacks”. Although these guidelines are federally mandated, state and local jurisdictions may adopt policies that have stronger nutritional guidelines for foods served during the school day and at school events. This implementation guide applies only to the Smart Snacks federal guidelines, so it is important that you check with state and local guidelines for additional requirements around food sales in school. We also recognize that fundraising is necessary for many PTAs as a means to provide resources and programming. This guide should serve to help your PTA be a successful partner in the transition to Smart Snacks, including alternatives when fundraising is necessary.





PTA's Role

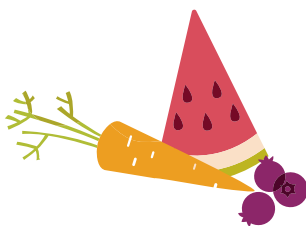
PTAs play an extraordinarily important role in supporting schools and kids with the transition to healthy food offerings throughout the school day. If your PTA is selling foods or beverages during the school day, it is required that these items meet the Smart Snacks guidelines unless your school has approved it as an exempted fundraiser (see more in fundraiser section). The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) identifies the local education agency (this is typically the school or school district) as the entity responsible for ensuring each school's compliance with Smart Snacks. As such, your PTA should identify who in the school or school district you should be working with to ensure that any food sale during the day, administered by your PTA, follows Smart Snacks guidelines. In order to support your school's success, PTAs—to the extent possible—should take it upon themselves to ensure that the food they are selling meets the Smart Snacks guidelines and any additional state or local requirements. As best practice, it may make sense for your PTA to identify someone to serve as your Smart Snacks point person—both for PTA members and school officials.

Which foods and beverages must meet Smart Snacks guidelines?

Foods and beverages must meet Smart Snacks guidelines if they are sold during the school day (defined as midnight before the school day to 30 minutes after the end of the school day). Only foods sold during this time frame and on the school campus must meet the Smart Snacks guidelines. Foods and beverages that are given away do not have to meet these guidelines because they are not being sold. Also, foods sold outside of the defined school day or on weekends, such as at evening football games, do not have to comply with the Smart Snacks guidelines.

The following foods must meet Smart Snacks Guidelines:

- A la carte lines (individually sold food and beverage in the cafeteria)
- Vending machines
- Snack bars
- School stores
- Fundraiser (unless exempted by school)



Determining if your food or beverage meets Smart Snacks guidelines

The good news is that there are existing tools to help you determine, whether a food product meets the guidelines. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation product calculator (healthiergeneration.org/calculator) allows individuals to enter in information found right on the nutrition label to determine if the product meets the Smart Snacks guidelines. The Alliance for a Healthier Generation also provides a list of products already determined to be compliant at healthiergeneration.org/productnavigator.

You can also visit PTA.org/smartsnacks for a list of food products that meet the Smart Snacks guidelines.



Fundraisers

Although PTA is an advocacy association first and foremost, fundraising is a reality for most PTAs. PTAs are often turned to for fundraising when school resources are short. PTAs also raise money to support important PTA programs that serve schools, students and families. At the same time, PTAs play an important role in creating healthy schools and supporting the healthy school environment.

To improve the health and nutrition of students, fundraisers that involve selling foods or beverages during the school day on school grounds must follow the Smart Snacks guidelines.

Keep in mind that fundraisers that take place outside of the school day, not on school grounds, or that are not designed to be consumed by students at school do not have to comply with the guidelines. For example, fundraisers in which children sell doughnuts on the weekend or cookie dough through catalogs do not have to meet the Smart Snacks guidelines.

Additionally, the USDA has created a process for which certain fundraisers that do not meet Smart Snacks guidelines can still be sold—if permissible by the state and local school. The USDA rule for exempt fundraisers does not require states and local districts to allow fundraisers.

Is it a Smart Snack?

Use this quick checklist to determine if your product is considered a Smart Snack.

- Is it a food or beverage?
- Is it sold to students?
- Is it sold before the school day, during the school day, or up to 30 minutes after the school day?
- Is it sold in a vending machine, a la carte line, school store or as a fundraiser?

If you answered yes to all these questions – your product needs to meet Smart Snack guidelines. Use the Smart Snacks calculator to determine if the food or beverage qualifies.

Foods not considered “Smart Snacks”

- Celebration foods provided free of charge
- Teacher Lounges
- Afterschool and weekend school events like football games and musicals

State-Exempted Fundraisers

The Smart Snacks guidelines allows your state to set a certain number of fundraisers that each school can sell that do not meet the nutrition standards.



Check with your principal about the number and process for exempted fundraisers in the school and keep in mind that state and local guidelines can go further and must be followed. You can also find your state's allowable exemptions at www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/bytopics.php?topicid=3115&catExpand=acdnbtm_catC

Catalog and Fundraisers Not Consumed by Students

Fundraisers like cookie dough, frozen pizza and others that are not intended to be consumed by students during the school day are not included in the Smart Snacks rule.

Alternatives

There are an increasing number of alternatives available to raise money without serving unhealthy foods to students. Many PTAs are finding successful physical activity alternatives such as walk-a-thons, jog-a-thons, fitness classes, biking events, boot camps, 5K runs, the Fire Up Your Feet Program and many more. Non-food items such as water bottles, t-shirts, cookbooks with recipes submitted by students and their families, pedometers, and others are great alternatives. A list of healthy fundraisers and non-food fundraisers can be found at PTA.org/smartsnacks. Keep checking back as new and exciting fundraiser activities are added. If you've found a successful healthy fundraiser for your PTA, share your success by emailing schoolfoods@pta.org.

