

USDA Final Rule: School Nutrition Standards

There has been yet another update to the nutritional guidelines for school nutrition. The USDA states, “this is the next step in continuing the science-based improvement of school meals and other USDA child nutrition programs (CNP), as well as advancing USDA’s commitment to nutrition security.”

Added sugars is one of the major changes that came from the new ruling. Added sugars are now going to be monitored based on overall weekly limits and limits on specific foods. Some of these foods include cereals, yogurts, and flavored milk.

We are having another decrease in sodium restrictions. By the year 2027-2028 schools will decrease sodium content by 15% for lunch and 10% reduction for breakfast. This gives schools and industry two school years to come up with a game plan to make these new sodium restrictions work.

Whole grains and milk requirements are not changing and will remain the same. 80% of grains offered must be whole grains and schools will continue to offer fat-free or low-fat flavored or unflavored milk.

There are other updates to things such as smart snack guidelines, vegetable groups, etc. Please make sure to read all of the updates using this link:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/school-nutrition-standards-updates>

Some resources to help during this transition would include using a USDA compliant nutrition analysis program. This will help reassure that you are meeting the changing guidelines and feel good about the changes happening. Also, talk with your sales representatives and find out what products will be changed to help meet these requirements. Stay up to date with deadlines on when these restrictions are being put in place by following SNA of Ohio on social media and through the newsletter!