

Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

This information applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) meal pattern for grades K-12. The ASP operates under the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). For information on the ASP meal pattern requirements and crediting foods for grades K-12, refer to the CSDE’s [Afterschool Snack Program Handbook](#) and visit the CSDE’s [Afterschool Snack Program](#) webpage.



Contents

- Definition of Noncreditable Foods 2
- Allowable Noncreditable Foods 2
- Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26 3
- Federal and State Laws for A La Carte Sales of Foods and Beverages 3
- Examples of Noncreditable Foods..... 4
- Menu Planning Notes..... 6
- Resources..... 7



Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

Definition of Noncreditable Foods

Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not count toward the four meal components (meats/meat alternates, grains, vegetables/fruits, and milk) required by the USDA's ASP meal patterns for grades K-12. Noncreditable foods include:

- foods and beverages in amounts that are too small to credit (i.e., less than the minimum creditable amount required by the ASP meal patterns), such as 1 tablespoon of applesauce or 1/8 ounce of cheese; and
- foods and beverages that do not belong to the five meal components. Some examples include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water.

The list on pages 4-5 includes additional examples of noncreditable foods for the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. This list is not all-inclusive.

Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) snack meal pattern requirements. The vegetables/fruits component will change to two separate components (vegetables component and fruits component).

Allowable Noncreditable Foods

School food authorities (SFAs) may serve some noncreditable foods in addition to the meal components to add variety, help improve acceptability in the meal, and satisfy appetites. Examples include maple syrup on pancakes, salad dressing on tossed greens, and condiments such as ketchup or mustard on sandwiches and other entrees.

To ensure that ASP snacks meet children's nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages SFAs to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Menu planners should read labels, be aware of the ingredients in foods, and limit the frequency and amount of less nutritious choices.

Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

Meal Pattern Changes for School Year 2025-26

Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes new sugar limits for yogurt, breakfast cereals, and flavored milk, as indicated below.

- Yogurt: No more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- Breakfast cereals: No more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.
- Flavored milk: No more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.
- Flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools: No more than 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fluid ounces.

These new sugar limits will change what types of yogurts, breakfast cereals, and milk are noncreditable foods.

Federal and State Laws for A La Carte Sales of Foods and Beverages

Some noncreditable foods (such as candy, soda, coffee, tea, and sports drinks) cannot be sold in the school nutrition programs due to federal and state requirements. Before selling any noncreditable foods and beverages to students, SFAs must make sure they comply with the applicable federal and state laws.

Some a la carte sales of foods and beverages are prohibited due to federal and state laws.

All foods available for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals (a la carte sales) must meet the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards \(CNS\)](#) or the USDA [Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards. The CNS are required for public school districts that participate in the NSLP and choose to implement the healthy food option of [Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\)](#). The USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards are required for non-HFC public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the NSLP.

All beverages available for sale to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals in HFC and non-HFC public schools must comply with the state beverage requirements of [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) and the USDA Smart Snacks beverage standards. Beverages sold in private schools and RCCIs must comply with the USDA Smart Snacks beverage standards.

Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

In addition to these nutrition standards for foods and beverages, other federal and state laws determine what and when foods and beverages may be sold or given to students on school premises, and where the income must accrue. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage and [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

Examples of Noncreditable Foods

The foods and beverages below do not credit in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. This list is not all-inclusive. For additional guidance, refer to the menu planning notes on page 6.

