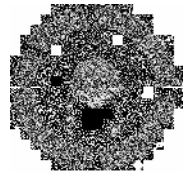


5 Richmond Square
Providence, RI 02906
401-751-4503 • Fax 401-421-0248
Email kids1st@gis.net • www.kidsfirstri.org

Team Nutrition is a USDA
funded program through
RI Department of Education



Updated August, 2005

Guidelines for Choosing Healthier Snacks and Vending Items

The Kids First Guidelines for Choosing Healthier Snacks are based on a food-group focused approach that will encourage snack foods that are whole food, real food and thus contain naturally occurring nutrients and micro nutrients. Basically, this approach eliminates snack foods that would fall into the category of Fats, Oils, and Sweets at the top of the Food Guide Pyramid. This concept grew out of a successful educational program of RI Team Nutrition entitled “Snacks vs. Treats.” Through this program we specify that “snacks” are everyday foods that should contribute to meeting daily nutrient needs and “treats” are the once-in-a-while foods that are above and beyond our daily needs – like ice cream, soda and candy bars.

The Kids First Guidelines encourage the offering of foods of maximal nutrient density. Foods that are of maximal nutrient density will be lean sources of protein and/or complex carbohydrates and low in total fat, as opposed to foods that are nutrient void and only calorie dense, from added sugars, fats, and highly processed flour/carbohydrates. Furthermore, foods of maximal nutrient density will contain a significant amount (10% or more) of at least one of the following: calcium, vitamin C, vitamin A, iron or fiber. For a copy of the Kids First Approved Products list, e-mail us at kids1st@gis.net.

A Healthy Vending / Snack Food is:

- A food item that fits into one of the five food groups of the Food Guide Pyramid because of nutrient density associated with that food group AND meets the specific guidelines for that Food Group as listed in the *Food Group-Specific Guidelines*, beginning on page 2.
- Water
- A Combination Food: food items that have main ingredients from more than one food group in the Food Guide Pyramid and is approved according to the *Combination Foods Guidelines* on page 4.

Examples:

Fresh vegetables or fruits with low-fat dip

Fresh vegetables with hummus

Bread sticks with hummus

Pretzels with soy nut butter

Crackers with peanut butter

Trail mixes that contain granola, nuts, seeds, and/or dried fruits

Cheese with crackers

Cheese with breadsticks

Yogurt with granola topping

Fruit & nut bars

Cereal and fruit bars, etc...

Food Group - Specific Guidelines:

*If a snack or vending item fits into one of the Food Groups in the Food Guide Pyramid **AND** it meets the Specific Guidelines below for that Food Group, then it is determined to be a healthy vending/snack food. Kids First strongly suggests that any additional recommendations listed within each food group be considered when selecting snack and vending foods for your students.*

Grains Guidelines:

- Package size is **no more than** 2 ounces (56g).
- Package contains **no more than** 7 grams of sugar or other sweetener per 1 ounce of product or **no more than** 14 grams of sugar or other sweetener per 2 ounces of product
OR
- Sugar or other sweetener is **no more than** 25% by weight
- Package contains **no more than** 6 grams of total added fat.

Additional Recommendations for Grains

- A variety of grains, especially whole grains, are strongly recommended.
- Ideally, product should have no hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils or, at the least, these fats should be limited.
- Artificial sweeteners are **not** recommended.
- Fat substitutes are **not** recommended.

Fruits and Vegetables Guidelines:

Whole Fresh Fruits & Vegetables

- Whole fruits & vegetables in their natural, unpreserved, unprocessed form are **IDEAL** snack or vending items.

Dried Fruits

- Package size is **no more than** 1.5 ounces.
- Package is 100% dried fruits with **no** added sugars or fats.

Frozen or Canned Fruits

- 100% fruit packed in fruit juice with **no** added sugar or other sweeteners.

Fruit or Vegetable Juices

- Product is 100% fruit or vegetable juice
OR
- Product is water with added juice and **no** added sugars or other sweeteners. (*An example of such a product is a sparkling juice beverage.*)
- Product size is **no more than** 12 ounces.

Additional Recommendation for Fruits and Vegetables

- Whole fruit should be considered as a first choice over 100% juice due to the higher fiber content.

