

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

This information applies to afterschool snacks for grades K-12 in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). For information on the ASP meal pattern and crediting requirements, visit the “[Meal Patterns and Crediting](#)” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage. For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



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Noncreditable Foods in 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 4-6 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 afterschool 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.

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

Federal and State Laws for Foods and Beverages

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

- **Healthy Food Certification (HFC) Public Schools:** All foods served in afterschool snacks and sold separately from afterschool snacks must comply with the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards \(CNS\)](#). All beverages served in afterschool snacks and sold separately from afterschool snacks 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.
- **Non-HFC public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs):** All beverages served in afterschool snacks and sold separately from afterschool snacks must comply with the state beverage requirements and the Smart Snacks beverage standards. The USDA Smart Snacks food standards do not apply to the ASP.

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.

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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 7.

- Almond flour
- Almond milk ¹
- Bacon (pork)
- Bacon bits, regular or imitation
- Banana chips
- Bread products that are not whole grain, whole grain-rich (WGR), or enriched ²
- Breakfast cereals (ready-to-eat and cooked) that are not whole grain, WGR, enriched, or fortified ³
- Butter
- Candy
- Candy-coated popcorn
- Chocolate milk-based drinks, e.g., Yoo-Hoo
- Coconut flour
- Coconut milk
- Coffee (regular, decaffeinated, iced)
- Commercial processed products without a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS), e.g., entrees, smoothies, and breaded vegetables ⁴
- Commercial smoothies that contain dietary or herbal supplements
- Condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, relish, barbecue sauce
- Cranberry cocktail drink
- Cream cheese
- Cream, half and half
- Dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning
- Drinkable or squeezable yogurt and yogurt drinks ⁵
- Egg whites without the yolk
- Eggnog
- Frozen yogurt
- Fruit drink, fruit beverage, powdered fruit drink mix
- Fruit leathers (100 percent fruit)
- Fruit punch (not 100 percent juice)

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- Fruit snacks, e.g., fruit roll-ups, wrinkles, twists
- Gelatin, regular and sugar free
- Grain products that are not whole grain, WGR, or enriched ³
- Home-canned products, e.g., vegetables and fruits
- Honey
- Hot chocolate
- Ice cream and ice cream novelties
- Ice milk
- Iced coffee
- Iced tea
- Imitation cheese
- Jam and jelly
- Lemonade
- Limeade
- Liquid egg substitutes
- Maple syrup
- Margarine
- Marshmallows
- 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
- Powdered milk beverages, e.g., Nestle's NIDO
- Probiotic dairy drinks
- Pudding
- Pudding pops
- Rice milk ¹

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- 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, yogurt-covered breakfast bars, and yogurt-covered fruits and nuts ⁵

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Menu Planning Notes

- ¹ Milk substitutes for children without a disability must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Allowable Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the "Milk Substitutes" section of the CSDE's Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
- 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 afterschool 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 the USDA's [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#). Additional guidance is available on the CSDE's [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms is available in Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation Part B – Crediting Commercial Processed Products, 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 during the afterschool snack service. 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 the CSDE's [Water Availability for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. 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 in 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 Fluid Milk Substitutes for Non-disability Reasons in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Beverage Requirements (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/connecticut-nutrition-standards>

Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs#Commercial>

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 Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs>

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 School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

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

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

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

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE webpage):

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

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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

Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/smart-snacks-nutrition-standards>

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>

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

Water Availability for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/water-availability-for-school-nutrition-programs>

What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation Part A – School Menus (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

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For more information, 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.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
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3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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