| | |
|--|--|
| Almond flour | Drinkable or squeezable yogurt and yogurt drinks ⁵ |
| Almond milk ¹ | Eggnog |
| Bacon (pork) | Egg whites without the yolk |
| Bacon bits, regular or imitation | Frozen yogurt |
| Banana chips | Fruit drink, fruit beverage, powdered fruit drink mix |
| Bread products that are not whole grain, whole grain-rich (WGR), or enriched ² | Fruit leathers (100 percent fruit) |
| Breakfast cereals (ready-to-eat and cooked) that are not whole grain, WGR, enriched, or fortified ³ | Fruit punch (not 100 percent juice) |
| Butter | Fruit snacks, e.g., fruit roll-ups, wrinkles, twists |
| Candy | Gelatin, regular and sugar free |
| Candy-coated popcorn | Grain products that are not whole grain, WGR, or enriched ³ |
| Chocolate milk-based drinks, e.g., Yoo-Hoo | Home-canned products, e.g., vegetables and fruits |
| Coconut flour | Honey |
| Coconut milk | Hot chocolate |
| Coffee (regular, decaffeinated, iced) | Ice cream and ice cream novelties |
| Commercial processed products without a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS), e.g., entrees, smoothies, and breaded vegetables ⁴ | Ice milk |
| Commercial smoothies that contain dietary or herbal supplements | Iced coffee |
| Condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, relish, barbecue sauce | Iced tea |
| Cranberry cocktail drink | Imitation cheese |
| Cream, half and half | Jam and jelly |
| Cream cheese | Lemonade |
| Dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning | Limeade |
| | Liquid egg substitutes |
| | Maple syrup |
| | Margarine |
| | Marshmallows |

Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

Mayonnaise
Milk, reduced fat (2%) and whole
Mustard
Nectar drinks
Nondairy milk that does not meet the
USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk
substitutes ¹
Nutrition supplement beverages,
e.g., Abbott's Pediasure
Oat milk that does not meet the USDA's
nutrition standards for fluid milk
substitutes ¹
Pickle relish
Popsicles (not 100 percent juice)
Potato chips
Pudding
Powdered milk beverages,
e.g., Nestle's NIDO
Probiotic dairy drinks
Pudding pops
Rice milk ¹
Salad dressings
Salt pork
Scrapple
Sherbet
Soda, regular and diet
Soups, commercial cream of vegetable,
e.g., cream of broccoli, cream of
mushroom, and cream of celery
Sour cream
Soy milk that does not meet the USDA's
nutrition standards for fluid milk
substitutes ¹
Sports drinks, regular and diet
Spreadable fruit
Syrup
Tea, regular, herbal, iced
Tofu with less than 5 grams of protein in
2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) ⁶

Water ⁷
Yogurt products, e.g., drinkable or
squeezable yogurt, frozen yogurt,
yogurt bars, and yogurt-covered fruits
and nuts ⁵

Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

Menu Planning Notes

- ¹ Milk substitutes for children without a disability must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes (refer to the to the CSDE's resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#)).
- ² For guidance on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).
- ³ For guidance on creditable cereals, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- ⁴ Commercial products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in ASP snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs](#); and the USDA's [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#). Additional guidance is available in the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage. Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms is available in Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation of the CSDE's training program, [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).
- ⁵ For guidance on crediting yogurt, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Yogurt in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- ⁶ For guidance on crediting tofu, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the School Nutrition Programs](#).
- ⁷ SFAs must make drinking water available to children at no charge where meals are served during the meal service, including the ASP. However, SFAs cannot promote or offer water or any other beverage as an alternative selection to fluid milk throughout the food service area. For more information, refer to [USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#) and [USDA Memo SP 19-2018: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Programs](#). Training on the water requirement is available in Module 14: Water Availability during Meal Service of the CSDE's training program, [What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

Resources

Afterschool Snack Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program>

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/asp_handbook.pdf

Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/meal_pattern_asp_grades_k-12.pdf

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/specdiet/milk_substitutes_snp.pdf

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards>

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_commercial_mma_snp.pdf

Crediting Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#CommercialProducts>

Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_enriched_grains_snp.pdf

Crediting Foods in the Asp Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#CreditingFoodsGradesK12>

Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_whole_grains_snp.pdf

Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/healthy-food-certification>

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/list-of-acceptable-foods-and-beverages>

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_grades_k-12.pdf

Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming_Meal_Pattern_Changes

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with The 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines For Americans (89 FR 31962):

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/child-nutrition-programs-meal-patterns-consistent-with-the-2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-for>

USDA Memo SP 19-2018: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Programs.

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/memos/om2018/sp19-2018s.pdf>

USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/cn_labels_snp.pdf

Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product_formulation_statements.pdf

Noncreditable Foods for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Afterschool Snack Program Handbook](#) and visit the CSDE's [Afterschool Snack Program](#) webpage, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/noncreditable_foods_asp_grades_k-12.pdf.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.

