



National Alliance for Nutrition & Activity

Model Beverage and Food Vending Machine Standards

A key strategy for obesity prevention is improving access to healthy foods and beverages. Often, there is a lack of healthy options when eating away from home, particularly among selections in vending machines. Applying nutrition standards for foods and beverages in vending machines can improve access to healthier selections.

These vending standards were developed to provide a model for municipal, state, and federal government leased or operated vending machines or vending machines on public property. The standards also could be used by hospitals, private workplaces, and others to support the health of their employees or visitors.

Nutrition Standards

Beverage Standards:

- **100% of beverages must be one or a combination of the following:**
 - Water, including carbonated water (no added caloric sweeteners);
 - Coffee or tea with no added caloric sweeteners (if condiments are provided, sugars and sugar substitutes may be provided and milk/creamer products, such as whole or 2% milk, that have less fat than cream);
 - Fat-free or 1% low-fat dairy milk or calcium- and vitamin-D-fortified soymilk with less than 200 calories per container;
 - 100% fruit juice or fruit juice combined with water or carbonated water (limited to a maximum of 12-ounce container; no added caloric sweeteners);
 - 100% vegetable juice (limited to a maximum of 12-ounce container, no added caloric sweeteners, and ≤ 200 milligrams of sodium per container); and
 - Low-calorie beverages that are ≤ 40 calories per container.

Food Standards:

Provide an assortment of healthier food choices with more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free/low-fat dairy products, and lower amounts of saturated and *trans* fats, added sugars, and sodium.

- **100% of snack foods (and side dishes) must meet all of the following criteria:**
 - No more than 200 calories per item as offered (per package).
 - No more than 35% calories from fat (which would be no more than 7 grams of fat for a 200 calorie snack, for example) with the exception of packages that

- contain 100% nuts or seeds; snack mixes that contain components other than nuts and seeds must have no more than 35% of calories from fat;
 - No more than 10% calories from saturated fat (which would be no more than 2 grams of saturated fat for a 200 calorie snack, for example) with the exception of packages that contain 100% nuts or seeds; snack mixes that contain components other than nuts and seeds must have no more than 10% of calories from saturated fat;
 - 0 grams *trans* fat;
 - No more than 35% of calories from total sugars and a maximum of no more than 10 grams of total sugars in the product, with the exception of fruits and vegetables that do not contain added sweeteners or fats; and with the exception of yogurt that contains no more than 30 grams of total sugars per 8-ounce container (and adjust proportionally for smaller containers);
 - No more than 200 mg of sodium per item as offered (per package/container); and
 - Each snack food item must contain at least one of the following: 1) a quarter cup of fruit, non-fried vegetable, or fat-free/low-fat dairy, or 2) 1 oz. of nuts or seeds or 1 Tbsp. of nut butter, or 3) at least 50% of the grain ingredients are whole grain (determined by the product having whole grain as the first ingredient, from the manufacturer, or if the product has a whole grain claim), or 4) at least 10% of the Daily Value of a naturally occurring nutrient of public health concern (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or fiber).
 - Sugarless chewing gum can be sold without having to meet the above nutrition standards.
- **100% of entrée-type foods (e.g., sandwich, pizza, burger) must meet all of the following criteria:**
 - No more than 400 calories per item as offered (per package);
 - No more than 35% calories from fat (which would be no more than 15 grams of fat for a 400 calorie item, for example);
 - No more than 10% calories from saturated fat (which would be no more than 4 grams saturated fat for a 400 calorie entrée-type item, for example);
 - 0 grams *trans* fat;
 - No more than 35% of calories from total sugars and a maximum of no more than 15 grams of total sugars in the item;
 - No more than 480 mg of sodium per item as offered; and
 - Each food item must contain at least two of the following: 1) a quarter cup of fruit, non-fried vegetable, fat-free/low-fat dairy, or 2) 1 oz. of nuts or seeds or 1 Tbsp. of nut butter, or 3) at least 50% of the grain ingredients are whole grain (determined by the product having whole grain as the first ingredient, from the manufacturer, or if the product has a whole grain claim), or 4) at least 10% of the Daily Value of a naturally occurring nutrient of public health concern (calcium, potassium, vitamin D, or fiber).

