

Can these Smart Snacks pass our tests?

Food and beverage companies have improved their K–12 products by reducing sodium and increasing whole grains. Some have also taken steps to reduce added sugars and remove harmful low-calorie sweeteners and synthetic dyes. Despite this, many snacks and beverages sold in schools are still too high in added sugars and can contain harmful low-calorie sweeteners and synthetic dyes.

In [Smart Snacks: Graded](#), the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) assessed the nutritional quality of 623 single-serve, individually packaged, Smart Snacks-compliant foods and beverages to determine if they meet additional science-based standards for added sugars, low-calorie sweeteners, and synthetic dyes.

Here are some examples of the worst offending products from the report, published in October 2023, alongside better alternatives sold by the same company at the time of data collection. It's time for companies to offer better Smart Snacks in schools!

SNACKS

Snacks passed our tests if they had 5 g of added sugars or less and were free from harmful low-calorie sweeteners and synthetic dyes. Breakfast cereals, however, could have up to 6 g of added sugars per dry ounce. Likewise, yogurts with no more than 12 g of added sugars per 6 ounces earned a passing grade.

50 percent (157 of 315) of the snacks in our report had 5 g of added sugars or less; only 2 percent (5 of 315) contained harmful low-calorie sweeteners, but 12 percent (37 of 315) were synthetically dyed.

Cookies and baked sweets



FAIL

This Rice Krispies Treats Chocolatey Chip Made with Whole Grain is specially made for K-12 schools and contains **14 g of added sugars** per 1.59 oz package.



PASS

This Rice Krispies Treats Mini Squares Made with Whole Grain is a smaller size at 0.42 oz and has only **3 g of added sugars**.

Fruit



FAIL

There are **15 g of added sugars** in this 4.5 oz cup of Mott's Applesauce.



PASS

This cup of Mott's No Sugar Added Applesauce is the same size and contains **0 g of added sugars**.

Breakfast Cereal



FAIL

This 1 oz Lucky Charms Cereal with Marshmallows Bowlpak not only has **9 g of added sugars** but also contains four synthetic dyes: **Blue 1, Red 40, Yellow 5, and Yellow 6**.



PASS

This 1 oz Trix Cereal 25% Less Sugar Single Serve Bowlpak is a better choice with only **6 g of added sugars** and **no synthetic dyes**.

Yogurt



FAIL

This 6 oz YoCrunch Lowfat Yogurt, Strawberry with Kellogg's Granola has **17 g of added sugars**.



PASS

This Danimals Nonfat Yogurt, Strawberry is a smaller size at 4 oz and only has **4 g of added sugars**.

BEVERAGES

Beverages that earned a passing grade could not be sweetened with added sugars—unless they were flavored milks with 10 g of added sugars or less per cup—nor could they contain harmful low-calorie sweeteners (i.e., aspartame, acesulfame potassium, saccharin, or sucralose) or synthetic dyes.

96 percent (291 of 303) of the beverages in our report had no added sugars; 35 percent (107 of 303), however, contained harmful low-calorie sweeteners, and 12 percent (36 of 303) were synthetically dyed.

Sugar-Sweetened Beverages



FAIL

Keurig Dr Pepper sells this 12 fl oz Hawaiian Punch Fruit Juicy Red Flavored Juice Drink which is sweetened with **15 g of added sugars** as well as **sucralose**. It is also synthetically dyed with **Blue 1** and **Red 40**.



FAIL

Coca-Cola Co. offers this 10.1 fl oz Tum-E Yummies Big Berry Blast with **13 g of added sugars, sucralose, and Blue 1**.



FAIL

PepsiCo Inc. makes this 12 fl oz Gatorade G2 Lower Sugar Thirst Quencher Grape. It is sweetened with **7 g of added sugars, acesulfame potassium, and sucralose** and is synthetically dyed with **Blue 1** and **Red 40**.

**Diet Sodas versus
Unsweetened Flavored
Sparkling Waters**



FAIL

This 20 fl oz Fanta Zero Sugar Orange is allowed to be sold in high schools and contains both **aspartame** and **acesulfame potassium** as well as **Red 40** and **Yellow 6**.



PASS

This 16 fl oz AHA Blueberry + Pomegranate sparkling water is a better choice. Not only is it **unsweetened**, but it is also **free from synthetic dyes**.

**OUR FULL REPORT IS AVAILABLE ONLINE AT
[HTTPS://WWW.CSPINET.ORG/RESOURCE/SMART-SNACKS-GRADED](https://www.cspinet.org/resource/smart-snacks-graded)**



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