Using food as a reward for behavior and achievement can encourage unhealthy habits later in life. There are many disadvantages to using food as a reward:

- It establishes an emotional connection between food and performance.
- It encourages the use of food for soothing rather than for nourishment.
- It can undermine nutrition education taught in school.
- It encourages overconsumption of foods usually high in sugar and fat.
- It can contradict healthy habits valued by parents.

Portland Public Schools’ Local Wellness Policy prohibits using food or beverages as a reward or incentive for students’ behavior or performance.

Here are some ways to motivate a student using non-food rewards:

- **Social rewards** – Involve attention, praise, or a thank-you. Simple gestures like verbal praise, especially in front of others, can mean a lot.
- **Recognition** – A trophy, plaque, ribbon, certificate or a sticker.
- **Privileges** – Going first, choosing a class activity, sitting by friends, getting a “no homework” pass, doing special jobs, or taking a walk with a special staff person.
- **School Supplies** – Pens, pencils, erasers, notebooks, bookmarks, highlighters, markers, art supplies, rulers, or a pencil box.

Here are some ideas for class and school-wide rewards:

- Extra recess
- Going to the lunch room first
- Holding class outdoors
- Extra art, music, PE, or reading time
- Dancing to music
- Playing a game or doing a puzzle together
- “Free choice” time at the end of the day
- A song, dance, or performance by the teacher or students
- A book read aloud to the class by the teacher
- A walk to a nearby park
Schools can play a major role in helping students become fit, healthy and ready to learn. One way to accomplish this is for foods offered in schools to support lessons learned in the classroom regarding nutrition and physical activity. What better venue than schools—which have a great impact on children—to support the message that proper nutrition and physical activity are a key part of a healthy lifestyle? Positive examples of making healthy eating choices and encouraging physical activity should be visible throughout the school. Parties as well as cafeterias, school stores, vending machines, and after-school events offer opportunities for schools to reinforce the message that making healthy food choices and being physically active means a healthier body and a sharper mind.

**Snack Ideas for School & Classroom Parties**

Of course, the foods offered at school parties should add to the fun, but try to avoid making them the main focus. Remember, schools are responsible for helping students learn lessons about good nutrition and healthy lifestyles and students should practice these lessons during school parties. For example, consider combining student birthday parties into one monthly event that incorporates physical activities as well as healthy snacks. Also, be sure to consider ethnic and medical food restrictions and allergies when providing classroom snacks.

Here is a list of healthy snack choices to consider for classroom events. Serving all healthy foods and incorporating physical activities make a powerful statement. Actions speak louder than words: Lead by example.

- Fresh fruit and vegetables – Buy locally when possible.
- Yogurt
- Bagels with lowfat cream cheese
- Baby carrots and other vegetables with lowfat dip
- Trail mix*
- Nuts and seeds*
- Fig cookies
- Animal crackers
- Baked chips
- Baked chips
- Lowfat popcorn
- Granola bars*
- Soft pretzels and mustard
- Pizza (no extra cheese and no more than one meat)
- Pudding
- String cheese
- Cereal bar
- Single-serve lowfat or fat free milk (regular or flavored)
- 100% fruit juice (small single-serves)
- Bottled water (including flavored water)

*May be allergens and/or a choking risk for some people, please check with a health care provider.

*Note: See “Recipes” in the Resources by Topic section.*
**Common Food Allergies**
Eight foods account for 90% of all food-allergic reactions: peanuts, tree nuts (walnuts, cashews, etc), milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, soy and wheat. The most common food allergens that cause problems in children are eggs, milk, and peanuts. It is important to prevent allergic reactions to food because they can cause devastating illness and, in some cases, be fatal. Avoidance is the only way to prevent an allergic reaction. When planning school parties be sure you are aware of any food allergies of students and staff.

**Incorporate Physical Activity**
Today’s children are at an increased risk of developing diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, depression, and anxiety as a result of the lack of physical activity and poor nutrition habits. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate physical activities into class parties as well as classroom learning. Celebrate special events without food or limit the quantity of food and encourage physical activity (active games, dancing, walking, etc.).

