

NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR ADDED SUGARS: FLAVORED MILK



The [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2025–2030](#) continue to emphasize reducing added sugars as part of building healthy dietary patterns. Current school meal requirements remain based on the Final Rule aligned with the [Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020–2025](#).

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) published the Final Rule, “[Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020–2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#),” which established [added sugars limits](#) using a two-phase approach in the school lunch and breakfast programs. The first phase provides added sugars limits for specific products (cereals, yogurt, and flavored milk) to target the leading contributors of added sugars in school meals.

Added Sugars in Flavored Milk

The USDA FNS [Added Sugars in School Meals and Competitive Foods Report to Congress](#) found the following:

- The main source of added sugars in both school breakfasts and lunches is flavored fat-free milk, which contributes 29 percent of the added sugars in breakfasts and 47 percent of the added sugars in lunches.
- Flavored fat-free milk, with 33.7 percent of calories from added sugars, and flavored low-fat milk, with 26 percent of calories from added sugars, were among the highest contributors of added sugars among competitive foods and beverages sold a la carte at school breakfast and lunch.

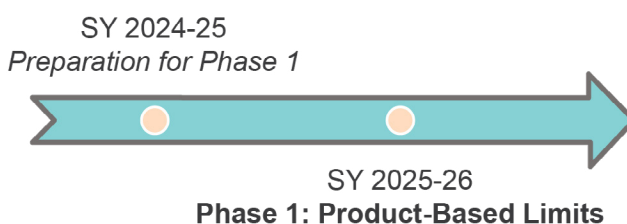


To help reduce added sugars in school meals, the USDA established an added sugars limit for flavored milk.

Added Sugars Timeline and Limits for Flavored Milk

As of July 1, 2025:

- Flavored milk must contain no more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces (fl oz).
- Flavored milk sold as a competitive food in middle and high schools must contain no more than 15 grams of added sugars per 12 fl oz.



Determine if Your Flavored Milk Meets the Added Sugars Limit

Step 1:

Determine if the carton or bottle of flavored milk is 8 or 12 fl oz.

Step 2:

Find the **Added Sugars** line in the **Nutrition Facts label**. Look at the number of grams (g) next to Added Sugars.

If an 8 fl oz carton or bottle of flavored milk has 10 g of added sugars or less, the flavored milk meets the added sugars limit.

If a 12 fl oz carton or bottle of flavored milk has 15 g of added sugars or less, the flavored milk meets the added sugars limit.

The Nutrition Facts label for this 8 fl oz milk carton shows that it has 6 g of added sugars, which meets the added sugars limit.

8 fl oz / 236 ml

Nutrition Facts
1 servings per container
Serving size 1 Carton (236ml)
Amount Per Serving
Calories 110
% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g 0%
Saturated Fat 0g 0%
Trans Fat 0g
Sodium 190mg 8%
Total Carbohydrate 18g 7%
Dietary Fiber 0g 0%
Total Sugars 18g
Includes 6g Added Sugars 12%
Protein 9g
Not a significant source of cholesterol, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium
*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Procuring Flavored Milk that Meets the Added Sugars Limit

Use the following checklist to procure flavored milk that meets the added sugars limit from your vendors.

Evaluate Your Flavored Milk

Determine the amount of added sugars per 8 fl oz and 12 fl oz in the flavored milk you currently offer. Check all flavors (chocolate, strawberry, vanilla, etc.) and fat varieties. Determine the amount of added sugars per 8 fl oz and 12 fl oz in the flavored milk you currently offer. Check all flavors (chocolate, strawberry, vanilla, etc.) and fat varieties. Schools may offer whole, reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%), or fat-free milk at both breakfast and lunch.

Identify which flavored milk meets and does not meet the added sugars limit.

Flavored Milk that Meets the Added Sugars Limit	Flavored Milk that DOES NOT Meet the Added Sugars Limit

Conduct market research to familiarize yourself with other flavored milk that meets the added sugars limit.

Discuss Menu Needs with Vendors

Notify vendors of the added sugars limit for flavored milk.

Share flavored milk options you currently offer that do NOT meet the added sugars limit.

Ask vendors about possible substitutes and future product reformulations.

Incorporate New Products into Menu

Seek student input via taste-testing activities and surveys.

Procure new flavored milk that meets the added sugars limit. See the sample product specification below.

Sample Product Specification for Flavored Milk

An important aspect of the procurement process is writing specifications. To procure flavored milk that meets the added sugars limit, include the limit within the specification. You can insert the added sugars limit within the specification with variations of the following terms:

“No more than,” “May not exceed,” or “A maximum limit of”

10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces

Here is an example of a partially written product specification for chocolate milk, suitable for formal or informal procurement documents.



FLUID MILK, NONFAT, CHOCOLATE. Fresh, pasteurized, and homogenized Grade A skim milk fortified with vitamins A and D at levels specified by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Chocolate flavoring must be derived from cacao products. One half-pint serving packed in aseptic paperboard cartons. **No more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces.** Cannot contain high fructose corn syrup or artificial sweeteners. Must meet all state and local requirements.

References

- U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020, December). *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2020-2025*. 9th Edition. https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2021-03/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans-2020-2025.pdf
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- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2024, May 28). *Added sugars*. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/school-nutrition-standards-updates/added-sugars>



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