

HEALTHY CONVENIENCE STORE PROJECT



Storeowner Toolkit

PROVIDED BY:



Healthy
Southern Illinois
Delta Network

Thank you for choosing to become a Southern Illinois Healthy Convenience Store! Marketing and selling healthy foods can help you improve your total sales, increase customer loyalty and bring new shoppers to your store. This opportunity not only better your business but creates healthy benefits for the community as well. This toolkit is equipped with useful tools and resources to help you achieve your business goals.

Contents

What is the Healthy Convenience Store Project?

- ✓ Describes the project and who is involved.

Project Expectations

- ✓ Outlines what you agree to do for the project and what will be provided in return.

Making the Store Project Plan

- ✓ Helps you think about what changes or improvements you will make in the store to increase your sales of healthy foods.

Marketing Healthy Foods

- ✓ Provides ideas and techniques on how to market healthy foods, particularly fresh fruit and vegetables.

Stocking, Displaying & Purchasing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

- ✓ Shares techniques and tips on how to properly handle fresh produce to increase your sales and lengthen their shelf-life.

What are Healthy Foods?

- ✓ Identifies what types of healthy food to stock.

WIC & Food Stamps (SNAP)

- ✓ Provides information about applying for each program.

Resources

- ✓ Points you to more information beyond this toolkit

The Project

This project focuses on making healthy food more accessible to rural residents, particularly those who must travel a long distance to grocery shopping. Residents in these areas must rely on convenience stores for grocery shopping in between periodic supermarket shopping trips. As a result, making healthy food available to these residents depends on improving what is stocked on the shelves of convenience stores. This project attempts to address this problem by encouraging retailers to incorporate more healthy food options into their stores through a healthy convenience store program.

Who We Are:

The Healthy Southern Illinois Delta Network (HSIDN) is a grassroots effort established to build consensus on the health needs of residents in southernmost Illinois.

The Network brings together local health departments, area health centers, hospitals and others interested in improving the health of their communities. Members work together to support healthy communities in the lower sixteen counties in Illinois.

HSIDN members include Southern Illinois Healthcare, the Center for Rural Health and Social Service Development and the area's six health departments covering a fifteen county region. Regional efforts are coordinated by the steering committee and implemented at the local level through healthy community coalitions. Coalition members and action teams engage their communities to conduct activities and advance the overall mission of the HSIDN.

For more information, visit our website at <http://www.hsidn.org/>.

The Need for Healthier Foods

This toolkit resulted from a needs assessment conducted in the Fall 2014 aimed at measuring the availability of healthy foods in convenience stores located in Southern Illinois. Particular attention was paid to areas that a supermarket may be too far away for regular shopping. In the absence of a nearby supermarket, residents in these areas must rely on convenience stores for grocery shopping for periodic supermarket shopping trips. As a result, the immediate availability of healthy food for these residents depends on what is available in these convenience stores.

What is a Southern Illinois Healthy Convenience Store?

A Southern Illinois Healthy Convenience Store (SIHCS) is a convenience or small grocery store that promotes the sale of healthy foods such as fresh produce, low-fat dairy, and whole grains through stocking and marketing. The project's aim is to improve health and prevent obesity and chronic disease in rural communities through culturally appropriate, store-based interventions.

What is the Southern Illinois Healthy Convenience Store Designation?

Convenience stores can earn the SIHCS designation after meeting the following program criteria.

1. A commitment to sell healthier foods at an affordable price at their convenience store.
2. A commitment to accept assistance from local health department staff or other organizers to market healthy food items to customers.
3. Improving the convenience store's healthy food offerings according the plan and goals established by the local health department or organizer.

What is expected of a Southern Illinois Healthy Convenience Store?

A SIHCS is a convenience store that stocks and markets the sale of healthy foods. A healthy convenience store is willing to commit to the following:

1. A commitment to sell healthier foods at an affordable price at their convenience store.
2. A commitment to accept assistance from local health department staff or other organizers to market healthy food items to customers.
3. Improving the convenience store's healthy food offerings according the plan and goals established by the local health department or organizer.

What will the organizer do for the convenience store?

The organizer will provide educational, marketing, and technical assistance for participating stores. Working with each store, the organizer will develop an individualized store project plan to help stores stock, market, and sell healthy food items. Examples of what the organizer will provide include:

- Assist in improving store layout for storage and display of healthy foods.
- Starting kit with promotional materials (shelf signs, posters, flyers, etc.)
- Consultation about social marketing to current and *new* customers through Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Consultation in filling out applications and other paperwork for SNAP (Food Stamps) and WIC.
- Evaluation of store progress to determine how the organizer can assist the store further.