**Food Safety***
Preparing and serving food that will not cause food borne illness is as important as preparing and serving healthy choices for school parties! Remember the four steps to safe food:

1. Clean. Wash hands and surfaces often.
3. Cook to proper temperatures.

*Fact sheets on each of these steps can be found at www.fightbac.org.

---

**Things to Remember When Having a School Party**

**Yogurt Parfait**
- 2 cups vanilla lowfat yogurt
- 1 cup chopped fruit (thawed frozen fruit works well)
- 1 cup lowfat granola
- Spoon ½ cup of yogurt in each of 4 cups.
- Spoon ¼ cup of chopped fruit in each cup. Sprinkle with ¼ cup granola.

**Peanut Butter Roll Up**
- Spread peanut butter over a flour tortilla, then sprinkle with sunflower seeds.
- Roll and cut into 1-inch slices.

---

*Image of a tortilla with peanut butter and sunflower seeds.*
Resources for Fundraisers
Healthy Fundraisers Handout
Sweet Deals: Fundraisers Can Be Healthy and Profitable
Fundraising with non-food items and healthy foods demonstrates commitment to promoting healthy behaviors.

**Healthier Fundraisers:**
- Provide consistent messages about health and nutrition throughout the learning environment.
- Make a positive impact on healthy behaviors.
- Offer feasible alternatives to raise needed funds for schools and school organizations—people will buy healthier items, when they are available.
- Offer students the opportunity to be creative and involve the community in school projects.

**Fundraising Policy for Portland Public Schools:**
- Non-food fundraisers are encouraged.
- Prepackaged foods must meet the Healthier US Schools Challenge criteria at the Gold Award level.
- More than 50% of non-prepackaged foods, such as pizza or sandwiches, must meet the Healthier US Schools Challenge at the Gold Award level. Go to http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/hsmrs/HUSSC/calculator.html for a list of foods that meet the nutrition guidelines.
- Beverages must meet the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Beverage Guidelines at the high school level. Go to http://www.healthiergeneration.org/companies.aspx?id=1376 for a list of beverages that meet the nutrition guidelines.
- Soda is not allowed.
- Sales are not allowed during the school day.

For more information and ideas, visit: www2.portlandschools.org/district-wellness
Here are ideas for fundraising activities that do not include food or beverages:

- Community spelling bee
- Read-a-thon
- Auction
- Wreath or greenery sale
- Car wash (pre-sell tickets)
- Carnival
- Dance
- Family/glamour portrait
- Fun run
- Gift wrap sale and/or wrapping
- Jump rope-a-thon

- Raffle (passes)
- Raffle (teacher does a silly activity)
- Providing child care during PTO, school committee, or town council meeting
- Recycling cans/bottles
- Singing telegram
- Skate-a-thon
- Talent show
- Treasure hunt
- Scavenger hunt
- Workshop
- Magazine sale
- Local crafts
Sweet Deals: School Fundraisers Can Be Healthy and Profitable

Virtually all schools in America raise funds to pay for supplies and equipment and to supplement other school activities.¹ Most schools (76%) hold between one and five fundraisers per year, and one in four schools holds between five and 10 fundraisers per year, making school fundraisers a common, and often constant, part of students’, staff, and parents’ lives.¹

Given the high rates of childhood obesity and children’s poor diets, many schools are reconsidering whether selling low-nutrition foods is an appropriate way to raise money. In 2004, the U.S. Congress established a new requirement that all school districts develop and implement wellness policies that address nutrition and physical activity. As a part of their wellness policies, many school districts are setting policies to ensure that schools conduct only healthy fundraisers.

Clubs, PTAs, athletic departments, school principals, and others may be reluctant to stop using fundraisers they have been conducting for years. Identifying and initiating new fundraising strategies can be a challenge. However, many healthy fundraising alternatives are available. Many of these are not only practical, but also can be profitable (see next page).

