

# Nutrition Standards Fact Sheet: Parties and Celebrations

For Schools Participating in Pennsylvania's School Nutrition Incentive: Effective July 2008

## Classroom Parties and Holiday Celebrations (during the school day):

- You may offer up to 3 treats such as cake, cupcakes, or chocolate that have added sugar<sup>\*\*\*</sup> as the first ingredient. These foods may not be Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)<sup>\*\*</sup>
- Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)<sup>\*\*</sup> such as soda/pop are not allowed at parties.
- You must offer fresh fruits and vegetables.
- You must offer plain water, milk, or 100% juice to drink. (Drinkable tap water is fine.)

Food service must offer parents and teachers a list of party items that meet the criteria below:

- Moderate in sodium (most snacks should contain less than 200 mg. sodium per serving)
- Minimal to no trans fats (zero grams trans fat on the label)
- Include items that contain > 2 grams fiber per serving
- Offer fresh fruits and vegetables
- Offer water, 100% juice, or milk to drink
- No Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV)<sup>\*\*</sup>

Parents and teachers should be encouraged to purchase items on this list. If possible, food service should offer to sell these items to parents and teachers for the parties.

**\*\*FMNV include:** carbonated beverages, water ices, chewing gum, hard candy, jelly/gum candy, marshmallow, candy corn, mints, licorice, cotton candy, candy coated popcorn.

**\*\*\*Names for sugar include:** brown sugar, corn sweetener, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, honey, invert sugar, lactose, maltose, molasses, raw sugar, sucrose, sugar, syrup.

**IMPORTANT: Make sure students do not have allergies or dietary restrictions to the foods served.**

## The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) recommends:

- Parents and teachers should purchase party items from food service (rather than preparing them themselves) to help prevent food safety and allergy concerns.
- Schedule birthday parties once per month, rather than every birthday.
- Plan parties that focus on activities, rather than food. For ideas, go to:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle/QuickandEasy/celebrations.pdf>

**Great resources on the PDE website** [www.pde.state.pa.us/food\\_nutrition](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/food_nutrition). Click on "School Nutrition Incentive" and look for:

[PDE Nutrition Standards for Classroom and Holiday Parties](#) (PDF)  
For Food Service Professionals

[PDE Nutrition Standards for Classroom and Holiday Parties](#) (PDF)  
For Parents

### What if a parent brings in treats when schools don't have the required fruits and vegetables?

Inform parents through newsletters, websites, etc. that treats should only be brought in when requested for scheduled parties. If a parent still brings in the treats on an unscheduled party day, inform the parent of the policy for future reference. We suggest providing a note thanking them for the treats, but letting them know the policy for the future. You may serve the treat, preferably after lunch is served.

### Can we provide birthday treats in the cafeteria?

Yes, but the treat must be available to all students. It must be provided after the meal, so students are not eating the treat instead of the meal. Fruits and vegetables and water, 100% juice or milk must be available. This should not be a problem since reimbursable meal rules already require offering most of these items.