

Competitive Food Agreement Q&A

What is the Alliance announcing today?

Today's announcement is the second formal agreement with industry members as part of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Healthy Schools Program. Five of the nation's leading food manufacturers have joined with the Alliance to support guidelines created for its Healthy Schools Program to help students make healthier food choices in the school environment. The guidelines promote the consumption of fruit, vegetables, nutrient-rich foods, fat-free and low-fat dairy products and place limits on calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium. The guidelines cover foods offered outside of the reimbursable meal program such as products sold in school vending machines, a la carte lines, snack bars, fundraisers, and school stores. The companies included in the agreement are Campbell Soup Company, Dannon, Kraft Foods, Mars, and PepsiCo.

What do the guidelines do?

They promote a healthy lifestyle and balanced diet that may help to reduce the risk of obesity and heart disease. The guidelines have been developed to provide guidance on better choices for foods available to kids in schools by:

- Promoting consumption of fruits and vegetables
- Encouraging consumption of whole grain foods
- Promoting fat-free and low-fat dairy products
- Placing limits on total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium
- And, as in the beverage agreement, incorporating calorie limits based on age levels.

Foods covered under this agreement range from fruits and vegetables to soups and yogurt, from chips to chocolate, crackers to cookies, candy, ice cream, granola bars, and even nuts, and seeds.

Why focus on snack foods and side dishes? What about other foods available in schools?

On May 3, the Alliance announced a set of beverage guidelines together with the nation's leading beverage companies and the American Beverage Association, thereby launching our efforts with respect to school beverages.

With regards to schools, there are two major categories offered for sale in schools to students – reimbursable meals and competitive foods. Reimbursable meals include breakfast, lunch, and after-school snacks. Reimbursable meals, also known as free and reduced meals, are already regulated by the USDA. Only those competitive foods classified as Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV) are regulated by the USDA – FMNVs cannot be sold in school cafeterias during lunch periods. Some states and districts have introduced legislation, regulations, or policies for competitive foods that go beyond USDA's regulations regarding FMNVs. However many schools are only subject to the USDA regulations regarding FMNVs. For this reason, the Alliance decided to initially focus its food efforts on snack foods that are offered as competitive foods. As part of its Healthy Schools Program, the Alliance will work to develop guidelines and programs for a la carte entrée items and reimbursable meals in the future.

How do the guidelines work?

For most foods the guidelines begin with what is often referred to as “35-10-35”. These numbers refer to the following:

- No more than 35% of calories from total fat
- No more than 10% of calories from saturated fat
- No more than 35% sugar by weight

As an alternative for low calorie foods, we allow up to 1 gram of saturated fat even if calories from saturated fat exceed 10% of total calories. The guidelines also specify that foods must be trans fat free and most must have no more than 230 mg sodium. Snack foods within these limits are capped at 100 calories regardless of grade level. For foods which contain essential nutrients – defined by minimum amounts of certain vitamins and minerals, fiber, protein, fruits, or vegetables – the guidelines allow for increased portion sizes that are 150 calories for elementary school, 180 calories for middle school, and 200 calories for high school. These levels correspond to 10% of the caloric intake of sedentary children according to age. Health authorities typically estimate 10-15% of caloric intake from snacking. For snacks that provide these important nutrients, we believe that these higher calorie levels (above 100 calories) are warranted.

There are a variety of additional requirements and exceptions to these rules for certain foods such as fruits and vegetables, dairy products, nuts, seeds, nut butters, soups, and eggs. Detailed information regarding these requirements and exceptions can be found in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and in the Guidelines documents.

Qualification against these criteria can be easily determined using only information found on a package's Nutrition Facts panel. Some criteria require only a comparison of numbers, whereas other criteria will require simple calculations involving multiplication or division. The Alliance will be developing tutorials and simple online tools so that anybody can determine if a product qualifies.

How will today's announcement affect childhood obesity?