Unhealthy Fundraisers Undermine Student Health

Many school fundraisers involve the sale of unhealthy foods. Of the schools that sell food through fundraisers, 76% sell chocolate candy, 67% sell high-fat baked goods, and 63% sell non-chocolate candy.² Most fundraising activities center on unhealthy foods, such as bake sales; fundraising events held at fast-food restaurants; and sales of sugary drinks, chips, and snack cakes out of vending machines or a la carte. On-campus food-related practices, such as the sale of low-nutrition foods in school fundraisers, are associated with increases in children’s body mass index (BMI). Every separate food-related practice that promotes low-nutrition foods in a school is associated with a 10% increase in students’ BMI.³

Marketing in schools has become big business. Companies view school fundraising as an opportunity to make direct sales now and to cultivate brand loyalty to ensure future sales. Companies want to market their products in schools for a number of reasons, such as: school children are a captive audience; schools are relatively uncluttered marketing environments in comparison to other venues, like television or the Internet; and school-based marketing adds credibility associating a company’s name, brands, or products with schools and teachers, which are trusted institutions and role models for children. Companies market products in schools through a variety of fundraising methods, including direct product sales; redemption programs (e.g., Campbell’s Labels for Education Program or General Mills’ Box Tops for Education Program); selling brand name fast food in the cafeteria; school fundraisers at fast-food restaurants; and in-school contests.

Junk-Food Fundraisers Undermine Parents. Parents entrust schools with the care of their children during the school day. Selling junk food in schools undermines parental authority and parents’ efforts to feed their children healthfully. When parents send their child to school with lunch money, they should not have to worry that their child will buy a candy bar and a sugary drink from the vending machine instead of buying a balanced school lunch. This is especially a concern when children have diet-related health problems, such as high cholesterol or diabetes.

Junk-Food Fundraisers Contradict Nutrition Education. Students should receive consistent messages about health throughout the school day, across all subjects, and in all school venues - from the classroom to the cafeteria to the gymnasium. Selling low-nutrition foods in schools contradicts nutrition education by sending the message that good nutrition is unimportant.⁴
### Healthier Fundraising Alternatives Abound

**Instead of:**

Sales of foods and beverages of poor nutritional quality through a la carte, vending, or school stores.

**Try:**

Setting nutrition standards for a la carte, vending, and school store sales. Of 17 schools and school districts that tracked income after switching to healthier school foods, 12 increased revenue and four reported no change. The one school district that did lose revenue in the short term experienced a subsequent revenue increase after the study was completed.

Bake sales, pizza kits, candy, cookie dough, and doughnut sales. Bake sales may be popular with kids, but many parents resent bake sales, which require them to purchase ingredients, bake an item to sell, and then give their child money to buy the products for which they have already paid.

**Try:**

Sales of bottled water, calendars, stationery, greeting cards, fruit, holiday decorations/ornaments, jewelry, clothing, first-aid kids, personal care products, plants, flowers, spices, and many more items. Caution: Many popular catalogs that sell gift wrap also include chocolates, high-fat, high-sugar baked goods, and other low-nutrition foods.

Label redemption programs that include products of poor nutritional quality. Label redemption programs (e.g., Campbell’s Labels for Education and General Mills’ Box Tops for Education) are not effective fundraisers. For example, to earn a $300 digital camcorder, a school would have to collect 27,850 Campbell’s product labels. At $1.20 per can of soup, students’ families would have to spend $33,420 to get a $300 camcorder.

**Try:**

Programs such as grocery store Scrip or gift-card sales, book fairs, cookbook fundraisers, scratch cards, and recycling of clothing, cell phones, and printer cartridges.

Fundraisers at fast-food restaurants. Fast-food restaurant fundraisers 1) market fast-food restaurants to children, 2) are image marketing for restaurants and 3) drum up business on a slow night. While there are some healthy choices available, the overwhelming majority of choices at fast-food restaurants are of poor nutritional value. Few fruits,

**Try:**

Events such as car washes, fun runs, walk-a-thons, bowl-a-thons, golf tournaments, sporting events, and raffles.

