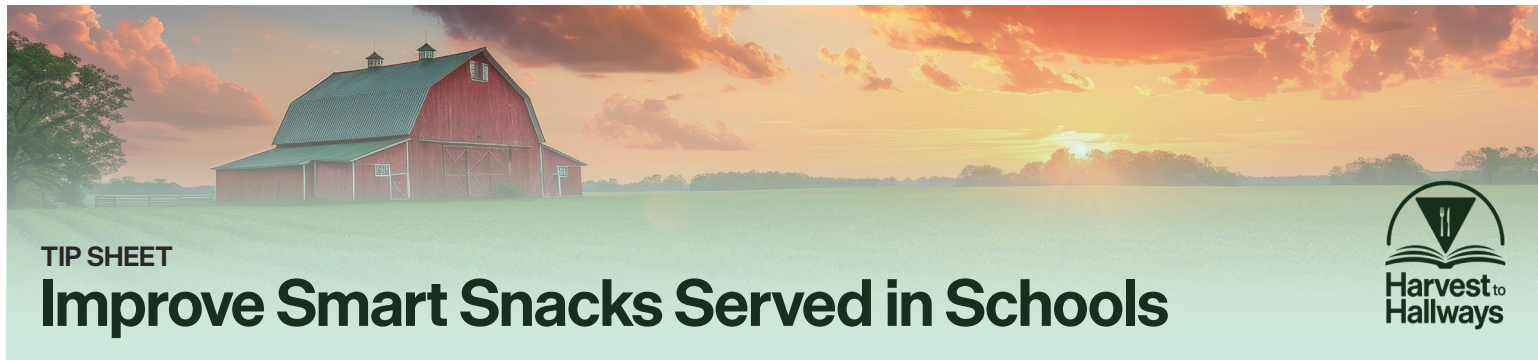




TIP SHEET

Improve Smart Snacks Served in Schools



Competitive foods are all foods and beverages sold to students on campus during the school day that are not part of the reimbursable meal and must meet the Smart Snacks in School Nutrition Standards. This includes foods and beverages sold at school fundraisers, school stores, and vending machines. Serving whole, nutrient-dense snacks help students stay focused, energized, ready to learn and meets one of the goals of the [USDA Pledge for Healthier School Meals](#).

Key Pledge Tips

- Spotlight whole-food snacks with eye-catching labels and creative signage—make healthy choices impossible to miss!
- Place plain water, milk, unsweetened beverages, fruit, vegetables, nuts, seeds, cheese, and whole-grain snacks at eye level.
- Feature locally sourced snacks and beverages without added sugars or artificial sweeteners, flavors, dyes, and preservatives.
- Present fruits and vegetables in ready-to-eat portions to reduce barriers to choosing them.

Smart Snacks Menu Ideas

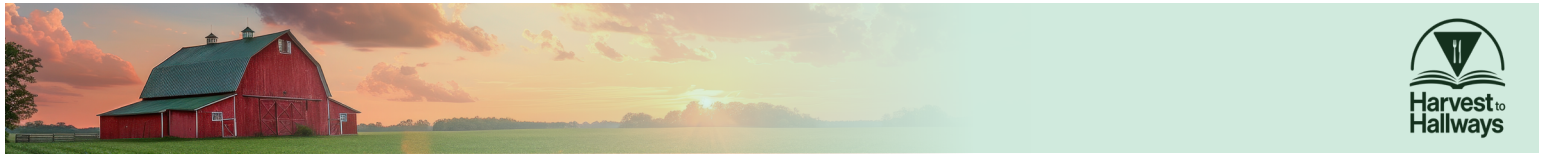
Consider serving up these delicious, kid-friendly whole-food snack pairings that are simple to prepare and deliver fiber and protein to keep students powered up and ready to learn and play.^{1,2}

- Apple slices with unsweetened nut or seed butter
- Cheese sticks with whole-grain crackers
- Hard-boiled eggs with cherry tomatoes
- Plain yogurt with fresh fruit
- Carrots or cucumber slices with hummus
- Nuts and dried fruit with no added sugars
- Popcorn with raisins

¹Refer to A Guide to Smart Snacks in School for more information on foods and paired foods with exemptions from certain nutrient standards. These exemptions make it easy to offer whole foods as snacks.

²Be sure to serve foods in shapes and textures that are safe and appropriate for a child's age.

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Try It Out!

The following activities can help schools offer whole-food snacks:

- 1. Swap Challenge:** What simple swaps can I make to replace current offerings with whole, nutrient-dense snacks? List 3 common snacks and replace each with a whole-food alternative like those suggested above.
- 2. Harvest to Hallways:** Feature locally grown fruit and vegetables or regionally produced dairy items on the menu boards or signs to help students learn where their snacks come from.
- 3. Taste Test ‘Try Day’ Event:** Engage students in choosing wholesome, whole-food snacks through hands-on tasting and exploration.
- 4. Reflection Prompt:** Collaborate with local stakeholders as a way to make a positive change: How can you leverage the Local School Wellness Policy Committee to help identify healthier, student-approved snack options?

Helpful Tools

- [A Guide to Smart Snacks in School](#)
- [Local School Wellness Policy Outreach Toolkit](#)
- [The Alliance for a Healthier Generation’s Smart Snacks in School Product Calculator](#)
- [Eat Real Food Toolkit](#)
- [Taste-Testing Event Resources](#)
- [Tips for Procuring Whole Foods](#)
- [Child Nutrition Programs Food Industry Toolkit](#)

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