Retailer Notice

South Carolina Bans Unhealthy Foods and Beverages from SNAP EBT

Beginning November 1, 2026, South Carolina SNAP retailers cannot accept SNAP EBT payments for candy, energy drinks, soft drinks, and other sweetened beverages.

"Candy" is defined as and shall mean a preparation of sugar, honey, or other natural or artificial sweeteners in combination with chocolate, fruits, nuts, or other ingredients in the form of bars, drops, or pieces. "Candy" shall not include the following: protein bars, granola bars, or baking ingredients such as sprinkles, chocolate melting wafters, toffee bits, or chocolate chips, or items primarily identified and sold as bakery or bread products, such as baked goods, cakes, crackers, cookies, muffins, brownies, pastries, bread, or similar products.

"Energy drinks" is defined as and shall mean beverages containing at least sixty-five (65) milligrams of caffeine per eight (8) fluid ounces that are advertised as being specifically designed to provide metabolic stimulation or an increase to the consumer's mental or physical energy. "Energy drinks" shall not include coffee or tea or any substantially coffee- or tea-based beverage.

"Soft drinks" is defined as and shall mean any nonalcoholic beverage made with carbonated water and flavored or sweetened, or both, with more than five (5) grams of sugar or other natural or artificial sweeteners.

Diet and zero sugar soft drinks will remain an allowable purchase with SNAP benefits.

"Sweetened beverages" is defined as and shall mean any sweetened beverage, flavored or sweetened or both, with added sugar or other natural or artificial sweeteners, ready for consumption without further processing.

You will need to comply with these changes. **If you do not comply, FNA may withdraw your SNAP authorization, and you will no longer be able to accept SNAP EBT.**

For more information on South Carolina's Heathy Food project, please visit the Healthy Food SC website or email your questions to SC Healthy Food Choice Project.

For a complete list of states implementing similar changes and to review the South Carolina Food Restriction waiver, visit USDA's SNAP Food Restriction Waivers website.

For more information visit USDA FNA SNAP Retailer website.

Guidance documents lack the force and effect of law, unless expressly authorized by statute or incorporated into a contract. USDA may not cite, use, or rely on any guidance that is not available through their guidance portal, except to establish historical facts.