### Examples of Profits from Healthier Fundraisers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profit</th>
<th>School Fundraiser</th>
<th>For more information about healthy fundraising and contact information for healthy fundraising companies, see, Sweet Deals, at: <a href="http://www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/schoolfundraising.pdf">http://www.cspinet.org/new/pdf/schoolfundraising.pdf</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>A school sells 1,440 water bottles with the names/logos of 5 local business sponsors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>A walk-a-thon with 100 student, parent, and family member walkers each raising $50 in sponsorships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$9,000</td>
<td>110 families buy scratch cards with discounts at local businesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000/year</td>
<td>100 school families belong to a grocery store Scrip program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### References

Resources for Concessions
Healthy Concession Handout
Maine’s Law Banning Food Ads in Schools: Understanding the Law
School organizations can promote healthy eating habits by making healthy foods available and attractive to students and parents. Offering healthier options supports student health and reinforces nutrition taught in school.

**Healthier Concessions Make “Cents”:**
- Healthy options will be purchased, when they are available.
- While profits may initially decrease, sales quickly recover.
- Food suppliers now offer a variety of healthier options.
- The prominent placement of healthier options will result in increased sales off these items.

**Nutrition Standards for School-Approved Organizations’ Concessions:**
- Prepackaged foods must meet the Healthier US Schools Challenge criteria at the Gold Award level.
- More than 50% of non-prepackaged foods, such as pizza or sandwiches, must meet the Healthier US School Challenge at the Gold Award level.
- Beverages must meet the Alliance for a Healthier Generation Beverage Guidelines at the high school level.
- Soda is not allowed.
- Sales are not allowed during the school day.

For more information and ideas, visit: www2.portlandschools.org/district-wellness
Here are some healthier beverages that meet nutrition standards:

- Water
- Coffee
- Tea
- 100% juice
- No or low-calorie beverages, sports drinks, flavored waters and iced teas (up to 66 calories per 8 oz. and not more than 12 oz. per container)

Here are some healthy snacks that meet nutrition standards:

- Baked tortilla chips with salsa
- Whole-grain soft pretzel
- Fruit – in bite-sized portions (watermelon, oranges, grapes, etc.)
- Sunflower seeds
- Some granola bars (check the label)
- Low fat or reduced fat string cheese
- Baked chips
- 100% juice popsicles
- Air-popped popcorn
- Vegetables and hummus
Maine’s Law Banning Food Ads in Schools
Understanding the Law

In many schools, foods and beverages are advertised everywhere – in hallways and cafeterias, in classrooms and athletic facilities, on paper products and scoreboards, and in teaching materials and school publications. Study after study has shown that food and beverage advertising influences children’s food preferences and purchases – and their diets and health.¹

In 2007, the Maine legislature passed the first state law prohibiting brand-specific advertising of certain unhealthy foods and beverages in schools. To help Maine schools comply with the law, the National Policy and Legal Analysis Network to Prevent Childhood Obesity (NPLAN) has developed this fact sheet.

Background
Since 1985, federal law has prohibited the sale of “Foods of Minimal Nutrition Value” (FMNV) to students during school meal times.² Federal law also permits states to impose more rigorous regulations.

In 2005, the Maine legislature enacted a law directing the Maine Department of Education (DOE) to adopt rules to establish standards for foods and beverages sold on school property outside of school meal programs.³ (The law stated that the rules would not apply to community events and fundraisers held outside the normal school day.) Later that year the DOE adopted rules that, with some limited exceptions, prohibited the sale of FMNV at any time on school property.⁴

In 2007, the Maine legislature amended the law, prohibiting brand-specific advertising on school grounds for foods that are not allowed to be sold to students (i.e., FMNV).⁵ In 2011, the Maine legislature further amended the law to specify that the DOE’s nutrition standards do not apply to foods prepared in culinary arts programs provided by career and technical schools and programs.⁶

