

Vending Machine Food and Beverage Standards





Model Food Vending Machine Standards

Your employees spend much of their day at work and are likely making many of their breakfast, lunch, snack, and beverage decisions there, too. This presents a unique opportunity to support them in their desire for good health by making good nutrition convenient, accessible, and affordable.

Applying nutrition standards for foods and beverages in vending machines can improve access to healthier selections. This document will help you implement a healthy food vending machine policy.

As members of the National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity (NANA), the American Cancer Society and its nonprofit nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action NetworkSM, participated in the development of these food and beverage standards. The NANA Model Nutrition Standards for “Grab-and-Go” Foods and Beverages guidelines are an update of the 2012 NANA standards for municipal, state, and federal government leased or operated vending machines or vending machines on public property. They can also be used in private worksites, checkout aisles, concession stands, and other convenience-oriented food venues. In 2020 they were revised to reflect updates to the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the current food and beverage marketplace. They are similar, though not identical, to the United States Department of Agriculture’s Smart Snacks guidelines for schools.

NANA Food Standards

Provide a variety of healthier foods with more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains and moderate amounts of saturated fat, added sugars, and sodium.

SNACK FOODS AND SIDE DISHES

100% of snack foods (and side dishes) must meet the following criteria as offered (per package/container):

- No more than 200 calories
- Less than 10% of 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
- No more than 10% of calories from added sugars and a maximum of 5 grams of added sugars, with the exception of yogurts that contain no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 5.3-ounce container
- No more than 200 mg of sodium
- One of the following must be listed as the first ingredient (or second ingredient after water): fruit or non-fried vegetable; fat-free/low-fat dairy or calcium- and vitamin D-fortified plant-based alternative; legumes, nuts, or seeds; or non-fried whole grain, with at least 50% of the grain ingredients being whole grain (indicated by the product having whole grain as the first ingredient, from the manufacturer, or if the product has a whole-grain claim stating that at least 50% of the grains are whole grain).
- Sugarless chewing gum can be sold without having to meet the above nutrition standards.



ENTRÉE FOODS

100% of entrée-type foods (e.g., sandwich, pizza, burger) must meet the following criteria per item as offered (per package/container):

- No more than 400 calories
- Less than 10% of calories from saturated fat (which would be less than 4.5 grams saturated fat for a 400-calorie entrée-type item, for example)
- No more than 10% of calories from added sugars and a maximum of 10 grams of added sugars
- No more than 480 mg of sodium
- One of the following must be listed as the first ingredient (or second ingredient after water): fruit or non-fried vegetable; fat-free/low-fat dairy or calcium- and vitamin D-fortified plant-based alternative; lean protein food (i.e., fish, legumes, poultry); or non-fried whole grain, with at least 50% of the grain ingredients being whole grain (indicated by the product having whole grain as the first ingredient, from the manufacturer, or if the product has a whole-grain claim stating that at least 50% of the grains are whole grain).

NANA Beverage Standards – (Vending Machines)

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 that have less fat than cream, such as whole or 2% milk)
- No more than 200 calories per container of fat-free dairy milk, 1% low-fat dairy milk, or calcium- and vitamin-D-fortified plant-based milks that contain at least 6 grams of protein per 8 ounces
- 100% fruit/vegetable juice or juice combined with water or carbonated water (limited to a maximum of a 12-ounce container; no added caloric sweeteners; and \leq 200 milligrams of sodium per container)
- Low-calorie beverages that are \leq 40 calories per container

Marketing and Promotion

Here are tips from NANA to successfully implement 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 choose a phased-in approach).
- **Placement.** Beverages and foods that meet nutrition standards should be as visible – or more so – than similar items that do not meet the nutrition standards (e.g., 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 only promote products that meet the nutrition standards.
- **Hold taste-testings.** Partner with vendors to offer taste-testings 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-testings 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-testings. Find out which products and meals customers enjoy, do not prefer, and which healthy foods they eat at home.
- **Use online surveys** as opportunities to promote healthy options in vending machines.
- **Provide education, and promote the program.** Educate 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 speaking at staff meetings; posters; flyers; e-cards; emails to staff; newsletter articles; postings on bulletin boards; or signage near vending machines, cafeterias, or concession stands. Work with leadership from the outset for strong buy-in and have messages from them or leadership's signature on promotional materials and messages.

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 initially, consider using the following phased-in approach:

- 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.
- 100% of all items in vending machines will meet nutrition standards for beverages and foods within 3 years.