Fifty four million students attend nearly 123,000 elementary, middle and high schools nationwide, making schools a natural place to promote and reinforce healthy habits in today's youth.

The new, science-based guidelines will provide kids with food and snack products that are lower in calories, reinforcing the nutrition lessons they learn at home and in the classroom about healthy, balanced diets. Notably, the guidelines promote the consumption of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nutrient-rich foods, fat-free and low fat dairy foods and place limits on calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar and sodium. These guidelines will work in tandem with the other components of the Healthy Schools Program, which aims to help students balance their calorie intake with their calorie burn by improving their environment and teaching them lifelong healthy habits.

With these key companies on board, the guidelines will have a real impact across America.

What does this do for schools?

Schools will have a science-based, age-appropriate set of nutrition guidelines to use in support of their wellness policy that has the support of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (American Heart Association and the Clinton Foundation) and leading manufacturers. Schools will be able to more easily identify which foods meet these guidelines and through product innovation, schools will have access to an expanding number of foods that meet these guidelines.

How will the guidelines be implemented?

The Alliance and each of the food manufacturers who have signed the MOU will each work to encourage education leaders, education organizations and school authorities to adopt these guidelines and to offer students only competitive foods that meet the guidelines. Organizations whose members purchase or influence the purchase of these foods will be encouraged to support these guidelines and promote them to their members.

We recognize that most competitive foods are sold to schools and school districts by independent food distributors and contract operators. Some competitive foods are purchased from retail locations by school administrators, faculty members and coaches to sell at school stores or for use in connection with school activities. School vending machines are usually stocked by third-party vending companies. The Alliance and each signatory company will work to encourage independent food distributors, contract operators, vending brokers, vending service companies, and other relevant vendors to support these guidelines. We will also encourage companies that are not currently part of this formal agreement to support the guidelines. The Alliance and each company will designate individuals to work toward achieving these goals.

How will the Alliance assist schools in support of these guidelines?

Assistance and support will be available to all schools and districts wishing to align their policies and contracts to the competitive foods guidelines through the Alliance 1-888-KID-HLTH call line. Schools that are receiving hands-on technical assistance through the Healthy Schools Program will receive targeted assistance on implementing the competitive foods guidelines. The Alliance will develop an implementation toolkit for schools on how to align their policies and contracts with the competitive foods guidelines at www.healthiergeneration.org. The Alliance will also work with its network of national health and education organizations to educate their constituents about the guidelines and support their efforts towards implementation.

What will these companies do in support of these guidelines?

Company and product communications for direct and indirect school sales and distribution channels will explain and promote these guidelines. Companies can identify qualifying products online, in marketing collateral directed at schools and vendors who serve them, on bulk packages bought by schools, and in marketing communications directed towards parents.

Additionally, the five participating companies are already demonstrating their commitment to the new guidelines.

- Campbell will promote the benefits of its soups that are lower in calories, fat and sodium and will leverage its expertise with lower sodium natural sea salt to provide additional reduced sodium options in food service
- Dannon will reduce the sugar content of its Danimals yogurt cups for kids by 25 percent, even though the products already conform to the Guidelines before the reduction.
- Kraft will add the Alliance's sodium and calorie caps to its current vending guidelines and extend them to include all of its competitive foods sold in schools.
- Mars will create a new line of nutritious snack products that are formulated with the specific needs of children and teens in mind and that meet or exceed the Alliance guidelines.
- In addition to its products like Baked Lay's that already qualify, PepsiCo will reformulate several products and also encourage schools, distributors and vending partners to offer products that meet the new Alliance guidelines.

What will the American Heart Association do in support of these guidelines?

The AHA is a strong advocate of healthy school environments and will continue to support improvements in the school environment through legislation, regulation, and voluntary action. The agreement's competitive food guidelines are consistent with the science and policy positions of the Association. It is recognized that there is and will be state legislation, district policy, and other standards that differ from these guidelines and this agreement is not intended to usurp the authority of parents, educators, and their elected representatives to set standards for their communities. The AHA believes that these guidelines and their other school health and wellness recommendations are good models for policy makers and others as they address these issues at the federal, state and local level. Where appropriate, the AHA will promote legislative and regulatory reform that is consistent with these guidelines.

