

Healthy Vending Guidelines

A Fit City Initiative
San Antonio, Texas



Suggested List of items for Fit City Vending Machines*

Snacks

Healthiest	Healthier	Excluded
Animal crackers, graham crackers	Granola bars, whole-grain fruit bars	Cookies (including lowfat)
		Candy, candy bars, chocolate bars, toaster pastries, marshmallow/cereal treats
	Baked chips, corn nuts, rice cakes, cereal/nut mix	Regular chips, cheese-flavored crackers, cracker sandwiches
Nuts and seeds – plain or with spices	Nuts with light sugar covering; honey roasted	Candy - or yogurt-coated nuts
Trail mix – cereals and dried fruit (no fat added)	Popcorn/nut mix	Trail mix with chocolate, yogurt or candy
Fresh, canned or individually packed fruit –natural juices only	Canned or individually packaged fruit in light syrup	Canned or aseptic-packed fruit in heavy syrup
Dried fruit – raisins, dried cranberries; fruit leather	Fruit-flavored snacks	Candy- or sugar-coated dried fruit
	Pretzels – any flavor	Candy - or yogurt-coated pretzels
Fat-free popcorn	Light popcorn	Popcorn – Butter, butter lovers, movie style
Beef jerky - 95% fat free		Sausages, pork rinds
Yogurt, preferably non-fat, low-fat or light		
Sugar-free gelatin	Fat-free pudding	Pudding made with whole milk

Beverages

Healthiest	Healthier	Excluded
Milk, any flavor – preferably non-fat or low-fat (1%)		
Juice – fruit or vegetable that contains at least 100% juice	Juice – fruit or vegetable that contains at least 50% juice	Fruit flavored soft drinks
Water, pure	Flavored or vitamin-enhanced fitness water, sparkling water	
	Low-calorie, diet sodas; low-cal iced tea; low-cal coffee	Regular soft drinks, sports drinks

*The guidelines were followed, but there are food items that were a close fit that were included to increase the variety of products.

Guidelines adopted in December 2002

Rationale for Guidelines

Snacks

Healthiest – must meet both criteria

- **3 grams of Total Fat or fewer per serving** (Nuts and seeds exempt from restrictions.)
- **30 grams of Carbohydrates or fewer per serving** (All candies are considered unhealthy. Fruit in any form is permitted, regardless of carbohydrate count.)

Healthier – must meet both criteria

- **5 grams of Total Fat or fewer per serving** (Nuts and seeds exempt from restrictions.)
- **30 grams of Carbohydrates or fewer per serving** (All candies are considered unhealthy. Fruit in any form is permitted, regardless of carbohydrate count.)

Portion Size - Portion size is not defined for any items, but smaller portion sizes are preferred.

Rationale

Fat: It was determined not to differentiate saturated fat from unsaturated fat. When total fat is considered, saturated fat tends to be low.

Nuts and seeds: Nuts and seeds are exempt from the fat guidelines, because they are high in monounsaturated fat, which can help lower “bad” LDL cholesterol and maintain “good” HDL cholesterol. Nuts and Seeds have been shown in many studies to reduce the risk of having a heart attack.

Carbohydrates: The level of carbohydrates was set at 30 grams per serving to include more food items. All candies are considered unhealthy, regardless of carbohydrate content.

Fruit: Fruit in any form (canned, fresh, dried) was not restricted by carbohydrate standards because it provides vitamins, minerals, anti-oxidants and dietary fiber that are beneficial to an overall balanced diet.

Portion size: Portion size is not defined, because there is variability among products. However, the preference is for smaller-portioned products.

Rationale for Guidelines

Beverages

Healthiest

- Milk – Lowfat (1%) or Nonfat preferred, any flavor
- Water – Pure
- Juice – at least 50% fruit or vegetable juice

Healthier

- Water – Flavored or vitamin enhanced
- Low-Calorie Beverage – (<50 calories per 12 oz serving)

Rationale

Milk: Milk in any form provides vitamins and minerals, but the low-fat and non-fat versions are preferred. Flavored milks are permitted.

Water: Pure water is preferred, but water that is flavored maybe more attractive to someone who doesn't drink plain water. The vitamin-enhanced waters may benefit people with such nutritional needs, although pure water is the healthiest choice.

Juice: Fruit and vegetable juices should contain at least 50-percent juice, coinciding with the California Consensus

Carbonation and caffeine: Carbonation and caffeine in moderation do not have a significant effect on nutrition. Carbonated low-calorie beverages may be another option for people who don't like milk or plain water.

Low-calorie: Beverages containing 50 calories or fewer per 12 oz serving were deemed healthier options. Artificially sweetened drinks are not as healthy as pure water but may be a healthy alternative for people trying to watch their weight or manage their diabetes.

HOW TO GET STARTED WITH THE FIT CITY SNACK CENTER INITIATIVE

1. Identify the person in your organization that handles vending contracts.
2. Contact a Fit City representative at 210-246-9613.
3. Set a meeting between a Fit City representative and the vending company to discuss food items that will be placed in vending machines using these guidelines.
4. Decide how many healthy items you would like in your vending machines. For many organizations, 100% healthy is too high. If this is the first “health” initiative in your organization, you might decide to try for 50%. Decide what makes sense for your organization!
5. Talk to your organization’s employees about the initiative: send out memos; put articles on your Web site or in your newsletters. Promote the good stuff and publicize your success stories. Try not to sound like the *snack police*; be positive and non-judgmental.
6. Working with the Fit City representative and your vendor, decide which type and size of Fit City Snack Center signage you want to use. We recommend that you use **two** types of signs and labels that are provided by the Fit City rep:
 - **Window Cling Decoder** that denotes the color coding of products as Healthier and Healthiest. The window clings will be provided free of charge.
 - **Yellow & Purple Price Tags.** Price tags will denote whether the product is Healthier or Healthiest. Items not in either category should be unmarked. Yellow denotes items that are Healthiest. Purple denotes items that are Healthier. Tags are to be provided by the vending company or the organization hosting the machines.
7. Once a Fit City Snack Machine has been labeled, monitor the re-stocking to ensure the machines abide by the standards over time. Keep in touch with Fit City representative in order to track how well Healthy machines are being received.
8. Enjoy the new options. Eat Healthier. Lead by example!

Fit City is managed and operated by the YMCA of Greater San Antonio and is owned by the Bexar County Community Health Collaborative. Members of the Health Collaborative include Baptist Health System, Bexar County Medical Society, CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Healthcare, Community First Health Plans, Methodist Healthcare, Methodist Healthcare Ministries, San Antonio Metropolitan Health District, Southwest General Hospital and University Health System.