



Vermont Nutrition and Fitness Policy Guidelines

Developed by:

Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets
Vermont Department of Education
Vermont Department of Health

(Pursuant to Act 161 of the 2004 Vermont Legislative Session)

November 2005

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Dear Fellow Vermonter:

The enclosed document, *Vermont Nutrition and Fitness Policy Guidelines*, is the result of the collaboration between the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets and the departments of Education and Health, as required by Act 161 of the 2003 session of the Vermont Legislature. It is available online at http://www.state.vt.us/educ/new/html/pgm_nutrition.html#policy_guidelines.

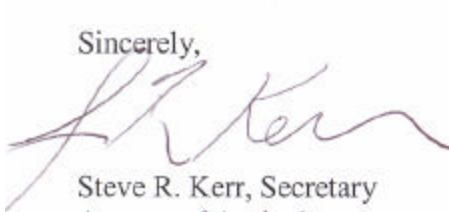
Our goal in publishing these guidelines is to provide schools with the most recent information on best practices for school nutrition and physical fitness that may influence the rates of child and adolescent obesity and enhance academic performance. The guidelines are based on the recommendations of nationally recognized authorities, including the Surgeon General of the United States, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the American Dietetics Association and the National Association of Sports and Physical Education.

We recognize that components of these policy guidelines may present both economic and time pressures for local school systems. Yet we know school leaders are already working closely with community leaders, after school programs and parents to tackle the challenges of decreasing physical inactivity and poor nutrition. It is important for Vermont school leaders to be aware of what the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Centers for Disease Control, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are saying is necessary to reduce obesity and improve physical well-being.

In the coming year, all schools participating in the National School Lunch Program will be required to adopt a school wellness policy. The Vermont School Boards Association will develop a model school wellness policy which will meet the minimum requirements of the federal legislation. We recommend that school districts use the *Vermont Nutrition and Fitness Policy Guidelines* to enhance the language of the model policy within the context of their overall mission when local resources and interest allow expanded health and wellness programs. These *Vermont Nutrition and Fitness Policy Guidelines* should aid in this work.

We intend to update this document online as relevant new information becomes available. You may send your comments to shevonnetravers@education.state.vt.us.


Sincerely,



Steve R. Kerr, Secretary
Agency of Agriculture,
Food and Markets



Richard H. Cate, Commissioner
Department of Education



Paul E. Jarris, MD, MBA
Commissioner
Department of Health

The Vermont Department of Education in collaboration with
Department of Health and Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets

Nutrition and Fitness Policy Guidelines

Introduction

Vermont's Nutrition and Fitness Policy Guidelines were developed by representatives from the Department of Education, Department of Health, Agency of Agriculture, and Vermont educators. The guidelines are divided into five sections:

- I. Nutrition
- II. Physical Education
- III. Physical Activity
- IV. Implementation
- V. Reporting to the Community

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for district policy writers. This document is intended for use by districts drafting their own policies. The concepts represent the best practices available today and are reflective of the highest standards to which schools should aspire.

The Guidelines are based on the following:

- In order for children to achieve their full academic potential, healthy-eating patterns are essential. A well planned and well implemented school nutrition program positively influences students' eating habits. Consuming a variety of nutritious foods promotes healthy growth and development and provides the necessary energy for learning.
- A comprehensive physical education program, coupled with moderate to vigorous physical activity on a daily basis, has been shown to improve student learning and well-being. Quality physical education programs positively impact students' physical, social and emotional health. The goal of physical education is to instill a passion for lifelong physical activity. This is accomplished by incorporating a variety of programs in the curriculum.

I. Nutrition

A. Nutritious Food Choices

1. Nutritious foods are available wherever and whenever food is sold or otherwise offered at school.
2. See Appendix A for the definition of nutritious foods.

B. The School Food Service Program

1. Menus are planned to conform to the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the nutrient standards established in the regulations of the National School Lunch Program (7CFR 210) and the School Breakfast Program (7CFR 220).
2. A la carte (see Appendix A for definition) foods conform to the a la carte guidelines outlined in Appendix B.
3. Food pricing strategies are designed to encourage students to purchase nutritious items and/or reimbursable meals.
4. Compatible with federal regulations for such purchases, the food service program establishes procedures to include locally grown foods and beverages in the development of purchasing bids or procedures. Procedures to promote the purchase of locally grown products may include:
 - a. purchasing partnerships with local farms and farmers, manufacturers, and small processors;
 - b. taking advantage, where possible, of local products that are already available through distributions channels in the state such as eggs, milk and dairy products, apples, and other produce;
 - c. asking local distributors to carry Vermont products in their inventory to allow for easier availability to schools; and
 - d. writing bid contracts that allow districts to buy local products “off bid” if primary vendors cannot or will not sell them.

