# Should school cafeterias ban sweets?

**Some people say schools should stop offering them at breakfast and lunch.**

## What you need to know

- **Added sugars are sweeteners added to food during processing. School food cannot contain more than 10% added sugars, according to US government policies.**
- **Every day in the US, schools provide lunch to 30 million students and breakfast to 16 million students.**
- **School meals can include foods with added sugar, like flavored milk, yogurt, muffins, and cookies.**
- **Eating high levels of sugar can lead to health problems, studies show.**



**AROUND THE WORLD**
Japanese school lunches, known as *kyushoku*, are said to be among the healthiest in the world.

Health experts recommend that children and teens consume no more than 24 grams of added sugar per day, but it's estimated that they actually take in about 68 grams per day. Much of that comes from highly processed or packaged items like sugary drinks, cereals, snacks, some breads and crackers, and desserts like cake or pudding. Some nutrition experts say that cutting back on cafeteria sweets is a great way to reduce added sugar for US students. But many people say that's going too far and there are ways to limit but not eliminate sweetened foods. What do you think? Should school cafeterias ban sweets?

### Yes—save them for home

The school day is long and busy, and kids get a short amount of time for breakfast or lunch. It's hard enough to resist sweet foods or drinks, but it's especially difficult when you're hungry and rushed. If sweets aren't available in school at all, kids won't be able to grab them simply because they're in a hurry. If kids do have sugar at school, it can add up quickly and adults might not realize how much kids are consuming each day. Sweets should only be eaten at home or at restaurant meals with family. That way, grown-ups can track and adjust how much their kids can have, which safeguards their health.

### No—kids deserve a treat

School meals in the US have gotten much healthier in recent years, with more whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables. If kids are eating a healthy, balanced diet overall, what's wrong with having a muffin for breakfast or a cookie after lunch? It also gives them something to look forward to during the school day, when they're busy doing the hard work of learning. Children and the adults in their lives are perfectly capable of making smart food choices. If parents know their kids are having chocolate milk or yogurt at school, they can make sure they don't eat too much sugar at home.

### YES Three reasons school cafeterias should ban sweets

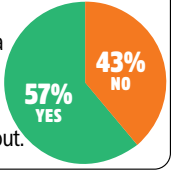
1. **It's hard to resist sweets, especially during the hectic school day when kids are hungry and rushed.**
2. **Having sweets available at school makes it difficult for adults to keep track of how much kids are having.**
3. **Kids can eat sweet treats at home, where adults can decide what's best for them.**

### NO Three reasons school cafeterias should not ban sweets

1. **School meals are much healthier than they used to be. If kids eat a healthy, balanced diet overall, treats are OK.**
2. **Students work hard in school and should have something to look forward to.**
3. **Parents and kids are capable of keeping track of sweets and making good food decisions together.**

## LAST WEEK'S POLL

Last week, we asked if Election Day should be on a weekend. More than half of you said yes, voting should be moved to a Saturday or Sunday to increase turnout.




## What do you think?

Now that you've read a bit more about this issue, visit kids.theweekjunior.com/polls so you can vote in our debate. Vote YES if you think school cafeterias should ban sweets or NO if you don't. We'll publish the results next week.

**The goal of the big debate** is to present two sides of an issue fairly in order to stimulate discussion and allow our readers to make up their minds. The views on this page do not reflect those of *The Week Junior*, and the page is not funded by third parties.

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