What are “Foods of Minimum Nutritional Value” (FMNV)?
Based on federal law, FMNV include:

- Soda
- Water ices
- Chewing gum
- Candies (including hard candies, jellies and gums, marshmallow candies, fondant, licorice, spun candy, and candy-coated popcorn)⁸
- Any food containing less than 5 percent of the Reference Daily Intake (RDI) for each of eight specified nutrients per 100 calories and less than 5 percent of the RDI for each of eight specified nutrients per serving. The eight nutrients are: protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, niacin, riboflavin, thiamin, calcium, and iron.
- Any artificially sweetened food, a food that provides less than 5 percent of the RDI for each of the eight specified nutrients per serving.⁹
### Restrictions on Food Sales and Advertising in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food Sales Restrictions</th>
<th>Exceptions to Food Sales Restrictions</th>
<th>Advertising Ban</th>
<th>Exceptions to Advertising Ban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FMNV may not be sold to students:</td>
<td>The restrictions do not apply to:</td>
<td>Advertising of specific brands of FMNV is prohibited:</td>
<td>Advertising of specific brands of FMNV is permitted:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• At any time (including before and after school)</td>
<td>• State-approved, instructional Career and Technical Education (CTE) Culinary Arts Programs</td>
<td>• At any time (including before and after school)</td>
<td>• In/on broadcast media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Anywhere on campus (including school cafeterias, stores, and vending machines)</td>
<td>• Sales to the public at community events or fundraisers held outside the normal school day</td>
<td>• Anywhere in school buildings or on school grounds, including in:</td>
<td>• In print media such as newspapers and magazines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And, if the local school board passes a policy, the restrictions do not apply:</td>
<td>○ School cafeterias –including on posters, menu boards, paper products</td>
<td>• On product packaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To school staff (e.g., staff may have soda vending machines in faculty lounges)</td>
<td>○ Faculty lounges, including on vending machines</td>
<td>• On clothing with brand images worn on school grounds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To comply with the law, schools need to eliminate all brand-specific advertising of FMNV. To do that, NPLAN encourages schools — with assistance from students, teachers, parents, staff, or community volunteers — to thoroughly survey school facilities and grounds for brand-specific advertising of FMNV. In the event such surveys locate advertising that should not be displayed, administrators should remove the advertising. In addition, administrators should review their contracts with vendors to ensure that the contracts are consistent with state law and that vendors are in full compliance. If a contract contains a provision that violates state law, that provision is unenforceable. Administrators should work with legal counsel to amend the contract. Finally, a school may have obtained, before 2007 (when the law was enacted), a scoreboard or similar large piece of equipment that advertises a brand-specific FMNV. If the school lacks the funds to replace the equipment, the school may simply cover up the existing advertising.

NPLAN will be providing more resources to help schools comply with the advertising ban. NPLAN has a wealth of resources to help schools create a healthy nutrition environment. Visit [www.nplan.org](http://www.nplan.org) for more information.

