

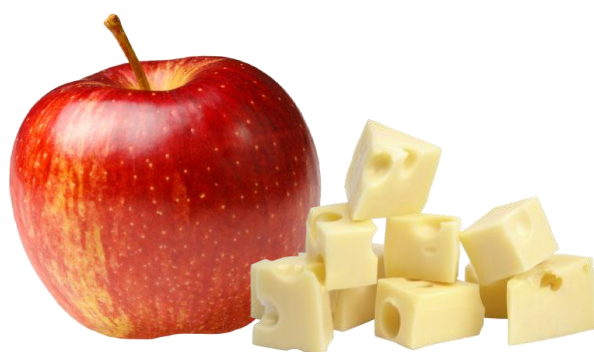
Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Paired Exempt Foods

This information applies only to sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) that do not participate in Connecticut's [Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\)](#) under [Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes](#). Public schools that participate in HFC have different requirements and must follow the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards \(CNS\)](#) for all foods available for sale to students on school premises.



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Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Paired Exempt Foods

Smart Snacks Overview

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Snacks nutrition standards were established by the final rule, [National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the HHSFKA of 2010](#). Effective July 1, 2014, these standards apply to all competitive foods sold on school campus during the school day in public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the NSLP and SBP.

- Competitive foods are all foods and beverages available for sale to students on the school campus during the school day, separately from reimbursable meals and snacks in the USDA's [Child Nutrition Programs](#) (CNP).
- The school campus is all areas of the property under the jurisdiction of the school that are accessible to students during the school day.
- The school day is the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day.

For information on the Smart Snacks requirements, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) resource, [Summary of Smart Snacks Standards](#). For guidance on the additional federal and state laws that apply to competitive foods in schools, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Overview of Federal and State Laws for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools, Private Schools, and Residential Child Care Institutions](#), and visit the CSDE's [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage.

Smart Snacks Exemptions

The Smart Snacks nutrition standards allow exemptions for certain foods that are nutrient dense, even if they do not meet all specific nutrient requirements. For example, all fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables that contain no additional ingredients are exempt from all nutrient standards because the USDA wants to encourage students to consume more of these foods. Similarly, peanut butter and other nut butters are exempt from the total fat and saturated fat standards, since these foods are nutrient dense and primarily consist of healthier fats. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Summary of Smart Snacks Standards](#).

Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Paired Exempt Foods

Paired Exempt Foods

The USDA recognizes that paired exempt foods are nutrient dense and contain foods that meet the intent of the Smart Snacks requirements. [Section 7 CFR 210.11\(a\)\(6\) of the NSLP regulations](#) defines “paired exempt foods” as food items that have been designated as exempt from one or more of the nutrient requirements individually which are packaged together without any additional ingredients. These paired exempt foods retain their individually designated exemption for total fat, saturated fat, and sugar when packaged together and sold, but are required to meet the designated calorie and sodium standards. **Note:** Entree items sold a la carte do not qualify as paired exempt foods.

Some examples of paired exempt foods that may be served together to meet the Smart Snacks requirements are listed below.

- **Peanut butter and celery:** Peanut butter is exempt from the total fat and saturated fat limits. Celery is exempt from all standards. When peanut butter is paired with a vegetable or fruit, the paired snack retains these exemptions and may be served if it meets the calorie and sodium limits.
- **Celery with peanut butter and unsweetened raisins:** Celery is exempt from all standards. Peanut butter is exempt from the total fat and saturated fat limits. Unsweetened dried fruit is exempt from the sugar limit. The paired snack retains these exemptions and may be served if it meets the calorie and sodium limits.
- **Reduced-fat cheese and apples:** Reduced-fat cheese is exempt from the total fat and saturated fat limits. Apples are exempt from all standards. When reduced-fat cheese is paired with a vegetable or fruit, the paired snack retains these exemptions and may be served if it meets the calorie and sodium limits.
- **Peanuts and apples:** Peanuts are exempt from the total fat and saturated fat limits. Apples are exempt from all standards. When peanuts are paired with a vegetable or fruit, the paired snack retains these exemptions and may be served if it meets the calorie and sodium limits.

These examples are not all-inclusive.

Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Paired Exempt Foods

Resources

[A Guide to Smart Snacks in School](#) (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/guide-smart-snacks-school>

[Competitive Foods in Schools](#) (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/competitive-foods>

[List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) (CSDE webpage):

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

[NSLP Regulations Section 7 CFR 210.11\(a\)\(6\)](#):

[https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/part-210#p-210.11\(a\)\(6\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/part-210#p-210.11(a)(6))

[Overview of Federal and State Laws for Competitive Foods in Connecticut Public Schools, Private Schools, and Residential Child Care Institutions](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/overview_federal_state_laws_competitive_foods.pdf

[Smart Snack Product Calculator](#) (Alliance for a Healthier Generation):

<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/>

[Smart Snacks in Schools](#) (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fna.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards/smartsnacks>

[Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards](#) (CSDE webpage):

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

[Summary of Smart Snacks Standards](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/compfoods/summary_smart_snacks_nutrition_standards.pdf

[USDA Final Rule: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School as Required by the HHFKA of 2010](#)

<https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/fr-072916d>

[USDA Memo SP 63-2014: Smart Snacks Standards for Exempt Foods when Paired Together:](#)

<https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/smart-snacks-standards-exempt-foods-when-paired-together>

Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Paired Exempt Foods

For more information, visit the CSDE's [Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards](#) webpage and [Beverage Requirements](#) 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/compfoods/smart_snacks_paired_exempt_foods.pdf.

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Smart Snacks Nutrition Standards for Paired Exempt Foods

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

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