To become a SIHCS, the organizer will work with you to develop a store project plan. This plan will outline your overall goals for the projects and identifies the specific changes you plan to make with your business.

To ensure a successful and sustainable store project plan, first ask yourself the questions below:

- What are your store's strengths?
- What are your store's weaknesses?
- What changes would you like to make in your store?
- Which items bring in the most profits?
- Which items bring in the least profits?
- What type of assistance, training, and information do you need?
- What are your goals for becoming a SIHCS?

Consider the following when answering the questions above.¹

Current Financial Status

The main goal is to maintain or to increase your current profit margin. Creating a budget to promote and sell healthy foods will allow you to stay on track with your financial goals. Will you need any additional storage or display equipment? If so, how much can you afford to invest and what kind of sales will you need to pay for the equipment and other needs? Consider any extra electricity costs for new equipment. Are there any cosmetic improvements (i.e. better lighting, painting walls) that you will need to make? How can you make the outside of your store more appealing and attract new customers to come shop? What are the associated expenses?

¹ The following is adapted from the Network for a healthy California's draft of the Retailer Fruit and Vegetable Education Kit. (www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net)

Space

Look around the store. Where can you stock fresh produce so that customers can easily see them? This will help you determine how much produce you can stock and how you layout your store. Can you identify items that can be decreased or eliminated to make room for the fresh produce items and other healthy items you would like to carry?

Storage and Display Equipment:

The size of your store determines the amount of healthy foods you will be able to stock and sell. To increase your sales, you may need to move around display cases and even replace equipment such as old refrigerators. Through used equipment is more affordable than new, newer models are more energy efficient and can lower your monthly electricity bill and repair costs. We will work with you to find potential financial resources such as a small business loan to buy new equipment. Also, make sure that your store's electrical wiring is up to date and new units are compatible to your outlets (most refrigeration units use 220-volt outlets) Find the unit that is compatible to your outlets.

Now that you have thought about some of the issues above, it is time to begin developing a store project plan. After a store inventory and an interview with you, we will first develop a draft of the plan with recommendations on potential changes to make. Remember, the store plan is designed to meet your business goals and in the end, the final plan is based on what you agree to do. Please review the rest of this toolkit to get ideas about what other healthy convenience stores have done. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Marketing is important for letting customers know you are selling healthy food options. Basic changes that stores make include placing the healthy food in high traffic areas, providing clear and colorful signs, and setting up attractive displays. Here are some tips and ideas. The pictures and commentary are provided to help you determine what you would like to do in your store. We will help you set up displays and provide marketing material such as shelf signs.

Tip #1: Display produce at the register counter.