Will the effort be limited to these five companies?

No. The Alliance and the participating companies welcome all food manufacturers, food distributors, and other food companies to join with us and be part of the solution to provide healthier food choices in schools. The Alliance will work together with each of the participating companies to urge other food companies at different levels of distribution to support these guidelines in their sale and distribution of products to

schools. The Alliance will also actively recruit additional food manufacturers to join with us and support these guidelines.

Is the Alliance saying that kids should only eat foods that fall within these guidelines?

No, but the school environment is unique. Outside of school, parents can and should model healthy eating patterns and teach their children about the role that different foods can play in an overall balanced diet. Parents cannot be present in school to directly impact the choices their children make during the regular and extended school day. These guidelines are meant to reinforce the lessons children learn at home and in the classroom and will encourage them to make healthier dietary choices during the school day.

What is the Alliance for a Healthier Generation and the Healthy Schools Program?

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is a partnership between the American Heart Association and The William J. Clinton Foundation, with funding from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The Alliance is also collaborating with a network of organizations and individuals concerned with childhood obesity and physical inactivity among America's youth. The Healthy Schools Program is an Alliance initiative that was launched in February 2006.

There are five main elements of the Healthy Schools program:

1. A criteria-based recognition program that will acknowledge schools that have met set criteria for nutrition, physical activity and staff wellness. Schools will be evaluated on
 - Healthy foods offered as part of the national school breakfast and lunch programs
 - Foods offered to children through competitive food offerings in schools
 - High quality physical education and health education programs
 - After-school programs that incorporate physical activity and offer children healthy snacks
 - Availability of wellness programs for school staff

There will be progressive levels of commitment to creating and implementing a healthy school environment. These will be recognized by platinum, gold, silver, and bronze award levels and innovation awards for schools with exceptional

programs in specific areas (e.g., physical education).

2. Support and assistance is available to all schools through:
 - The online Healthy Schools Builder (www.healthiergeneration.org/hsb) that guides school teams through the process of conducting a needs assessment, setting an action plan for improving the health of their school environments, and implementing real changes.
 - A telephone-based call center at 1-888-KID-HLTH.
3. Hands-on support and assistance to Healthy Schools Program schools that reach resource-constrained and vulnerable student populations. These schools are each supported by a Relationship Manager who provides customized technical assistance to help them build healthier school environments and align their policies to the beverage and snack food agreements. During this school year, which is the pilot year, we will work with 250 schools in 13 states. Our goal is to provide hands on assistant to 3,000 schools by 2008 and 7,100 schools by 2010.
4. Assistance with negotiating school food and physical activity services and programs.
5. Work with leading food and beverage manufacturers to establish and implement guidelines for foods and beverages available to students in schools.

The program will be evaluated and outcomes and lessons learned will be used to improve the overall initiative and also will be disseminated to people in education, healthcare and related fields.

Why have these companies agreed to support these guidelines?

These leading food manufacturers are committed to addressing the issue of childhood obesity and have joined with the Alliance in our work in schools. They want to do their part to provide students across the nation access to healthier foods while in school. In supporting the guidelines, each of these companies are further demonstrating their individual commitment to these important goals. These companies already have many products in their product portfolios that fall within these guidelines. They are committed to investing in innovation – product reformulation and new product introduction – and marketing of qualifying products to further increase the availability of these products to students in schools.

Why would AHA and the Clinton Foundation work with the food industry?

The Alliance for a Healthier Generation is committed to combating childhood obesity by helping children balance their calorie intake with their calorie burn by improving their environment and teaching them lifelong healthy habits. The Alliance guidelines encourage healthier food choices for children in school that are lower in calories and contain needed nutrients. Each of these companies shares these priorities and have stepped forward to take action. We commend them for showing this leadership. By working together, we can make a greater impact in the lives of millions of children than could any one of us could alone.

