

Coffee Bars in High Schools

USDA Smart Snack Standards

The Federal [Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010](#) established nutrition standards for all foods and beverages sold to students on school campuses before, during and 30 minutes after school. This includes fundraisers, vending machines, school stores, coffee bars and any other venue on the school campus that sells food or beverages to students during these hours. Additional details for these federal regulations can be found in the [Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools](#).

Allowable Beverages for High School Students

- Plain, unflavored water (carbonated or uncarbonated)
- Program milk, 12 fl oz or less
 - Program milk includes the varieties of milk that may be credited toward the fluid milk component in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), as defined by [7 CFR 210.10\(d\)](#)
 - Nonfat, 1%, 2% or whole cow's milk, flavored* or unflavored
 - Lactose-free [milk alternatives](#) that meet Program requirements, flavored* or unflavored
 - *Flavored milk must contain no more than 10 grams of added sugar per 8 fl oz, or 15 grams of added sugar per 12 fl oz
- 100% fruit and vegetable juices (carbonated or uncarbonated), 12 fl oz or less
- 100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water and no added sweeteners (carbonated or uncarbonated), 12 fl oz or less
- Low- and no-calorie beverages (with or without caffeine and/or carbonation)
 - Low-calorie beverages must contain no more than 5 calories per fl oz and be 12 fl oz or less
 - No-calorie beverages must contain less than 5 calories per 8 fl oz and be 20 fl oz or less

Low- and no-calorie beverages

When evaluating a low- or no-calorie beverage, the calories in some items do not need to be included in the calorie maximums:

Items Not Included in Total Calories	Items Included in Total Calories	Examples
Coffee, plain	Non-program milk	Any milk that cannot be credited toward the fluid milk component of NSLP, including but not limited to almond milk, oat milk, coconut milk, flavored cow's milk that exceeds added sugar requirements, etc.
Espresso, plain		
Tea, plain		
Program milk (any milk that may credit toward the fluid milk component in NSLP)		
	Creamers	Half-and-half, cream, non-dairy creamers, etc.
	Sweeteners	Sugar, honey, maple syrup, non-nutritive sweeteners, etc.
	Flavored syrups, sauces or toppings	Vanilla, chocolate, caramel, sprinkles, etc.

Coffee Bar Considerations

- Low- and no-calorie beverages cannot be sold to elementary or middle school students. If elementary or middle school students have access to the location where these foods or beverages are being sold, schools must default to the lower grade group's requirements. In these situations, low- or no-calorie beverages would not be allowable for sale to any student, including high school students.
- If a beverage is sold with ice, the ice must be included in the total volume of the drink.
- Specialty drinks, such as lattes or blended drinks, need a recipe to provide product consistency and ensure that every drink meets the calorie and volume requirements.
- If "pumps" are being used to dispense syrups, ensure that the number of "pumps" meets the parameters and can be repeated without error.
- If a self-serve area is available for students to add sweetener or creamer, a procedure must be in place to ensure the calorie limits are not exceeded.
- Purchasing pre-mixed coffee drinks from vendors is allowable. Each product must be verified for compliance with Smart Snack regulations by entering the nutrition facts label into the [Smart Snacks Calculator](#) and saving the calculator printouts for recordkeeping. When entering drinks like cappuccinos, mochas or lattes, choose "other flavored and/or carbonated beverages," then enter the volume and total calories.
- Each school participating in NSLP is federally required to have a Local Wellness Policy. Schools should ensure all local policies are being followed.

Low- and No-Calorie Beverage Ideas for a Coffee Bar

- Plain coffee, espresso and tea
- Coffee/tea with accompaniments (must meet calorie and portion standards (Program milk is excluded from total calories)
 - Coffee + sugar-free flavored syrup (with or without Program milk)
 - Coffee + no-calorie sweetener (with or without Program milk)
 - Coffee + 1 sugar packet + Program milk
 - Hot tea or iced tea + no calorie sweetener
 - Hot tea or iced tea + 1 sugar packet
- Espresso Drinks
 - Espresso + steamed Program milk (with or without ice)
 - Espresso + 1 oz sugar-free syrup + 10 oz Program milk
 - Espresso + 1 oz sugar-free syrup + 6 oz Program milk + 4 oz ice
- Other hot drinks
 - Program milk + hot chocolate packet (60 calories or less)
 - Chocolate-flavored Program milk, warmed + marshmallows (60 calories or less)

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

9/2026