Point of Purchase (POP) Calorie Labeling

- Each vending machine must display the total calorie content for each item as sold, clearly and conspicuously, adjacent or in close proximity to each individual item or its selection button, using a font and format that is at least as prominent, in size, appearance and contrast, as that used to post either the name or price of the item and where it can be seen before the consumer selects items (labeling should be consistent with federal law for calorie labeling of vending machines once in effect).

Tips for Successfully Implementing Vending Standards

- **Price** – beverages and foods that meet nutrition standards should be priced competitively (e.g., at or below) to similar items that do not meet the nutrition standards (if you chose a phased in approach).
- **Placement** – beverages and foods that meet nutrition standards should be as or more visible than similar items that do not meet the nutrition standards (for example, they should be closer to eye level).
- **Promotion** – promotional space on vending machines (e.g., sides and front panel), including but not limited to language and graphics, should promote only products that meet the nutrition standards.
- **Hold taste tests** – partner with vendors to offer taste testing of a variety of snack and beverage options that meet the nutrition standards. Have survey cards handy and tally up votes. Share results of taste testing and keep vending machines stocked with favorite items. Note: preferences may be location specific.
- **Administer online surveys** – provide online surveys in addition to or in lieu of in-person taste testing. Use online surveys as opportunities to promote healthy options in vending machines.
- **Provide education and promote program** – work with nutrition committee or health team to provide education to leadership and employees about the benefits of offering and choosing healthy foods and beverages. Use available methods to promote healthy options, cultivate support for the program, and promote educational events, taste testing, etc. Promotional methods might include posters, flyers, e-cards, emails to staff, newsletter articles, postings on bulletin boards, or signage near vending machines. Work with leadership from outset for strong buy-in and have leadership’s message and signature on promotional materials and messages.
- **Announce to community** – share information with the public to increase acceptance of the program and make healthier snacking the norm. Share information with the public through press releases, social media, etc.

A Phased in Approach

Implementation Timeline:

- 100% of items in vending machines should meet the nutrition standards for beverages and foods. If this is not feasible to implement initially, then it is reasonable to use a phased-in approach as follows:

- 50% of all items in vending machines will meet nutrition standards for beverages and foods within 1 year;
- 75% of all items in vending machines will meet nutrition standards for beverages and foods within 2 years; and
- 100% of all items in vending machines will meet nutrition standards for beverages and foods within 3 years.

Rationale for Healthier Foods and Beverages in Public Vending Machines

- Nutrition standards for foods and beverages found in vending machines can positively impact the eating habits of people working for and visiting government agencies, help shape social norms, and influence the practices and formulations of food companies.
- Through healthy vending policies, public agencies can provide healthy food and beverage options to many individuals, including employees and visitors to government parks and service agencies. For example, state and local governments employ 17 million people.
- Government agencies can be a model for healthy eating, reinforce other agency-sponsored obesity-prevention efforts, and show that healthy food tastes good and can generate revenue.
- Snack foods and sugary drinks are problems in Americans' diets. The top selling snacks include cookies, snack crackers, nuts, potato chips, tortilla chips, chocolate candy, and other candy. Sugary drinks are the number one source of calories in Americans' diets and contribute to obesity.
- More and more people are interested in healthier snack options. According to a 2010 study by the Snack Food Association, about 74% of consumers are trying to eat healthier, with about 65% eating specific foods to lose weight. Sales of healthier snacks are outpacing traditional snack foods by 3 to 1.
- Nutrition standards ensure that foods and beverages sold in vending machines in government locations align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the U.S. government's nutrition guidance for the nation.
- Offering foods and beverages that meet nutrition standards in vending machines located on government property is a promising, low-cost approach for supporting healthy eating and as part of a strategy to address obesity. It also could decrease the economic burden of obesity, which costs \$150 billion a year – half of which is paid by taxpayers through Medicaid and Medicare.