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# Healthy Snack Food Guidelines

Developed by the Healthy Kingston for Kids Partnership and endorsed by the Ulster County Department of Health

The following nutrient standards are adapted from the Choose Sensibly Guidelines created by The New York School Nutrition Association. After school programs and school districts in Ulster County are encouraged to adopt these guidelines.

Snacks should make a positive contribution to children’s diets and health. Ideally, there should be an emphasis on serving fruit and vegetables as the primary snacks and water as the primary beverage. Because vending machines play a significant role in the after school snack environment the guidelines have been drawn from a model that offers a dynamic vending list from which purchasing departments can select snacks that meet guidelines. The Choose Sensibly vending list is maintained and updated regularly by the New York School Nutrition Association. A copy of the vending list can be accessed online here: <http://www.nyschoolnutrition.org/choose-sensibly>



## Partners

The Community Heart Health  
Coalition of Ulster County

Ulster County Department of  
Health

Rose Women’s Care Service

Cornell Cooperative Extension  
of Ulster County:

Healthy Kingston for Kids

Creating Healthy Places

## BASIC GUIDELINES

To be considered a healthy snack choice, a snack should contain:

- 7 grams or less of fat\*
- 2 grams or less of saturated fat \*
- 0 grams of trans fat
- 15 grams or less of sugar
- 250 milligrams or less of sodium
- No artificial sweeteners



Vending snacks should contain one serving per package

\*Nuts and seed snacks are excluded from this limitation

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To be considered an acceptable beverage choice under the snack food policy a beverage should meet the following guidelines:

- All low and reduced fat milks that include less than 30 grams of sugar per 8 oz serving are acceptable
- Juice drinks for children in the approximate age range of 5-12 years should be 100% juice. Juice drinks for children in the age range of 13-18 should contain at least 25% juice.
- Beverages with 10 milligrams or less of caffeine per 8 oz serving
- No artificial sweeteners
- Water or flavored waters shall not contain added sugar or caffeine.

**Going for the Gold:** *After-school programs are encouraged to exceed the minimum snack guidelines and strive for the healthiest choices possible.* The Healthy (Bronze) standard in the tables below are the basic guidelines. Programs that successfully implement this policy, as demonstrated by the snacks served on a regular basis, will be recognized formally by the Ulster County Health Department for their exemplary performance. Successful programs will receive a certificate, which states their level of achievement (Bronze, Silver, Gold) according to the tables below, for display at the after-school program.

**SNACK GUIDELINES**

**Nuts and Seeds:** are exempt from the fat guidelines.

**Rationale:** Nuts and seeds are exempt from fat guidelines, because they are high in monounsaturated fat, which can help to lower “bad” LDL cholesterol and maintain “good” HDL cholesterol



BRONZE Healthy	SILVER Healthier	GOLD Healthiest	<i>Rationale for Guideline</i>
<b>For Fats</b>			
7 grams or less of fat*	5 grams of total fat or few per serving	3 grams of fat or fewer per serving	<i>No differentiation between saturated and unsaturated fat because when total fat is considered, saturated fat tends to be low.</i>
<b>For Sugars and Carbohydrates</b>			
Less than 15 grams of sugar. All candies are considered unhealthy.	Less than 30 grams of carbohydrates per serving. All candies are considered unhealthy.	Less than 30 grams of carbohydrates per serving. All candies are considered unhealthy.	<i>The level of carbohydrates was set at 30 grams to include a large variety of foods.</i>

**Fruit:** unsweetened fruit in any form and portion size is allowed.

**Rationale:** Fruit is not restricted by carbohydrate standards because it provides vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants and dietary fiber that are beneficial to an overall balanced diet.



**BEVERAGE GUIDELINES**

**Milk**

BRONZE Healthy	SILVER Healthier	GOLD Healthiest	Rationale
All low & reduced fat milks that include less than 30 grams of sugar per 8oz serving are acceptable.	Low fat or reduced fat milk, any flavor with less than 30 grams carbohydrates per 8 oz. serving	Non-fat or 1% unflavored milk	<i>Milk in any form provides vitamins and minerals, but the low-fat versions are preferred.</i>

**Juice**

BRONZE Healthy	SILVER Healthier	GOLD Healthiest	Rationale
Juice drinks for children in the approximate age range of 5-12 years should be 100% juice. Juice drinks for children in the age range of 13-18 should contain at least 25% juice.	Juice- fruit or vegetable that contains 50% juice	Juice- fruit or vegetable that contains 100% juice Serving size: 4-8 oz.	<i>In 2009, researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health <a href="#">published a report</a> in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, finding that the quickest and most reliable way to lose weight is to cut down on liquid calorie consumption. And the best way to do that is to reduce or eliminate beverages that contain added sugar.</i>

**Water**

BRONZE Healthy	SILVER Healthier	GOLD Healthiest	Rationale
Beverages with 10 milligrams or less of caffeine per 8oz serving and without artificial sweeteners. Water or flavored waters shall not contain added sugar or caffeine.	Beverages containing 50 or fewer calories per 12 oz. serving are healthier options.	Water, pure , flavored sparkling water	<i>Water is a major component of every body cell, tissue and organ. It plays an important role in almost every body function. The Institute of Medicine’s Food and Nutrition Board sets general recommendations for water consumption for adults are 3-4 liters a day.</i>



Adopted for use by the Creating Healthy Places to Live, Work, and Play—a program coordinated by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ulster County funded by the New York State Health Department