---

4. Id.
5. Maine Admin. Code Ch. 51 § 2 appears to prohibit more than just the sales of FMNV. Section 2 states, in pertinent part: Beginning July 1, 2005, any food or beverage sold at any time on school property of a school participating in the National School Lunch or School Breakfast Programs shall be a planned part of the total food service program of the school and shall include only those items which contribute both to the nutritional needs of children and the development of desirable food habits, and shall not include foods of minimal nutritional value as defined in Section 1 above . . .. (Emphasis added.)
6. The highlighted phrases seem to impose a higher standard than simply prohibiting the sales of FMNV, by requiring the foods to contribute to the nutritional needs of children and the development of desirable food habits. It appears, however, that the DOE interprets section 2 as merely prohibiting the sales of FMNV. The Department of Education issued "Frequently Asked Questions and Answers," with Chapter 51 to "clarify the requirements put forth in the rule." Available at: [www.maine.gov/education/sts/chapter51.html](http://www.maine.gov/education/sts/chapter51.html). The Department’s answers in that document indicate that it interprets Chapter 51 to prohibit only the sales of FMNV. See, e.g., Answers no. 2, 5.
9. The Maine DOE interprets chapter 51 as prohibiting the sale of all candies. E-mail communication from Maine DOE representative on February 3, 2012, on file with Public Health Law and Policy.
10. Under federal law, the USDA has itemized foods of minimal nutritional value to include only soda, water ices, chewing gum, and the types of candies listed above. 21 C.F.R. Pt. 230, Appendix D. Those who wish to have a food reclassified so that it does not fall within FMNV (or alternatively does fall within FMNV) can petition the USDA to have the food reclassified. The petitioner must disclose the amount of the eight nutrients per serving, after which the USDA makes a determination. The USDA publishes a list of exempted foods. Id.
11. The DOE rules are somewhat inconsistent with section 6662. The statute prohibits application of the FMNV restriction to sales of food to the public at community events or fundraisers outside of the normal school day and to culinary arts programs, while DOE Rule 51, section 2 allows these exceptions, only if the school board passes a policy permitting such exception. The inconsistencies exist, partly, because the statute was amended after 2005, but the DOE did not amend the rules to reflect the changes to the statute. "An agency interpretation of a statute is invalid if it is contrary to the plain meaning of the statute." Whitney v. Wal-Mart Stores, 895 A.2d 309, (Maine 2006). As a practical matter, however, the inconsistency of the rule will not matter, provided that the school complies with the statute – by not applying the prohibition on sales to community events outside of the school day or to culinary arts programs – whether by direction of the statute or school board policy.
Other Resources for Healthy Eating

Choose My Plate: 10 Tips to a Great Plate
25 Snacks for Kids: ADA’s Eat Right Tips
Child Nutrition Policy Brief
Making food choices for a healthy lifestyle can be as simple as using these 10 Tips.

Use the ideas in this list to balance your calories, to choose foods to eat more often, and to cut back on foods to eat less often.

1. Balance calories
   Find out how many calories YOU need for a day as a first step in managing your weight. Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to find your calorie level. Being physically active also helps you balance calories.

2. Enjoy your food, but eat less
   Take the time to fully enjoy your food as you eat it. Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during, and after meals. Use them to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough.

3. Avoid oversized portions
   Use a smaller plate, bowl, and glass. Portion out foods before you eat. When eating out, choose a smaller size option, share a dish, or take home part of your meal.

4. Foods to eat more often
   Eat more vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and fat-free or 1% milk and dairy products. These foods have the nutrients you need for health—including potassium, calcium, vitamin D, and fiber. Make them the basis for meals and snacks.

5. Make half your plate fruits and vegetables
   Choose red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli, along with other vegetables for your meals. Add fruit to meals as part of main or side dishes or as dessert.

6. Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk
   They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.

7. Make half your grains whole grains
   To eat more whole grains, substitute a whole-grain product for a refined product—such as eating whole-wheat bread instead of white bread or brown rice instead of white rice.

8. Foods to eat less often
   Cut back on foods high in solid fats, added sugars, and salt. They include cakes, cookies, ice cream, candies, sweetened drinks, pizza, and fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon, and hot dogs. Use these foods as occasional treats, not everyday foods.

9. Compare sodium in foods
   Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals. Select canned foods labeled "low sodium," "reduced sodium," or "no salt added."

10. Drink water instead of sugary drinks
    Cut calories by drinking water or unsweetened beverages. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar, and calories, in American diets.

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov for more information.
25 Healthy Snacks for Kids
When a snack attack strikes, refuel with these nutrition-packed snacks.

Easy, Tasty (and Healthy) Snacks
You may need an adult to help with some of these snacks.

