New Federal Rules Ban Unhealthy Snacks in Schools

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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has announced new national nutrition standards for school snacks, as part of the first dietary overhaul for school lunches in more than 30 years, CNN reports. The Smart Snacks in School program will set limits for fat, salt and sugar for foods sold in school vending machines and snack bars and will effectively ban the sale of sodas and sugary sports drinks to students. In addition, new standards will require foods to contain at least 50 percent whole grains or have a fruit, vegetable, dairy or protein as the first ingredient. USDA officials say schools and food/beverage companies must meet these new nutritional standards by July 1, 2014, in advance of the 2014–2015 school year. The rules are a result of the Healthy and Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, designed to improve the quality of food served under the National School Lunch Program and help curb obesity, which affects nearly 17 percent of children and adolescents nationwide.

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