

Pricing Strategies to Encourage Healthy Eating

Overview

Offering healthy foods for sale at school is sometimes not enough to get students to eat better. How can you encourage students to choose the healthy options your school offers? One way is to price healthier options so they are cheaper than their less healthy counterparts. Students (and parents) are cost-conscious and how much a snack costs can affect their purchasing decisions.



If your school participates in the National School Meal Program, foods for sale during the school day need to meet [Smart Snacks Standards](#). Favorably pricing healthy food options will help promote these foods outside of the school hours, too.

Take Action

- Complete an inventory of all foods and beverages sold on campus by price, including vending, a la carte, concessions and the school store.
- Survey students and staff to learn about the kinds of healthy snacks they would like to see sold in school stores, concessions and other venues, and how price influences purchasing.
- Work with school purchasing staff (your Food Service Manager) to determine product cost and possible profit margins to support sales.

- Talk with your Food Service Manager about cooperative purchasing and even preparation assistance for fruits, vegetables and other fresh options.
- When pricing items, consider a tiered pricing structure to make it easy to have a variety of healthy items, such as all fresh fruit at one price.
- Consider rounding down prices to make the healthier choices a better bargain - and rounding up the price of less healthy items to offset cost.
- Look at “bundling” items to improve nutritional value of snacks. For example, offer specials such as a free apple with the purchase of a sandwich.

Tips



Check out the [Smart Snacks Standards](#) to learn about healthier food and beverage options. While these requirements apply to foods and beverages sold during the school day, these guidelines can be applied to all foods sold to consistently encourage nutritious food choices.



Get student and staff input prior to introducing new products.



Compliment all changes with promotion and education on the new products available.



Have a volunteer lead and collect teacher and student surveys to learn about the kinds of healthy snacks they would like to see sold in school stores, concessions and other venues.



Engage volunteers to complete the above-mentioned inventory.

Additional Resources

[Tools for Schools: Focusing on Smart Snacks \(USDA\)](#)

[Approved Smart Snacks \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)

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

[Food Sales Tip Sheet \(ENGLISH\) \(Action for Healthy Kids\)](#)

[Food Sales Tip Sheet \(SPANISH\) \(Action for Healthy Kids\)](#)

[Strategies to improve Marketing and Promotion of Foods and Beverages at School \(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention\)](#)

Related Activities

Healthy Fundraising

Healthy fundraising is a public demonstration of your school's commitment to promoting healthy, consistent behaviors among students, families, and communities at large while helping your school meet financial needs.

Healthy School Store

A school store that sells healthy options helps reinforce good nutrition and gives students the opportunity to practice making healthy food choices.

Smart Snacks Standards

Is your school smart snack savvy? The “Smart Snacks in School” rule set standards for all foods and beverages sold in schools that participate in the national school meal program.

Nutrition Promotion

Take a look around your school building. How does your school promote good nutrition? Nutrition promotion can take place across the school, formally and informally, inside and outside of the classroom — in the cafeteria, in the hallway and at school events.