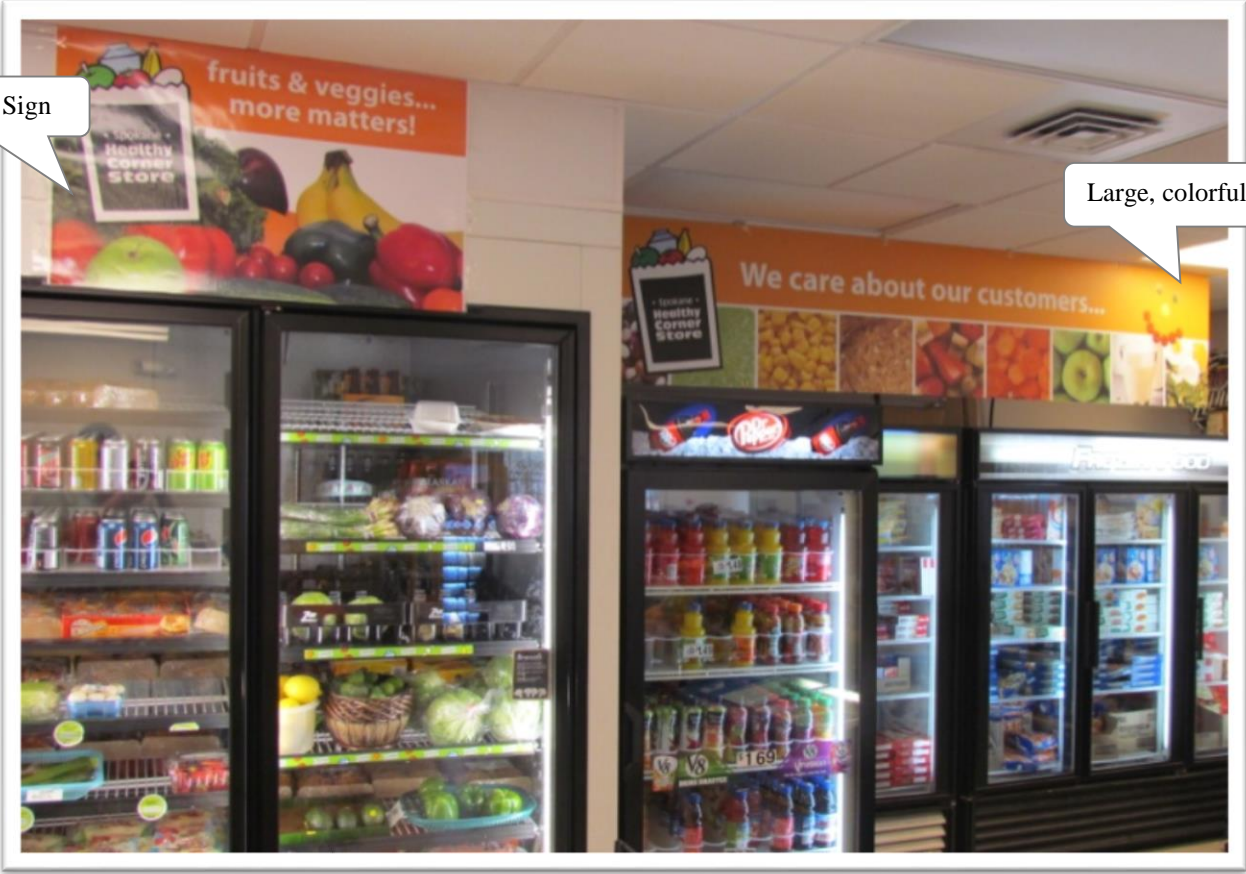
Use a simple plastic, wicker or wire basket.

Fresh-looking produce. No bruises. No mold.

Keep in mind what fruits or vegetables need to be refrigerated.



Tip #2: Set up a special display area or “health zone.”



Promotional Sign

Large, colorful sign

Tip #3: Display signs throughout store directing customers to healthy food items.

Promotional Sign



Shelf signs point out healthy foods



Tip #4: Take a fresh approach to the store's outside appearance



Tip #5: Display signs promoting health foods offered at your store.

Clear and colorful sign point out healthy choices.



Tip #6: Promote the healthy foods offered at your store through creative packaging

Hand out recipe cards featuring healthy foods

Create healthy food kits such as grill kits, salad kits or any other healthy meal idea.



Customers like to see fresh fruits and vegetables when they do their food shopping. Produce is a key ingredient for many meals, so having a selection of fruits and vegetables available can make the shopping experience more convenient for shoppers in your store. Carrying these items can improve your sales and grow your customer base.

There are many things you can do to increase produce sales. An attractive, colorful produce display can help your business while also providing your customers with healthy food options. Suggest ways for your customers to eat more fruits and vegetables as well as get them interested in trying new things.

These produce handling guidelines will help increase your sales of fresh produce and prevent them from being bruised or going bad. Fresh produce can be contaminated by harmful bacteria from where it grows, during transport, and in storage. However, avoiding foodborne illness caused largely by germs is *easy*—just follow the safe handling tips below:

Ordering Produce:

- Before ordering produce be sure that you have the correct environment in your store to display and store each type of produce you plan to stock.
- Contact a representative at the distributor of your choice and begin to develop a relationship.
- Order produce in the smallest quantities possible from your distributor to maintain fresh stock and reduce waste.
- Be aware that it may take a few orders before you determine the right amount of produce to order for your store.
- Think about the cost effectiveness of ordering a *case* of something versus a *half-case* before you know how much you will sell.

When shopping for a distributor to collaborate with, consider these questions:

- What is the minimum dollar amount for each order?
- How often can they deliver to your store?
- How do their prices compare to other distributors?
- Do they have consistent quality?
- Are they willing to “break cases,” in other words, sell you a half case of something as opposed to a full case?

