

Common Smart Snacks Q&A

1. What is the basic rule?

Foods and beverages sold in schools before, during, and up to 30 minutes after the end of the school day in schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program must meet Smart Snacks guidelines. Selling includes exchange of tokens, tickets, or points for a food or beverage.

2. How is “for sale to students” defined?

If students must pay, use tickets, or trade anything to get food during the school day, the food must meet Smart Snacks nutrition rules.

But there are some exceptions:

- Food only for adults doesn't have to follow the rules.
- Food brought from home for lunches, celebrations, or parties is also exempt.
- Food given as a reward for good behavior or schoolwork doesn't need to meet the rules.
- Food for classroom or school parties is okay too, if any money is collected ahead of time—not when the food is handed out.

3. Does Michigan allow for any food fundraisers to be exempt from the Smart Snacks standards?

Yes. As of July 2015, Michigan allows, but does not require, optional food fundraiser exemptions. Up to two food/beverage fundraisers per school building per week are allowed. Please see [MDE non-compliant food fundraiser guidance memo](#) for more details.

4. What about bulk food fundraisers? Are these allowed?

You can sell bulk food items for fundraisers during the school day, even if they don't meet Smart Snacks rules, if they're not meant to be eaten right away. This includes items like Girl Scout cookies, bulk popcorn, frozen pizza kits, and cookie dough. However, these items cannot be sold in the cafeteria or other foodservice areas during mealtimes.

5. How will I know if the products sold to students during the school day are non-compliant with this law?

Use the [Smart Snacks Product Calculator](#) to check if a food or drink meets the nutrition rules. Make sure you enter the information correctly as accurate answers depend on it. Pay special attention when the calculator asks about the type of protein in the product. If the protein doesn't fall into one of the exempt categories, you must choose “other” (option `e`) to get the right result.

For example, if the first ingredient is peanuts but the actual protein source is Soy Protein Isolate, you should pick “other” in the calculator.

6. What if I don’t have time to run all my products through the product calculator?

You can ask your distributor for a list of products they think meet the Smart Snacks rules. You can also look at the “A-List” of approved products from the [John C. Stalker Institute of Food and Nutrition](#).

But remember, just because a product is on one of these lists doesn’t guarantee it meets the rules. You still need to check each item yourself using the Smart Snacks Calculator. Product ingredients can change often, and distributors might not always have the most up-to-date information.

7. Can I serve popcorn made in my school's popcorn machine?

Most popcorn made in machines usually has too much fat and salt to meet the Smart Snacks rules. However, MDE and foodservice directors have created a popcorn recipe that does meet the guidelines (see recipe below). Schools and districts are also welcome to create their own recipes, if they follow the rules.

8. Our school food service department doesn’t run the school store, snack cart, vending machines, or fundraisers. What do I do?

Good communication is important for following the Smart Snacks in School rules. Talk to your School or District Business Officer. Find out who handles vendor contracts in your school or district and let them know about the Smart Snacks nutrition standards.

Ask them to help you:

- Review contracts that might need changes based on your product inventory.
- Identify which vendors need to be contacted.

Also, share tools with them like the [Smart Snacks Product Calculator](#), the [MDE Smart Snacks online training module](#), and the fundraiser tracking spreadsheets.

9. What is a “compliant fundraiser”?

There are many fundraiser ideas that don’t involve selling food. Some examples include entertainment books, walk-a-thons or skate-a-thons, spirit wear, school garden farmers markets, gift cards, and silent auctions.

For more ideas, you can log into the [Alliance for a Healthier Generation website](#), where they keep an updated list of fundraisers that meet the rules.

10. How are a la carte items affected by these standards?

Smart Snacks rules do not apply to main dish (entrée) items from the school lunch or breakfast if they’re sold on their own (a la carte) the same day or the day after they were part of a regular school meal.

This gives schools more flexibility with selling extra portions or using leftovers.

Flavorful Popcorn Recipe

Certified as Smart Snacks Compliant by Michigan Department of Education (MDE)
School Nutrition Programs - 10/2014

NUMBER OF SERVINGS PER RECIPE:

Each recipe makes approximately 15 3-cup servings

INGREDIENTS

- **1 ½ cups premium popcorn kernels** (should contain 130 calories per 3 tablespoons of kernels; varieties with less calories will not meet Smart Snacks guidelines)
- **3 tablespoons trans fat-free oil** (preferably canola oil or a vegetable oil blend specifically marketed for popcorn)
- **1 teaspoon dry butter flavored popcorn seasoning**

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Wash hands.
2. Turn on industrial popcorn popper according to directions.
3. Combine oil, seasoning and popcorn kernels in popper kettle. Close kettle lid.
4. Heat until popping ends. Wait to touch until all of popcorn has finished popping.
5. Empty kettle of any remaining kernels.
6. Portion popcorn into 3-cup servings into each bag or container (2-pound kraft paper bags or plastic bags work well).
7. Servings must be sold individually by 3-cup serving size.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please ensure proper safety protocols are followed, and only appropriate individuals are allowed access when using the industrial popcorn popper. MDE is not responsible for any injuries related to recipe preparation.
- Ingredients and instructions must be followed each time popcorn is sold to students (or exchanged for tokens, tickets, or points). Failure to use only the ingredients identical to or with the same nutrition information as those listed above may result in the final food product no longer meeting Smart Snacks guidelines. Adjustments to the recipe are strongly discouraged and should be made with caution. Please consult your foodservice director if you wish to make any changes to this recipe.