How will you measure the success of the guidelines? Will they be enforced?

Over the next year we will collect baseline data identifying the competitive foods offered for sale in schools. Every two years thereafter, through 2011, a similar analysis will be conducted to assess the impact and status of these guidelines in shifting the mix of competitive foods toward those that meet these guidelines. These reports will be made public by the Alliance or designated third parties via website(s) and/or by news release.

Has the Alliance received money or other compensation from these food manufacturers?

No.

What if a school doesn't want to follow the guidelines?

The Alliance and the five food companies who have announced their support for the guidelines will work to inform schools about the merits of these guidelines. In addition, we will encourage food distributors, vending companies and other independent businesses that sell to schools to offer only qualifying products to schools.

However, there are many other food manufacturers who produce relevant products and numerous food distributors, vending brokers, warehouse clubs, etc. that sell those foods to schools. Some are very large companies. Many more are smaller, regional providers. Ultimately, each school or district will decide which products are made available to their students. We hope over time that all schools will sell to their students only foods that meet or exceed these guidelines.

In addition, for schools to receive the Alliance's Healthy Schools Program Recognition, they must sell only foods that meet these guidelines.

Do candy, cupcakes, cookies, or potato chips qualify?

They could be included if they meet the nutritional guidelines. Only products that are within the limits for calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, and sodium specified in the guidelines qualify. A survey of the Nutrition Facts panel for a broad set of these types of products indicates that the vast majority of currently available products across these categories would be eliminated in participating schools, because they exceed fat, calorie, sugar, or sodium limits.

Are functional foods such as energy bars or fortified "candy" allowed?

They could be included if they meet the nutritional guidelines. Only products that are within the limits for calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, and sodium specified in the guidelines qualify. A survey of the Nutrition Facts panel for a broad set of these types of products indicates that the vast majority of currently available products in these categories would be eliminated in participating schools, because they exceed fat, sugar, or calorie limits.

Why do the guidelines allow more sodium for vegetables with sauce and soups and for certain fat-free and low-fat dairy products?

The overall nutritional benefit of these foods outweighs the potential health concerns concerning higher sodium. They contain nutrients that kids need like vitamin A, calcium, and fiber. Many of the soups also contain vegetables, which we know that kids don't get enough of. In addition most soups are moderate in calories and low in fat and saturated fat. We will be working with the industry to provide lower sodium versions of these foods to schools over time.

Why are nuts, nut butters and seeds exempt?

While nuts, nut butters and seeds are high in fat, the type of fat found in these foods are healthy fats. These foods are also a source of fiber, vitamin E and other nutrients.

Are products with sugar substitutes allowable within the guidelines?

No specific limitations are placed on sugar substitutes within these guidelines. Although sugar substitutes can be used to provide lower sugar content and lower calorie alternatives for some snack foods, we are unaware of any product category which would require the use of sugar substitutes in order to qualify, even at the elementary grade levels where the calorie caps are the lowest.

Are products with fat replacers allowable within the guidelines?

We have not prohibited fat replacers in these guidelines, though we aren't specifically aware of any products containing them that will be made available in schools. AHA believes that within the context of a healthy dietary pattern, fat substitutes, when used judiciously, may provide some flexibility in dietary planning, although additional research is needed to fully determine the longer-term health effects.

What about laws and local standards that may be stricter?

The Alliance commends parents and policymakers for their efforts at the federal, state and local level to create healthier learning environments. Through our Healthy Schools Program, we're providing science-based guidelines that will help schools significantly reduce the calories, saturated and trans fat, sodium and sugar available to children in schools during, before, and after the school day. We recognize that there are state legislation, district policy, and other standards that differ from these guidelines, and this agreement is not intended to usurp the authority of parents, educators, and their elected representatives or to undermine any local initiatives to set standards or change any laws.