C. Other Food Choices at School

1. Foods and beverages available at school support the nutritional needs of students, are nutritious and meet the A la Carte Guidelines outlined in Appendix B.
2. All food sales on school grounds are under the management of the school food service program. Nutritious foods are included at any time foods are sold at school to raise funds.
3. Foods sold through vending machines conform to the Vending Guidelines outlined in Appendix C. No foods are sold from vending machines during meal service times.

4. To the extent possible, foods sold in vending machines, school stores, snack bars, and other venues are purchased using the practices described above regarding locally grown foods.

D. Promoting Healthy Eating Behaviors

1. Students and staff have adequate space to eat meals in pleasant surroundings and adequate time to eat, relax, and socialize. At a minimum, lunch periods are at least 20 minutes long. Sufficient transition time is also provided.
2. Nutrition education is integrated within the health education program. Nutrition education focuses on developing healthy eating behaviors, is based on theories and methods proven effective by research, and is consistent with Vermont's health education standard 3.5.
3. To the extent possible, lunch periods are scheduled to follow recess periods (in elementary schools).
4. Food is not used as a reward or a punishment for students.

II. Physical Education Program

A. Instructional Program

1. The physical education program is sequential, developmentally appropriate and, in alignment with the National Association for Sports and Physical Education, a minimum of 150 minutes per week for elementary school students and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students. The majority of physical education class time is spent in moderate to vigorous physical activity.
2. Classes are taught by licensed physical education teachers.

B. Facilities

1. The school provides a safe environment to implement the program. A safety inspection is conducted annually.
2. The school provides both functional and protective equipment for all students to participate actively and safely.
3. The school minimizes interruptions to scheduled physical education classes. This includes interruptions due to scheduling non-physical education activities in physical education facilities.

C. Curriculum

1. The curriculum uses developmentally-appropriate components of a health-related fitness program, e.g. Fitnessgram, Physical Best, or President's Challenge.

2. The curriculum equips students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for lifelong physical activity.
3. The curriculum offers students multiple opportunities to prepare for a variety of lifetime physical activities.
4. The curriculum builds students' competencies in their own physical abilities and thus improves their self confidence.
5. The physical education program is closely coordinated with the overall school health program. Physical education topics are integrated within other curricular areas. In particular, the benefits of being physically active are linked with instruction about human growth, development, and physiology in science classes and with instruction about personal health behaviors in health education class.
6. The physical education curriculum and assessments are aligned with standard 3.6 of the Vermont Framework for Standard and Learning Opportunities and with the Vermont Physical Education Grade Expectations.

D. Inclusion (Adapted Physical Education)

1. The physical education program includes all students, unless otherwise contra-indicated medically.
2. Suitable adapted physical education is included as part of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students with chronic health problems, other disabling conditions, and other special needs that preclude participation in regular physical education instruction or activities.
3. A student with a chronic health problem or other disabling condition is permitted to participate in any extra-curricular activity, including interscholastic athletics, if the student's skills and physical condition meet the same qualifications as other students. The school makes reasonable accommodations to allow the student to participate.

III. Physical Activity

A. Recess

1. Supervised unstructured active play, commonly referred to as recess is offered daily for all students Pre-K–8. Recess is in addition to a student's physical education class and not substituted for physical education class.
2. Recess and other physical activity shall not be taken away as a form of discipline unless doing so is directly related to a student's behavior during recess.
3. Proper equipment and a safe area is designated for recess.

4. Opportunities are provided for students, in grades 9-12, to be physically active during the school day, in a safe environment, beyond the physical education class. Activities may include open time in the gymnasium, walking programs or aerobic activities.

B. Interscholastic Sports (Athletics)

1. Instruction/coaching is designed to develop sport specific skills that are based on appropriate teaching/learning progressions.
2. Instruction/coaching provides a learning environment that is appropriate to the characteristics of the athletes and goals of the program.
3. Instruction/coaching utilizes a variety of teaching strategies to improve athletic performance and development.
4. Instruction/coaching uses appropriate forms of motivation and provides constructive feedback to athletes.

C. Before and After-School Programs

1. The school works with the community to provide an avenue for reaching all students before and after school through organized physical activities (e.g. intramurals, interscholastic sports, community-based programs, and other activities).
2. Use of the school facilities by community members for physical activities is encouraged.

IV. Policy Implementation

There is a plan for measuring the implementation of the policy, including designation of one or more persons charged with operational responsibility for ensuring that the policy is enforced.

V. Reporting to the Community

A. Report Topics

In reporting nutrition and fitness data, in a format easily understood by the public, the school will be in compliance with state and federal confidentiality laws. Data for the report is available from the following sources:

1. Physical fitness data such as Fitnessgram, Physical Best or the President's Challenge on Physical Fitness
2. Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) data
3. School Lunch Program data, such as the percentage of students participating in the meals program.

