

School Stores and Concessions



Objective

Increase the availability and selection of healthful foods and beverages at school stores and concessions.



Key Messages

Most middle and high school students do not consume adequate amounts of healthful foods such as fruits, vegetable and whole grains.

- Fewer than one in four 6th, 9th and 12th grade Dakota County students report consuming five or more fruits and vegetables a day.¹

School concessions are meal and snack outlets that can expose students, school athletes, parents, siblings and fans to healthy food and beverages.

- Teens' daily snacking increased from 61 percent in 1977-1978 to 83 percent in 2005-2006. Adolescents who had four or more snacks in a day consumed over 1.5 times more calories than adolescents who reported no snacks.²
- Parents reported that youth commonly consume unhealthful foods and beverages during sporting events and that few healthful options are available in sport settings.³
- Children and adolescents consume more than 35 percent of their daily calories at school. Replacing junk foods, sugary drinks and high-fat milks with healthier options is a critical strategy for improving children's diets and reversing the childhood obesity epidemic.⁴

School concessions can still be profitable while offering healthful food and beverage choices.

- Healthier food and beverage selections improved parents' and students' satisfaction with concessions, many students indicated they would buy the healthier choices again, and profits remained strong.⁵
- Increasing the availability and promotion of healthier a la carte foods for high school students led to significant increases in sales of the targeted foods.⁶





Key Strategies

- **Engage the district’s booster clubs.** Determine what booster clubs exist in your district and who the leaders are. Invite booster club stakeholders to a meeting to discuss the importance of offering healthy food and beverage options at concession stands and to determine mutually agreed upon, feasible steps for increasing healthy food and beverage offerings.
- **Increase the availability of non-food and healthful food and beverages.** Non-food items that may be sold at school stores include bookmarks, erasers, jump ropes, and pencils. School spirit gear is a great option for concession stands. Several ideas for healthier food options are included in “Resources for Implementation.”
- **Set a pricing strategy to encourage the selection of the healthier offerings.** One pricing strategy that shows promise in promoting the selection of healthier foods and beverages is increasing the price of the less healthy items while decreasing prices of more healthful items—generating a cost-neutral effect.⁷
- **Place healthful food and beverages in front of the customers.** Position healthier foods and beverages in plain view.
- **Market healthier school store and concession choices.** Attractive packaging, signage like posters, program inserts, flyers, etc. or taste testing can help increase the consumption of healthful food choices. Increasing the availability and promotion of healthier foods for high school students led to significant increases in sales of the targeted foods.⁶
- **Include school stores and concessions in wellness policies.** Establishing a policy will decrease junk food (foods and beverages with low nutrient density that provide calories primarily through fats and added sugars) offered in schools.⁸⁻⁹



Sample Policy Language

“Concession efforts will be supportive of healthy eating by emphasizing the sale of healthy food items or of non-food items.”

“The superintendent, with the assistance of the School Wellness Committee, will provide a list of foods and beverages that should be promoted at school-sponsored events outside of the school day.”

“Concessions should strive to include at least 25% of healthy options in the selection and should price those healthy options relatively lower than less healthy options, when possible.”

“100% of school store items sold during the school day will comply with USDA Smart Snacks in Schools nutrition standards.”



Success Stories

Bloomington, Edina and Richfield, MN

Healthier Concessions – *Reached goal of 40% of their concession menu items meeting healthier choice guidelines.*

The goal of the Bloomington, Edina and Richfield initiative was to work with municipal concession stand operators to ensure at least 40% of their menu offerings met healthier choice guidelines. Assessments were completed at two concession stands prior to the start of the initiative which revealed that healthier foods were limited to no more than one or two menu items, representing no more than 6% of total offerings. Bloomington Public Health staff monitored and evaluated the healthier offerings to see how they impacted revenues. They also conducted a workshop on how to maximize municipal concessions profits. Several city venues have upgraded their menus, stopped selling candy and reached at least 40 percent healthier selections. Many of the concession stands have actually increased profits.

Rochester Honkers Baseball team and Olmsted County Public Health Services, Rochester, MN

Slider's Healthy Choice Menu – *80% of a convenience sample of 49 Rochester Honker fans reported seeing the new healthier menu options and 47% reported trying them*

Rochester Honkers Baseball team and Olmsted County Public Health Services teamed up to launch a mascot-endorsed "Sliders Healthy Choice Menu" in 2011. In addition to increasing the availability of healthier items, a marketing plan was developed that included pricing the healthier items the same or lower than less healthy items, creating a brand and logo, and increasing the visibility of the healthier products.

Muscatine High School, Muscatine, IA

Improving the nutrition environment at rural school sporting events – *42% of students tried new products and would buy them again*

A team of researchers from the University of Iowa and the Muskie Boosters collaborated to add healthier options at concession stands and to modify some of the existing options to make them healthier. Parents and students were surveyed to help select items. Once selected, they considered issues such as pricing, availability and equipment. The Boosters also developed an advertising campaign using signs, local media, announcements over the PA systems and advertisements in their sports brochure. Results of the initiative show that parents' and students' satisfaction improved, many students indicated they would purchase the items again, and profits remained strong.



Resources for Implementation

- **Creating Healthier Concessions:** A resource guide designed to assist groups in improving concessions in their communities. <http://www.cspinet.org/nutritionpolicy/Fairmount-Concessions-Guide.pdf>
- **Healthy Foods in Recreational Facilities: It just makes sense:** A kit from New Brunswick recreational facilities that provides awareness, education and resources to encourage a greater availability of healthy food choices. <http://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/hic-csi/pdf/Wellness-MieuxEtre/HealthyFoods.pdf>
- **Cornell University – Concession Stand Makeover:**
<http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/op/concessions>

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Smart Choices is a partnership of the Dakota County Public Health Department and school districts in Dakota County committed to making the healthy choice the easy choice by creating opportunities for healthy eating and physical activity before, during and after school.

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