No Limits on Fundraisers that Meet the Smart Snacks Guidelines

Fundraisers that are non-food or that meet the nutrition guidelines are not limited by the Smart Snack guidelines. Keep in mind that local rules apply.

Food and Beverages Sold Outside the School Day Not Included

Food and beverages sold outside of the school day and off campus do not need to meet the Smart Snacks guidelines. This includes afterschool events (occurring more than 30 minutes after the school day ends), weekend events, sporting and musical events and events off the school campus.

Celebrations

Foods and beverages given away at celebrations and other school events do not have to meet the Smart Snacks guidelines because they are not being sold. However, many schools have implemented policies that require healthy celebrations or avoid foods or beverages for celebrations or events due to food allergies. In determining what is best for your celebrations and other events, it may be helpful to consult the school wellness policy for any language that prohibits certain foods or beverages. It also is important to contact the teacher, school administrators and school nurse to determine any foods that should be avoided due to allergies. Although shifting school events to contain healthy foods and beverages or non-foods may be overwhelming and confusing, helpful tips and further information regarding this transition can be located in resources.



Why the Smart Snacks Rule?

When planning and organizing fundraisers, it's important to keep in mind that children are seeing healthier changes in their school environment during the day due to updated nutrition quality of school lunch and breakfast. Healthier options throughout the school campus during the school day helps support the school's healthier cafeteria environment and encourages children to make sound choices when they do not have the guidance of a parent during the school day. Additionally, PTA delegates passed a resolution at the 2004 National PTA Convention calling for stronger national guidelines for all foods sold in school. Although it may be difficult to shift fundraisers to be more healthful, it consistently shows children and the school community the importance of healthy eating.

Additional Ways Your PTA Can Help

Working with School Nutrition Professionals and Educators

PTAs may be able to work with school nutrition professionals to determine how to gain acceptance of the new guidelines from students by incorporating them into PTA events and fundraisers. While these types of changes can be difficult, parents, teachers, students, and school staff can work together to ensure that the guidelines are met. Keeping an open dialogue with all of those involved in selling foods or beverages at school will make adapting to these changes easier. The ultimate goal is for PTA to support the school in implementing the changes to provide healthier foods and beverages to every student.

Local Wellness Policies

Through your school wellness policy, you can ensure the Smart Snacks guidelines are followed by updating nutrition guidelines for activities, events, meetings, etc. that will take place at school and having the necessary supports in place to ensure success.

More information on school wellness policies can be found at PTA.org.

Questions?

For additional help and further questions regarding Smart Snacks guidelines, feel free to contact National PTA at schoolfoods@pta.org.



Partner Resources

GENERAL

Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Smart Snacks Calculator:
<http://healthiergeneration.org/calculator>

Alliance for a Healthier Generation Smart Snacks Product Database:
<http://healthiergeneration.org/productnavigator>

Smart Snacks in School Beverage Guidelines:
https://schools.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/wgrp6/07-267_Beverage_Guidelines.pdf

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>

United States Department of Agriculture Team Nutrition, Smart Snacks in Schools Resources: <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/smartsnacks>

FUNDRAISERS

National Association of State Boards of Education, State School Health Policy Database:
http://www.nasbe.org/healthy_schools/hs/bytopics.php?topicid=3115&catExpand=acdnbtm_catC

FUNDRAISERS

Center for Science in the Public Interest, Sweet Deals: School Fundraising Can Be Healthy and Profitable: <http://www.cspinet.org/schoolfundraising.pdf>

Association of State Public Health Nutritionists:
http://www.asphn.org/resource_read.php?resource_id=233

Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Fundraisers:
https://www.healthiergeneration.org/take_action/schools/snacks_and_beverages/fundraisers/

CELEBRATIONS AND OTHER EVENTS

Alliance for a Healthier Generation, Healthy Schools Program Healthy Celebrations:
https://www.healthiergeneration.org/_asset/nvgd8g/13-6162_HSPHealthy_Celebration.pdf

Action for Healthy Kids, Healthy Birthdays, Celebrations & Family Events:
<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/storage/documents/parent-toolkit/CelebrationsF3A.pdf>

Center for Science in the Public Interest, Healthy School Celebrations:
http://cspinet.org/new/pdf/healthy_school_celebrations.pdf

SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICIES

United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service, Local School Wellness Policy:
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/local-school-wellness-policy>

Yale University Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, Wellness School Assessment Tool: <http://wellsat.org/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Local School Wellness Policies: Where do they stand and what can you do?
http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/npao/pdf/LWP_Overview_Brief.pdf

Action for Healthy Kids, Wellness Policy Tool:

<http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources/wellness-policy-tool>

Bridging the Gap, District Wellness Policies:

http://www.bridgingthegapresearch.org/research/district_wellness_policies/

WHAT YOU CAN DO AS A PARENT

Yale Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity, Parents: Talking to Your Kids About Weight:

<http://www.yaleruddcenter.org/resources/upload/docs/what/bias/parents/Parents-HowtoTalktoYourChildaboutWeight.pdf>

STOP (Strategies to Overcome and Prevent) Obesity Alliance, Weigh In: Talking to your children about weight and health:

<http://www.stopobesityalliance.org/wp-content/themes/stopobesityalliance/pdfs/stopobesityalliance-weighin.pdf>

For those looking for the specific nutrition requirements and official guidance from the USDA, information can be found at www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschool/day/tools-schools-smart-snacks.





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