

Wellness Policy – Affect on Food & Nutrition Services Operation Changes to the Program

School meals are highly regulated by the USDA federally, via the state Child Nutrition Bureau. The regulations establish nutrition guidelines and requirements for both food groups and specific nutrients by meal (breakfast and lunch). Each meal must consist of specific food groups and portion sizes per meal, whereas the nutrients, including fat level, are specified as a weekly average. An example would be that the percentage of calories coming from fat over the course of the week (5 breakfasts and 5 lunches) should not average more than a total of 30%. An individual food served in a meal may be at a level more than 30%, so long as the average is 30% or less.

The guidelines for ala carte food sales are less restrictive than those in a meal. Primarily, school meal programs cannot sell items defined in the regulations since 1979 as “Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value.” Mostly, these would be foods with sugar being the primary nutrient (most candies, Popsicles, gum, soda, suckers, etc.). We don’t sell these – never have, never will.

Because school meals are already regulated nutritionally, there will not need to be many changes. If ala carte items are not normally served as a part of a balanced complete meal, then any food with more than 15 gm. of sugar, more than 40% of its calories coming from fat, or larger than a single portion (defined by the Dietary Guidelines for Americans), could not be sold.

Those ala carte items now being sold that are more than a single portion are:

- Big cookies (3.5 oz.) Changing to 1.5 oz. only
- Shakes Changing to Yo-Cream, 4 oz. , 0 fat, 7 gm sugar
- 20 oz. Beverages Reducing to 12 and 16.9
- Colossal Hamburgers, 5.3 oz. Changing to 2.4 oz. (cooked wt.)
- Bagels 4 oz.

Those ala carte items now being sold that contain more than 15 gm. of sugar per portion (FNS does not sell candy) are:

- Little Debbie Snacks, 26-30 Discontinuing, already gone at 5 of 10
- Cappuccino
- Chai Looking for a Splenda product
- Shakes (though are dairy) Changing to Yo-Cream, 4 oz. dish/cone
- Ice Milk (though are dairy, and could be exempt) Yo-Cream
- Some Beverages, 22-26 gm. Looking for replacements, Nestle Waters, 0 sug
Crystal Light, 0 sugar, 16.9 oz.
- Some Novelty Ice Creams Eliminate some, switch to real ice cream, soft
with 15 gm. sugar/ 4oz.

Those ala carte items being sold that contain 40% or more of it’s calories from fat are:

- Little Debbie Snacks
- Some Potato Chips (baked are ok, traditional is not)

New Items Tested:

- Hot Peanuts Trail Mix (2-3 varieites)
- Almond Crunchers Pretzel Poppers
- Mini Rice Cakes (3 fat, 1 sugar) Old Colony Cookies (mini, 7 gm sugar)
- PBJ Crackers PBJ Bites
- Jonny Rap Fries (5 fat, 1 sugar) Quaker Breakfast Squares
- XTreme Fruit Bites (15 sugar) Reduced Fat Doritos, Cheez-its

Changes already made in last few years:

- Only Whole Wheat Bread
- Using low-sugar cereals, whole grain
- Serving low fat milk, skim and 1% white, 1% chocolate and strawberry
- Reduced fat and sugar desserts (made from scratch)
- Add 10-25% whole wheat flour to baked goods (even cookies)
- French Fries – served 2-3 X per week at Jr. Highs. Only offered with a few meals at Senior Highs. Otherwise, purchased ala carte for \$1.50
- Using low-fat cheeses
- More Yogurt

Some of the food items served as a part of a meal DO receive more than 40% of their calories from fat. But because they are part of the meal that contributes to the weekly average of calories coming from fat at the 30% level (per federal regs), they *can* be sold ala carte. This would include such food items as Pizza, French Fries, Hamburgers, Nachos, 1.5 oz. Cookies, Donuts, etc. All are balanced by fruit, vegetable, and milk.

Little Debbie Snacks are especially popular because of the \$.25 price. FNS has been actively searching the market for acceptable snack/sweet items that meet the fat and sugar limitations of the Wellness Policy, are affordable, and acceptable to students.

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