4. Physical Education and athletic program data, such as the percentage of students participating in physical education classes, athletics and intramural sports.
5. Wellness Program data, such as the percentage of students participating in special wellness programs run by the District throughout the year.
6. Health Services Program data, such as the percentage of students with a healthcare and dental provider.

B. Report Mechanism

A report on the health status of students is included in the report the District develops to comply with 16 VSA §165(a) (2) (B).

Appendix A Definitions

A la carte food - A la carte food includes all foods sold by the food service program that are not part of a reimbursable meal.

Intramurals – Competitive and non-competitive programs that are provided *by* the school *for* students enrolled in the school.

Nutritious foods - Nutritious foods are nutrient-dense foods including whole grains; low-fat or non-fat dairy products; fresh, frozen or canned fruits and vegetables; lean meats, poultry, fish, and beans. Nutritious foods exceed the nutrient levels of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value, which have been identified by the United States Department of Agriculture (7 CFR 210, Appendix B).

Appendix B A La Carte Food and Beverage Standards

“A la carte” refers to foods and beverages sold by the food service program in addition to the USDA reimbursable school meals. These food sales are intended to provide students with some additional food choices and to raise revenue to support the school food service program. Studies show that students who consume reimbursable school meals have better overall nutrient intakes than those who consume foods from any other source. A la carte foods are:

- priced to encourage students to select meals rather than a la carte foods;
- limited in quantity and variety; and
- designed to supplement, not replace, school meals.

Grades K-6	Standard
During Meal Service Periods	Eliminate foods that are sold outside of the breakfast and lunch programs.
Snacks and Breaks	If the school offers a morning or afternoon break/snack, individual items sold meet the a la carte food standards. The morning snack or break occurs at least 1.5 hours before the lunch meal.
Grades 7-12	Standard
During Meal Service Periods	Limit foods that are sold outside of the breakfast and lunch programs to items that are a supplement to, rather than in competition with, the meal. Entrees that would qualify as a meal component for the reimbursable school breakfast or school lunch program is not available as an a la carte item. Individual items sold meet the a la carte food standards.
Beverages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juice beverages must contain at least 50% fruit or vegetable juice, and the package size is no larger than 12 oz. • Water shall contain fewer than 20 calories per serving without artificial sweeteners. • Low or nonfat white or flavored milk, or drinkable yogurt shall be offered in portion sizes no larger than 16 oz. and contain no more than 340 total calories.
Grains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole grains and naturally occurring grains with minimal amounts of added fat and sugar may be served. Whole grains will have at least 1 gram of fiber per serving. • Other products will contain no more than 5 grams of fat per 1 ounce serving and no more than 2 grams of saturated fat and/or trans fat per 1 ounce serving. • No more than 25 grams of total carbohydrate per serving (includes natural sugar and added sugar). • Portion sizes are limited to 2 oz. for most products, 3 oz. for baked goods such as muffins, pastries and bagels.

Grades 7-12	Standard
Dairy Products Other Than Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular cheese – portion size no larger than 1½ oz. • Reduced fat cheese – portion size no larger than 2 oz. • Yogurt – portion size no larger than 8 oz. 8 oz. should be equal to or less than 200 calories per serving 6 oz. should be equal to or less than 150 calories per serving 4 oz. should be equal to or less than 100 calories per serving • Frozen desserts, including ice cream, are limited to a portion size of no more than 3 oz.
Fruits and Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If any foods are sold a la carte, fresh, frozen, canned and/or dried fruits and vegetables will be available as well. • Portion sizes for fried vegetables (french fries, onion rings, for example) will be ½ cup or less, and no larger than the portion of the same vegetable served in the school lunch program.
Meat, Beans, and Nuts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total fat – no more than 5 grams of fat per 1 ounce serving with the exception of nuts, seeds, and nut butters. • Saturated fat and trans fat – no more than 2 grams per 1 ounce serving • Portion sizes are limited. For example: trail mix, nuts, seeds, jerky – no larger than 2 oz.

Background

Grade K-6:

The rationale for the elementary school recommendation is that young children should only be presented with opportunities to make healthy food choices at school and healthy choices should be modeled throughout the school environment.

Sugar:

Excess sugar adds unnecessary calories to the diet and contributes to tooth decay. This includes added sugars that do not naturally occur in food. Added sugars are sugars and sweeteners (white, brown, and raw sugars; fructose, honey, molasses, anhydrous dextrose, and crystal dextrose), and syrups (corn, malt, pancake, maple, and high fructose corn). Naturally occurring sugars present in milk and fruit, such as lactose and fructose are not considered added sugars.

