

# USDA HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS INITIATIVE



This document is intended to provide an overview of our General Mills K-12 portfolio for whole grain, sodium and added sugars, which are areas of interest under USDA's Healthy School Meals Initiative.

This document serves as a reference when talking to operators about these topics.

The 4 areas highlighted under USDA's Healthy School Meals Initiative include:

1. Exceeding nutrition requirements for sodium and whole grains
2. Reducing added sugars in school breakfasts\*
3. Implementing innovative scratch cooking and nutrition practices
4. Providing meals that reflect the cultures and trends of their students



\*Although there are no added sugar requirements currently for school meals, schools are being encouraged to reduce added sugar in school breakfast. USDA recently published a guidance document: "Reducing Added Sugars at School Breakfast", which encourages schools to serve breakfast cereals and yogurts that meet the total sugar requirements for the CACFP (breakfast cereal: no more than 6 grams of total sugar per 28 grams; yogurt: no more than 23 grams of total sugar per 6 ounces).



# WHOLE GRAIN



At General Mills, we take pride in developing products for K12 that both meet whole grain-rich standards and deliver on great taste - helping to drive student participation and whole grain intake.



We continue to advocate for whole grain-rich product innovation and renovation for items used in the school meal program in recognition of the health benefits of whole grain.



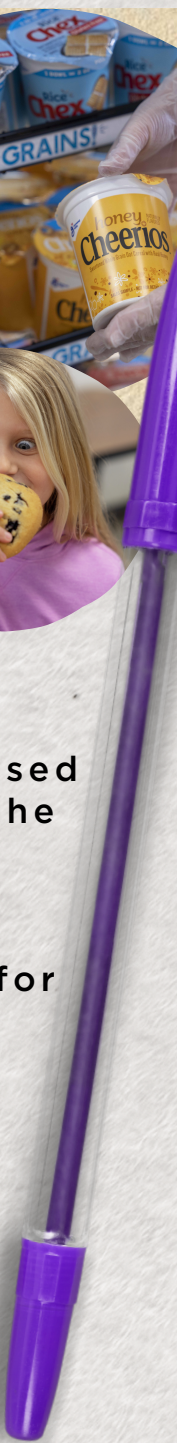
We require any new grain product developed for K12 to meet whole grain-rich standards.

**OF OUR GRAIN-BASED PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FOR K-12, OVER 70 ARE WHOLE-GRAIN RICH!**

All General Mills breakfast cereals, individually wrapped frozen grain entrees, and grain snacks are whole grain-rich. In select categories, such as biscuits, we offer both whole grain-rich and non-whole grain varieties to meet the needs of operators and students' tastes.

Our products and the school meal program make a difference in helping students get more whole grains

- Based on the USDA's School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study, kids who participate in the School Breakfast and National School Lunch Program get more whole grains compared to kids who don't participate and are more likely to meet whole grain recommendations.
- Ready to eat cereal makes a big impact on whole grain intakes - it is a top source of whole grain in kids & teens for the day. At breakfast it is the top source of whole grains.





# SODIUM

Our K-12 portfolio is well-positioned to fit in the current sodium targets for school meals at breakfast and lunch.

For K - 5 at breakfast, the average sodium target per day over the week is 540 mg. Serving the required fruit and milk will account for about 130 mg of sodium leaving 410 mg for the remaining meal components.

Over 80 of our K-12 SKUs fall below 410 mg of sodium per serving and can help operators meet weekly sodium targets and balance their menus across the week if a higher sodium entrée is offered.



## TIP!

Serving 2 Grain 25% less sugar Cinnamon Toast Crunch™ (320 mg sodium per 2 Grain) with fruit and milk will total about 450 mg sodium or serving Pillsbury™ Mini Cinnis (270 mg sodium per Grain) with fruit and milk will total about 400 mg sodium.

## FLEX YOUR SODIUM SPECS

- ★ We continually work with operators to develop products that provide the nutrition profile, flexibility and great taste to meet both the sodium targets in the school meal program and student tastes. Recently we renovated our K-12 biscuits to help operators stay within weekly sodium targets and continue to serve the biscuit entrees students love.
- ★ Yogurt is lower in sodium and, as a meat alternate, is a great way for operators to balance sodium.
- ★ Serving breakfast for lunch can be another strategy for operators to implement to help reduce sodium at the lunch occasion, such as a yogurt parfait with fruit and granola paired with a salad and milk.
- ★ We also offer over 80 products that are Smart Snack compliant, which requires snacks to have 200 mg or less of sodium per serving and entrees 480 mg or less in addition to meeting other requirements.