Dairy Guidelines:

Package Sizes:

- Yogurt and Pudding: **no more than** 8 ounces
- Milk: **no more than** 12 ounces
- Cheese: **no more than** 2 ounces
- Cottage Cheese: **no more than** 8 ounces

Fat Content:

- For all dairy products: Fat-to-Protein ratio in grams is **less than** 1.5 to 1*.
**Calculation Example: Fat-to-Protein Ratio for ½ cup of vanilla ice cream, 7 grams of fat and 2 grams of protein = ratio of 3.5 to 1. Therefore, this product would not be acceptable.*

Sugar and Sweeteners Content:

- For all dairy products, each 1 ounce serving contains **no more than** 4 grams of sugar (this includes added sugar, naturally occurring sugar found in dairy products, and fruit.)
**Calculation Example: A 6 ounce container of yogurt can contain no more than 24 grams of total sugar, 6 ounces x 4 grams of sugar per ounce.*

Additional Recommendations for Dairy

- Cheese: low-fat variety, 100% real cheese is recommended
- Milk: low-fat variety is recommended
- Yogurt: low-fat variety is recommended
- Artificial sweeteners are **not** recommended

Dairy Alternatives

Soy Products (beverage, yogurt, pudding, cheese)

- Follow dairy guidelines

Rice Beverage

- No more than 30% of calories from fat
- Each 1 ounce serving contains no more than 4 grams of sugar

Protein / Protein Alternatives: Meat, Beans, Nuts & Seeds Guidelines:

Beans, Nuts, and Seeds provide a significant source of protein, are natural foods with fiber, and provide micro nutrients and therefore, should be included in healthy snacks or vending.

- Package size is **no more than** 1.75 ounces for trail mixes, nuts, seeds, jerky.
- Package size is **no larger than** the portion served as part of the USDA National School Lunch Program for entrée items or other protein sources. (*Examples: tuna, chicken, hummus*)
- Package has **no more than** 5 grams of added sugar or other sweeteners.
- Package has **no more than** 3 grams of added fat (not naturally occurring in the product, fat added in the processing.) Exception – soy nut butters.

Calculation Example Using the “Naturally Occurring Fat” Listing:

Blue Diamond Smokehouse Almonds: 1 ounce package

Total fat = 15 grams

Naturally occurring fat in 1 ounce of almonds = 14 grams

Added fat: 15 grams – 14 grams = 1 gram

Grams of Fat Naturally Occurring in 1 Ounce (28g) Serving of Nuts/Seeds

Almonds (whole)	14 g
Brazil Nuts (6-8 nuts)	19 g
Cashews (dry roasted) (18 nuts)	13 g
Cashews (oil roasted) (18 nuts)	14 g
Hazelnuts	17 g
Mixed Nuts (dry roasted)	15 g
Mixed Nuts (oil roasted)	16 g
Peanuts (dry roasted)	14 g
Peanuts (oil roasted)	14 g
Pine Nuts (pignolia)	14 g
Pistachio, shelled (47 nuts)	13 g
Pumpkin/Squash Seed Kernels (roasted)	12 g
Sesame Seeds	14 g
Soy Nuts	5.5 g
Sunflower Seed Kernels (dry roasted)	14 g
Walnuts (14 halves)	18 g

Combination Foods Guidelines:

There are numerous examples of combination foods and quite frankly, these are the most difficult to analyze in terms of their nutrient density. It will be necessary to analyze each combination food and make a determination accordingly. Kids First recommends that you first become familiar with the Food Group-Specific Guidelines listed above and then read each package carefully and look for the following clues to make a determination as to whether or not to accept the product for your students.

- What is the number of servings in the package? What is the total calories in the package? For combination foods, **no more than 250 calories per package is recommended.** However, one exception is for nut and dried fruit trail mixes where up to 300 calories per package would be acceptable.
- Ingredients are listed according to relative weight. Are the first ingredients listed from major food groups such as: a whole grain, nuts or seeds, a fruit or vegetable with no added sugars or fats, milk, cheese, yogurt? If so, this **is acceptable.**
- Is a sweetener, sugar or other “ose” listed in the first two ingredients? In combination foods, if a sweetener is listed as the first or second ingredient, then it is truly not a combination food, but a highly sweetened product and **is not acceptable.**
- Is a fat or oil listed within the first two or three ingredients? If so, there could be more fat than food items such as nuts, fruits, or seeds and this **is not acceptable.**

Recommendations / Things to Consider for Combination Foods

- Is the fat listed a hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oil? If so, this product contains trans-fatty acids which are currently under scrutiny for their negative health effects and limiting these fats is recommended.
- Does the ingredient listing include 3 or more additives or preservatives? Typically, the more additives, the more processed the item, and the more fats and sugars that are used in the processing.
- High fructose corn syrup is currently under scrutiny for negative health effects. If product contains added sweeteners, natural sources such as fruit juice concentrates, maple syrup, and sugar are preferred sources.