For a list of local produce vendors, please see the *Resource* section

Handling Produce:

- Inspect the quality of all produce upon delivery; *send back* any product that is unsatisfactory.
- Produce is very sensitive to touch. Handle it as little as possible! Stacking, dropping, or rough handling can lead to bruising or scarring.
- Be aware of items that DO or DO NOT benefit from refrigeration—store them appropriately.

Storing Produce:

- Temperature control is essential! Keep produce that requires cooling in refrigeration (34° - 41°F; 1° - 5°C) as much as possible. See the *Produce Basics Chart*, to see what produce should be refrigerated.
- Make sure the storage area for items not requiring refrigeration has good air circulation. Keep produce away from hot, stuffy areas!
- Produce should be stored at least 6-12 inches off the floor on a crate or a stable stand for sanitary and safety reasons.
- According to the FDA-sponsored 2001 Food Code, areas NOT acceptable for food storage include “locker, toilet, garbage, mechanical rooms; under sewer or water lines (areas where water can drip or leak); under stairwells and other areas that can cause contamination.” Follow these guidelines to keep your employees and customers safe!

Displaying Produce:

- Check produce on display throughout the day to identify and remove moldy, rotten, soft or otherwise unsightly and unsellable items; these items may contaminate the fresh, incoming product.
- It is *very important* to rotate all produce! Whenever you order a new case of a particular item, be sure to display the older product first. Use the rule “First In, First Out.”
- If you would not buy it because it is going, bad— remove it from display!
- Keep display areas clean! Make sure to vacuum and sanitize areas where produce is displayed. Use a solution of 1 teaspoon of bleach chlorine to 1 quart of water. A cloth used for wiping up food spills should not be used for any other purpose.
- Trim appropriate produce items of rot or blemishes.
- See the *Produce Basics Chart* for information on which produce items benefit from misting or icing.

Organic Produce

- Organic produce has become very popular recently. Know your customer base and decide whether organic produce is something, they would demand.
- Organic produce is grown without use of synthetic chemical pesticides, insecticides, herbicides and fungicides.
- Organic produce is held to a higher standard than non-organic or conventional produce, which is commonly exposed to synthetic chemicals in production and storage.
- Organic produce generally costs more than conventional produce.
- Organic produce typically “breaks down” or “goes bad” more quickly than conventional produce.

Seasonality

- Most produce tastes best and is the most affordable when it is in season locally. Seasonality heavily affects items such as corn, berries, and watermelons.
- Check with your distributor and/or your state Department of Agriculture to find out when produce is in season.
- The following is a list of produce and their suggested storage requirements.

Common Name	Refrigeration	Storage Temp. (*F)	Would benefit from Misting	Display on Ice
Apples	Yes	30-32	No	No
Asparagus	Yes	36	Yes	Yes
Avocados	No	45-50	No	No
Bananas	No	55-59	No	No
Beans, Green	Yes	40-45	No	No
Beets	Yes	32	Yes	Yes
Berries	Yes	31-32	No	No
Bok Choy	Yes	32	Yes	No
Broccoli	Yes	32	Yes	Yes
Cabbage	Yes	32	Yes	No
Cantaloupes	Yes	36-41	No	Yes
Carrots, topped	Yes	32	Yes	Yes
Cauliflower	Yes	32	Yes	Yes
Celery	Yes	32	Yes	No
Chard, Swiss	Yes	32	Yes	Yes
Cherries	Yes	32	No	No
Collards	Yes	32	Yes	Yes
Corn	Yes	32	Yes	Yes

Cucumbers	No	34-41	No	No
Daikon (Radish)	Yes	32-34	No	No
Eggplants	No	48-50	No	No
Ginger	No	55	No	No
Grapes	Yes	31-32	No	No
Grapefruit	No	48-50	No	No
Kale	Yes	32	Yes	Yes
Leeks	Yes	32	Yes	No
Lemons	No	40-48	No	No
Lettuce	Yes	32	Yes	No
Limes	No	40-48	No	No
Mangoes	No	40-48	No	No
Mushrooms	Yes	32	No	No
Nectarines	Yes	31-32	No	No
Okra	No	45-49	No	No
Onions, Mature Dry	No	55-59	No	No
Onions, Green	Yes	32	Yes	No
Oranges	No	48-50	No	No
Peaches	Yes	32	No	No
Pears	Yes	32	No	No
Peppers, Bell	Yes	39-45	No	No
Peppers, Hot (Chilies)	No	48-50	No	No
Pineapples	No	48-50	No	No
Potatoes	No	55-59	No	No
Spinach	Yes	32	Yes	Yes
Squash (soft rind)	Yes	38	Yes	No
Squash, Winter (hard rind)	No	50-55	No	No
Sweet Potatoes (and Yams)	No	55-59	No	No
Tomatoes	No	55-59	No	No
Watermelons	No	55-59	No	Yes

This guide will help you identify healthy food items to stock in your store as well as tips on how to display and market them in your store. Based on the USDA's *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, a list of potential healthy items to stock along with items they can replace is provided. Items with "*" indicate they are accepted by WIC. Please check with the state WIC office for a current and complete list of WIC-approved items.