At General Mills, we believe foods with added sugar can fit in a healthy diet and can help kids consume nutrient dense foods like yogurt, and whole grain-rich cereals and grain-based entrees. We offer a range of choices in our K-12 portfolio including great tasting, reduced sugar products such as reduced sugar cereals, yogurt and Fruit Roll-Ups™.

# ADDED SUGARS



## CEREAL

We offer 10 cereals that meet the sugar requirements of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) of no more than 6 grams per 1 ounce including Honey Cheerios™ and Blueberry Chex™. We also have three 25% less sugar whole grain-rich cereals in brands kids know and love: Cinnamon Toast Crunch™, Cocoa Puffs™ and Trix™.

## YOGURT

All of our Yoplait yogurts meet the CACFP sugar requirements of no more than 23 grams of total sugar per 6 ounces of yogurt. We also offer reduced sugar Trix™ yogurt which has 5 grams of added sugar per 4 ounce serving and Simply GoGURT™ which has 3 grams of added sugar per 2 ounces - these are both fun and great tasting ways to help kids get the dairy, calcium and vitamin D they need.



Research from the National Health and Examination Survey (NHANES) has shown there is no difference in added sugar intake between kids who eat cereal and those who don't. Yet, this same research shows kids who eat cereal do get more key nutrients like iron, B-vitamins, and fiber, and food groups specifically dairy and whole grain compared to kids who don't eat cereal.



Similar to cereal, research from NHANES shows kids who eat yogurt do not get more added sugar in their diet compared to kids who don't eat yogurt, but do get more calcium, vitamin D and dairy - all of which kids fall short on compared to recommendations.



The American Academy of Pediatrics recognizes the role added sugars can play in encouraging kids to eat nutrient dense foods:

"Consumed within recommended calorie amounts, sweetness can offer an effective tool to promote consumption of nutrient-dense foods and beverages."



# ADDED SUGAR CONTENT OF SAMPLE BREAKFASTS



The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends less than 10% of calories in a day be from added sugar. Some organizations have called for this threshold to be used in the school meal program recommending no more than 10% of calories at breakfast and lunch averaged across the week based on current calorie requirements.

## EXAMPLE 1

Required meal component	Product	Added Sugar Per Serving
GRAIN (2 OZ EQ)	Blueberry Chex™ 2 oz eq. Grain	12g
MILK (1 CUP)	8 oz low fat milk	0g
FRUIT (1 CUP)	1 cup of blueberries	0g
TOTAL ADDED SUGAR		12g

## EXAMPLE 2

GRAIN (1 OZ EQ)	25% Less Sugar Cinnamon Toast Crunch™	6g
MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATIVE	4 oz Trix™ Yogurt	5g
MILK (1 CUP)	8 oz low fat milk	0g
FRUIT (1 CUP)	½ cup sliced apples; ½ cup canned pears in juice	0g
TOTAL ADDED SUGAR		11g

## EXAMPLE 3

GRAIN (2 OZ EQ)	Pillsbury™ Mini Waffles Blueberry Bash	11g
MILK (1 CUP)	8 oz low fat milk	0g
FRUIT (1 CUP)	1 cup of grapes	0g
TOTAL ADDED SUGAR		11g



We also offer over 80 products that are Smart Snack compliant, which requires snacks and entrees to have less than 35% total sugar by weight of the product.

### References:

1. School Nutrition and Meal Cost Study: Volume 4 – Student Participation, Satisfaction and Dietary Intakes <https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/SNMCS-Volume4-Summary.pdf>
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Data. Hyattsville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017 – 2018
3. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals>
4. Snacks, Sweetened Beverages, Added Sugars, and Schools | Pediatrics | American Academy of Pediatrics (aap.org)
5. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <https://health.gov/our-work/food-and-nutrition/2015-2020-dietary-guidelines/>
6. [https://www.generalmills.com/-/media/files/industry-resources/k12/exploring-products/new-product-guide/a46439a\\_k12productguide\\_digital.pdf](https://www.generalmills.com/-/media/files/industry-resources/k12/exploring-products/new-product-guide/a46439a_k12productguide_digital.pdf)