Fats:

Higher intakes of saturated and trans fats, and dietary cholesterol raise low density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad") cholesterol in the blood. An elevated LDL cholesterol increases the risk of developing coronary heart disease (CHD). To decrease LDL cholesterol and the risk of CHD, substitute monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats for saturated and trans fats and decrease the intake of cholesterol. Trans fat can be found in vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, baked goods, and other processed foods made with partially hydrogenated vegetable oils. Small amounts of naturally occurring trans fat can be found in some animal products, such as butter, milk products, cheese, beef, and lamb. Labeling of trans fats on food labels will be required starting January 1, 2006.

Sodium:

Schools should be aware of the sodium content of foods served and sold. According to the FDA foods labeled healthy must contain less than or equal to 360 mg per serving for an individual food and 480 mg per serving for meal-type products.

Caffeine:

Caffeine is a central nervous stimulant that in children may cause nervousness, anxiousness, fidgetiness or other similar behaviors. FDA requires that caffeine be listed on ingredient labels although herbal forms may not be recognized as caffeine sources. Herbal products containing kola (cola or kola nut), cacao (cocoa), guarana, mate, and green tea are known sources of caffeine.

Beverages:

Beverages are included that provide nutritional value. Fruit and vegetable juices contain a variety of nutrients including Vitamin C; low fat and nonfat milk include calcium and Vitamin D and Vitamin A, while not adding excess calories from fat; water without added ingredients provides hydration without any calories. Flavored milks may be offered as long as they are low or non-fat and do not contain excess calories from added sugar. If soy beverages are sold they must be fortified with Vitamin A, Calcium and Vitamin D to a level equivalent to cow's milk, other dairy alternatives of low nutritional value are not recommended. Serving sizes are limited to reduce consumption of excess calories. According to the food guide pyramid serving sizes are 6 oz. for fruit juices and 8 oz. for milk.

Snacks:

Recommendations for snacks include those that are lower in calorie and contain nutrients. For all foods ingredient labels list items in the order of highest content in the food. If sugar or fat is listed first or second it is more likely that the item contains little nutritional value. Nuts and seeds are exempt from the fat restriction as they are high in monounsaturated fat, which can help lower LDL "bad" cholesterol and maintain HDL "good" cholesterol. There are not standard portion sizes for snacks but smaller portions are preferred to avoid excess calories from one food item. Best practice would be to include "whole" foods (close to their original state prior to processing, such as: fruits, vegetables, yogurt, cheese and nuts) whenever possible, which contain not only all the original nutrients but also health promoting phytochemicals and other biologically active substances.

Appendix C
Vermont Vending Guidelines

Grades K-6	Recommendation	
	Eliminate the sale of foods outside of the school meal program during the entire school day. Vending may be permitted after school hours and must follow the guidelines for secondary education.	
Grades 7-12	Recommendation	
	Best Practice	Acceptable Practice
Non-Dairy Beverages	Beverages that contain 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Package size no larger than 8 oz.	Beverages that contain at least 50% fruit or vegetable juice. Package size no larger than 12 oz.
Bottled Water	Water without any added ingredients	Water containing fewer than 20 calories per serving without artificial sweeteners
Dairy Products	Low fat or nonfat, white or flavored milk, or drinkable yogurt, package size no larger than 10 oz. and total calories fewer than 200	Low fat or nonfat, white or flavored milk, or drinkable yogurt, package size no larger than 16 oz. and no more than 340 total calories
Recommendations for snacks include:		
Cheese	Regular Cheese Serving size should be 1½ oz. or smaller Reduced Fat Cheese Serving size should be 2 oz. or smaller	
Yogurt	No larger than 8 oz. 8 oz. should be equal to or less than 200 calories per serving 6 oz. should be equal to or less than 150 calories per serving 4 oz. should be equal to or less than 100 calories per serving	
Non-Dairy Snack Foods	Fat: Limit to less than 5 grams of total fat per each 1 oz. serving. (Nuts and seeds are exempt from the fat restriction.)	
	Saturated Fat/Trans Fat: Limit to less than 2 grams of saturated or trans fat per each 1 oz. serving.	
	Total Carbohydrates: Limit to less than 25 grams of total carbohydrates per each 1 oz. serving. (Fresh, dried or canned fruits are exempt from the carbohydrate restrictions)	
	Snack Portion Size: Serving size for snacks should be 2 oz. or less. Smaller portions are preferred.	
Vending Sales and Contracts	All foods served and sold should be administered by the school food service. Contracts should include language allowing for purchase of items from another company if not sold by the contracted company.	

References

Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005

Regulations of the National School Lunch Program (7 CFR 210) and Regulations of the School Breakfast Program (7CFR 220)

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