

USDA School Snack Guide – Smart Snack List for Parents, Teachers and School Foodservice Directors

The face of school snacks is changing. With the [new USDA regulations](#), healthful foods are replacing cookies and candy as the snacks available to kids. But how will this impact your school event? Let's take a look...

The Guidelines:

School snacks must conform to the USDA guidelines, which include calorie limits, sugar caps, and nutrient requirements.

- **Calorie Limits:** All snacks, including extras like butter and cream cheese, must have no more than 200 calories per serving.
- **Fat Ceilings:** Fat must make up no more than 35% of the total calorie count, with saturated fat content at less than 10% and trans fat content at 0.
- **Sugar Caps:** Only 35% (or less) of the weight in any snack food may come from sugar.
- **Nutrient Requirements:** In order to meet the USDA's guidelines, snacks must either be rich in whole grains, contain at least a quarter cup of fruit and/or vegetables, have a fruit, vegetable, protein food, or dairy product as the first ingredient, or contain 10% or more of the percent daily value of potassium, dietary fiber, vitamin D, or calcium.

The Guidelines and YOU:

Technically these guidelines are only required for food items sold at the school. They do not apply to off-site fundraisers or events that take place during non-school hours. However, we encourage everyone to follow the guidelines above.

Snack Inspiration:

Homemade Options:

- **Grapes, apples, tangerines, bananas and pears** are the perfect portable fresh fruit treat.
- **Frozen grapes** are great for hot days.
- Kids always get a kick out of [rabbit bags](#), which combine fresh fruit and vegetables in individual servings.
- Sliced **vegetables** with [spicy bean salsa](#) are a fun and exciting snack!
- [Popcorn trail bags](#) are easy. Sweet and salty come together when you mix unflavored **popcorn** with dry roasted **peanuts** and a handful of **raisins**. Package each serving in a mini paper bag for personal deliveries.
- [Strawberry crunchies](#) are a snack that kids can make themselves!
- You can't go wrong with an assortment of sliced **veggies** and a flavorful low-fat **dip**! [Find over 100 snack recipes here.](#)

- For a pretty and engaging snack, try [apple butterflies!](#)
- **Fruit parfaits** abide by the guidelines and are totally gorgeous. [Try this recipe for a fun layered parfait.](#)
- [Oven fries](#) are a great snack - use sodium-free ketchup or mix it up with sweet potatoes instead of regular potatoes.

And speaking of potatoes, you can always [microwave a potato](#) and top it with steamed veggies to make a cute face!

Packaged Snacks:

- **100 calorie packs** are great options for certain foods. Try low-fat, whole grain crackers and whole grain pretzels. Sweets, even in 100 calorie packs, often have more than 35% of their weight as just sugar, while fried foods, like potato chips, have way more fat than is allowed. To be under 35% calories from fat a food cannot have more than 35 calories of fat per 100 calories.
 - **Baked tortilla chips** with 100 calorie packs of **guacamole** dip can be fun treats.
 - **Baked potato chips** will meet the guidelines at 120 calories and 3 grams of fat.
 - Baked whole grain **pita** chips are a handy option.
 - Fill **pita** pockets with veggies and a little nonfat Italian dressing for a fun snack.
 - Prepared **veggie** and **fruit trays** with low-fat dips are speedy, fuss-free options.
 - For a calcium-rich option, try single-serving, sugar-free **pudding cups**.
 - Light, low-fat **yogurt** comes in cups and squeeze tubes. As long as it meets the sugar requirements, it is good to go.
 - Whole grain **cereals** like shredded wheat, oatmeal "O's", and Chex are great snack options without added sugar.
 - **Brown rice cakes** are great options. Kids can top them with nut butter and fruit.
 - Boxed **raisins** and other dried fruits are great.
 - Whole grain **fig cookies** like Fig Newtons will work.
 - **Fruit cups** and **individual fruit serving cans** packed in juice are great packaged snacks, too.
- **For More Information:** For more details and inspiration, visit <https://foodandhealth.com/usda-snack-foods-schools/>.

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