The end of this section provides a diagram on how to read a nutrition label found on food packaging. Learning to read nutrition labels will help you more easily identify healthy foods to stock in your store. Nutrition labels provide information such as which and how much nutrients are in each product and the number of servings it contains.

In general, healthy foods to stock include:

- ✓ Fruits and vegetables
- ✓ Whole grains (in breads, cereals, pasta, crackers, etc.)
- ✓ Foods low in salt (sodium)
- ✓ Foods low in sugar
- ✓ Foods low in fat (low in saturated fats, trans fats and cholesterol)
- ✓ Lean meats and poultry



Fruits & Vegetables



Health Benefits: Fruits and vegetables provide a variety of nutrients (i.e. vitamins and minerals), are low in calories and fat and contain valuable fiber that reduces the risk of chronic diseases (i.e. heart disease and some cancers). The USDA recommends 2-1/2 cups of vegetables and two cups of fruit each day for an average diet of 2,000 calories.

Healthy Options to Stock:	Reduce Stock in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh fruits* such as bananas, apples, oranges, pears, and other seasonal fruit <input type="checkbox"/> Fresh vegetables* such as lettuce, onions, peppers, and carrots <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen fruit or vegetables <input type="checkbox"/> Canned fruit with light sugar <input type="checkbox"/> Canned vegetables with low or no salt added <input type="checkbox"/> 100% juice* <input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, apples, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Juices that are less than 100%

Tips:

- fresh fruits and vegetables can be purchased with WIC coupons
- Ask your customers what fresh produce they would like to buy.
- Display a basket of fruit at the register.
- Remove produce with bruises, holes and decay from displays.
- For more on how to properly store and care for produce read the *Stocking, Displaying & Purchasing Fresh Fruit and Vegetables* section.

Whole Grains



Health Benefits: Whole grains provide fiber and a variety of nutrients (i.e. vitamins and minerals). The USDA recommends at least 3 ounces each day to help reduce the risk of chronic diseases; whole grains also may help with weight loss and management.

Healthy Options to Stock:	Reduce Stock in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain breads*, pasta and crackers—whole wheat or multi-grain<input type="checkbox"/> Whole grain cereals* such as bran flakes, Cheerios<input type="checkbox"/> Oatmeal* (includes instant)<input type="checkbox"/> Brown rice* and wild rice<input type="checkbox"/> Popcorn with low salt or salt-free<input type="checkbox"/> Other whole grain products with bulgur* (or “cracked wheat”), barley, and rye	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> White, enriched bread<input type="checkbox"/> White rice<input type="checkbox"/> Cereals with sugar added such as frosted flakes or fruit loops

Tips:

- Whole grain foods cannot be identified by color. Read the nutrition label and look for the words “whole” or “whole grain” before the grain ingredient’s name.
- Look for the whole grain listed as the first ingredient on the nutrition label. Wheat flour, enriched flour, and de-germinated cornmeal are not whole grains.
- WIC accepts any bread labeled “100% Whole Wheat” bread (16 oz. or 24 oz. packages).
- If you make deli, sandwiches provide a whole wheat bread option.

Food Low in Fat



Health Benefits: Reducing the amount of saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol can reduce the risk of heart disease and weight control. The USDA recommends keeping total fat intake between 20 to 35 percent of calories with most fats coming from polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.