1. Peel a banana and dip it in yogurt. Roll in crushed cereal and freeze.
2. Spread celery sticks with peanut butter or low-fat cream cheese. Top with raisins. Enjoy your “ants on a log.”
3. Stuff a whole-grain pita pocket with ricotta cheese and Granny Smith apple slices. Add a dash of cinnamon.
4. Mix together ready-to-eat cereal, dried fruit and nuts in a sandwich bag for an on-the-go snack.
5. Smear a scoop of frozen yogurt on two graham crackers and add sliced banana to make a yummy sandwich.
6. Top low-fat vanilla yogurt with crunchy granola and sprinkle with blueberries.
7. Microwave a small baked potato. Top with reduced-fat cheddar cheese and salsa.
9. Toast a whole grain waffle and top with low-fat yogurt and sliced peaches.
10. Spread peanut butter on apple slices.
12. Make a mini-sandwich with tuna or egg salad on a dinner roll.
13. Sprinkle grated Monterey Jack cheese over a corn tortilla; fold in half and microwave for twenty seconds. Top with salsa.
14. Toss dried cranberries and chopped walnuts in instant oatmeal.
15. Mix together peanut butter and cornflakes in a bowl. Shape into balls and roll in crushed graham crackers.

16. Microwave a cup of tomato or vegetable soup and enjoy with whole grain crackers.

17. Fill a waffle cone with cut-up fruit and top with low-fat vanilla yogurt.

18. Sprinkle grated Parmesan cheese on hot popcorn.


20. Sandwich Cut-Outs: Make a sandwich on whole grain bread. Cut out your favorite shape using a big cookie cutter. Eat the fun shape and the edges, too!

21. Spread mustard on a flour tortilla. Top with a slice of turkey or ham, low-fat cheese and lettuce. Then roll it up.

22. Mini Pizza: Toast an English muffin, drizzle with pizza sauce and sprinkle with low-fat mozzarella cheese.

23. Rocky Road: Break a graham cracker into bite-size pieces. Add to low-fat chocolate pudding along with a few miniature marshmallows.


25. Parfait: Layer vanilla yogurt and mandarin oranges or blueberries in a tall glass. Top with a sprinkle of granola.

Now that you are refueled, take a trip to Planet Power. Play the MyPyramid Blast-Off game at www.mypyramid.gov.

Dip it! Bonus Snacks

- Dip baby carrots and cherry tomatoes in low-fat ranch dressing.
- Dip strawberries or apple slices in low-fat yogurt.
- Dip pretzels in mustard.
- Dip pita chips in hummus.
- Dip graham crackers in applesauce.
- Dip baked tortilla chips in bean dip.
- Dip animal crackers in low-fat pudding.
- Dip bread sticks in salsa.
- Dip a granola bar in low-fat yogurt.
- Dip mini-toaster waffles in cinnamon applesauce.

For a referral to a registered dietitian and for additional food and nutrition information visit www.eatright.org.

The American Dietetic Association is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. ADA is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by:

Authored by American Dietetic Association staff registered dietitians.

©2009 ADA. Reproduction of this tip sheet is permitted for educational purposes. Reproduction for sales purposes is not authorized.
The phrase “competitive foods” refers to foods and beverages which are offered at school, other than meals and snacks served through the federally-reimbursed school lunch, breakfast and afterschool snack programs. Competitive foods include: extra foods and beverages sold through “à la carte” lines (which offer other food items for sale alongside the federally-reimbursed school meals); snack bars; student stores; vending machines; and fundraisers (where school organizations sell baked goods or candy to raise money.)

**TRENDS IN CHILDREN’S DIETS AND HEALTH**

- Obesity rates have doubled among children and tripled among adolescents over the past 20 years. Overweight children and adolescents are more likely to become obese adults, increasing their risk for serious chronic diseases later in life.

- Type 2 diabetes, which is closely linked to overweight, has skyrocketed among children and adolescents over the past decade. Childhood obesity has also been associated with increased rates of high cholesterol and high blood pressure among children.

- Only two percent of school-aged children meet the Food Guide Pyramid recommendations for all five food groups. Less than one in five children eat the recommended number of servings of fruits or vegetables. The vast majority of children consume too much fat and sodium. Children with unhealthy eating patterns tend to maintain those unhealthy habits into adulthood.

