

## Portion Sizes and School-Age Children

# Portion Sizes Policy Considerations

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The following recommendations will aid schools in striving to create environments that support healthy food and beverage choices by students. Establishing a policy that includes all recommendations is desirable, but phased-in implementation may be necessary in some schools.

- Ensure that National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program (NSLP) meals meet all nutrition standards and provide sufficient choices of nutritious, appealing foods in portion sizes appropriate for different age groups. In middle and high schools, increase the number of NSLP meal options available for students, including such choices as Grab 'n Go Bags, pre-plated salads, salad bars and choices for hot meals - all planned to meet nutrition standards.
    - To the extent that is financially feasible, offer larger-than-required portions of fruits and vegetables **without** added sauces and seasonings that add calories.
    - Offer entrees that are no larger than the minimum required by USDA.
    - Offer occasional desserts in small portion sizes to help students learn to enjoy quality, not quantity of food.
  - Limit beverage sales to water (any size), low-fat or nonfat (1% or less fat) flavored and unflavored milk, and 100% fruit or vegetable juices (no larger than 8 ounces for elementary and 12 ounces for middle and high schools).
  - Permit no a la carte, snack bar and vending machine sales of individual foods in elementary schools, in order to help students learn to eat well-balanced meals that have been planned to meet nutrition standards.
  - In middle and high schools, limit portions to specific sizes (examples for local consideration):
    - Snacks: 1.25 oz.
    - Cookies and cereal bars: 2 oz.
    - Bakery items: 3 oz.
    - Frozen desserts: 3 oz.
    - Yogurt: 8 oz.
    - Fries: 1 cup
    - Pizza: no more than 5 oz.
    - Entrees and side dishes: portion sizes equal to those of similar items served as part of the National School Lunch Program or School Breakfast Program.
  - Require the availability of fruits and vegetables at competitive prices and portion sizes in any venue where competitive foods are sold.
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