- A 500 percent increase in soft drink consumption over the past 50 years has displaced the consumption of healthier beverages. Adolescents now drink twice as much soda as milk. Only 36 percent of boys and 14 percent of girls consume enough calcium, leading to increased risk of osteoporosis later in life. Children who drink soft drinks also are more likely to become obese than those who do not.

**COMPETITIVE FOODS IN SCHOOLS**

- Research shows that access to competitive foods in school reduces the quality of students’ diets.

- While school meals must meet federal nutrition standards, competitive foods in schools are not required to meet these standards. Most competitive foods are low in nutrients and high in fat, added sugars, sodium and calories.

- 99 percent of high schools, 97 percent of middle schools and 83 percent of elementary schools have vending machines, school stores or snack bars. The most common competitive foods are carbonated sodas, fruit drinks with low percentages of juice, salty snacks and high-fat baked goods.

- Sales of competitive foods lead to decreases in school meal participation, meaning fewer children consuming meals at school that meet nutrition standards and less cash and commodity support provided to schools though the federal school meal programs.

- Current USDA statutory authority to regulate competitive foods is extremely limited. During school meal periods, foods of minimal nutritional value (FMNVs) are not allowed to be sold in food service areas, but may be sold anywhere else in the school at any time. FMNVs are defined as foods providing less than five percent of recommended intakes for eight key nutrients; examples include carbonated soda, gum, hard candies and jelly beans. Other competitive foods, such as candy bars, chips and ice cream, are not considered FMNVs and may be sold in the cafeteria during meal periods.
The Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act of 2004 required all school districts to develop school wellness policies that address standards for all foods in the school environment. As a result, many more schools are, or soon will be, implementing guidelines for competitive foods that require healthier items such as 100 percent juice, low fat milk, water, yogurt, fruits and vegetables. Often these new standards include restrictions on portion sizes as well. Schools that have already made these changes have not lost revenue as a result.

For more information on the current status of competitive foods in schools, see the United States General Accounting Office’s August 2005 report to Congress at http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05563.pdf.

**IMPACT OF COMPETITIVE FOODS ON LOW-INCOME STUDENTS**

The sale of competitive foods is especially harmful for low-income students. If students from families with limited budgets eat less healthy snack food instead of a free or reduced-price school meal, they lose out nutritionally in a much bigger way than their more affluent peers who make the same kind of choices but are more likely to be able to obtain healthy foods in other ways.

The presence of competitive foods creates stigma for low-income children. Peers notice who chooses the school meals rather than the items from vending machines or the à la carte line. Low-income children must choose between spending money they can ill afford, in order to be seen as “one of the group”, or singling themselves out by forgoing competitive foods.

**SCHOOL NUTRITION ENVIRONMENT**

Research shows that when a child’s nutritional needs are met, the child is more attentive in class and has better attendance and fewer disciplinary problems. Properly nourished children more actively participate in the education experience, which benefits them, their fellow students, and the entire school community.

Nutrition lessons taught in the classroom should be reflected and reinforced by the school environment. A healthy eating environment teaches children good nutrition and the elements of a proper diet, which can have positive effects on children’s eating habits and physical well-being throughout life.

Inadequate seating capacity has led some schools to pack together multiple lunch periods that begin as early as 10:30 am and as late as 1:30 pm, often without allowing students enough time to eat. With such difficult schedules, many students turn to less nutritious snacks sold through vending machines and school stores.

**NUTRITIONAL QUALITY OF FEDERALLY FUNDED SCHOOL MEALS**

Every school meal is required to provide a specified serving from each food group. There is no supersizing in school meals. In fact, school meals are often the best examples of healthy portion sizes and dietary variety to which children are exposed in their daily lives.

While there is room for improvement in the quality of school meals, research shows that children who eat school meals consume more milk and eat more fruits and vegetables.

School lunches and breakfasts meet the standard of providing at least one third and one fourth, respectively, of the recommended levels for key nutrients (protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron.) For low-income students, these nutrients are especially important, since their school meals may be filling in nutritional gaps left by tight household budgets.