Healthy Options to Stock:	Reduce Stock in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk* <input type="checkbox"/> Fat-free, Reduced fat or Low-fat cheese* <input type="checkbox"/> Frozen yogurt, low-fat <input type="checkbox"/> Extra lean ground beef (5% fat) <input type="checkbox"/> Baked potato chips <input type="checkbox"/> Roasted items such as chicken and potatoes <input type="checkbox"/> Soft margarine with zero <i>trans</i> fats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Whole milk (3.25%) <input type="checkbox"/> Regular cheese <input type="checkbox"/> Regular ice cream <input type="checkbox"/> Regular ground beef (25% fat) <input type="checkbox"/> Potato and corn chips with trans fat <input type="checkbox"/> Fried items such as chicken and potatoes

Tips:

- Replace a portion of ice cream shelf space with frozen yogurt.
- Stock items with total fat less than 5% Daily Value (found on the nutrition label).
- Watch out for items with trans fats above .5 grams per serving on nutrition label or “partially hydrogenated” listed in the ingredient list.

Food Low in Salt

Health Benefits: Decreasing salt (sodium) intake reduces the risk of high blood pressure, which is associated with health issues such as heart disease, stroke, congestive heart failure, and kidney disease. The USDA recommends individuals should consume less than 2,300 mg (approximately 1 tsp of salt) of sodium per day.

Healthy Options to Stock:	Reduce Stock in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Salt-free or reduced salt pretzels<input type="checkbox"/> Salt-free or reduced salt nuts<input type="checkbox"/> Salt-free or reduced salt crackers<input type="checkbox"/> Salt-free or reduced salt popcorn<input type="checkbox"/> Salt-free canned items such as tuna,* beans and vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Potato and corn chips<input type="checkbox"/> Canned items with added salt

Tips:

- Look for labels that say “Salt-free” or “Reduced Salt.”
- Display salt-free snack items such as nuts and pretzels near the register.
- Put up “Low in Salt” shelf signs.

Food Low in Sugar

Health Benefits: Decreasing sugar intake improves weight control, the body’s intake of nutrients and dental health. The USDA recommends reducing intake of “added sugars” (also known as caloric sweeteners) often found in processed foods such as soda and candy.

Healthy Options to Stock:	Reduce Stock in:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Water<input type="checkbox"/> Sparkling or carbonated water<input type="checkbox"/> Unsweetened tea<input type="checkbox"/> Diet soda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Soda<input type="checkbox"/> Energy and sports drinks<input type="checkbox"/> Sweetened tea<input type="checkbox"/> Candy

Tips:

- Watch for added sugars such as: sucrose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, and fructose.
- Read the ingredient list on the nutrition label and make sure added sugars are not one of the first items listed.
- Place healthier beverage options (i.e. water and 100% juice) in front of display case.

How to Read a Nutrition Label

Sample label for
Macaroni & Cheese

① **Start Here** →

② **Check Calories**

③ **Limit these Nutrients**

④ **Get Enough of these Nutrients**

⑤ **Footnote**

① **The Serving Size**

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g) Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories: 2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g	80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g	375g
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

⑥ **Quick Guide to % DV**

- 5% or less is Low
- 20% or more is High

① **Serving Size 1 cup (228g)**
Servings Per Container 2

Source: U.S. Food and Drug Administration,
(<http://www.fda.gov/Food/LabelingNutrition/ConsumerInformation/ucm078889.htm>)

Southern Illinois Healthy Convenience Store Project

WIC & Food Stamps (SNAP)

Applying for WIC and Food Stamp (SNAP) authorization will help you increase the affordability of your food for your customers. By accepting these two additional types of payment, you will be able to increase your sales volume and customer base. We recognize applying takes time and can be confusing, therefore we will help you fill out the necessary paperwork and assist you through any other steps along the way. Once authorized to accept WIC and food stamps, we will continue to work with you to meet the program's requirements such as reporting sales.

Applying for WIC:

The Women Infants and Children (WIC) Program is a federally funded health and nutrition program for women, infants, and children. WIC helps families by providing checks they can use to buy healthy supplemental foods from WIC-authorized vendors. Participants must meet the income guidelines, and be a pregnant woman, new mother, infant, or child under age five. The Illinois Department of Human Services manages WIC. Here are some general details to know about the program and how to become authorized:



- ✓ **How can my store become eligible to accept WIC?** Each store is required to meet a certain set of criteria in order to be WIC authorized. For example, stores must stock a minimum quantity of WIC approved foods at all times.
- ✓ **What types of products does a store need to stock? How do I apply?** Stores can apply by contacting the Illinois State WIC Nutrition Program at 217-782-2166.
If you would like a toll-free option, you can call the DHS Helpline at 1-800-843-6154.

We can assist you through this process.

Applying for Food Stamps (SNAP):

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly Food Stamp Program) manages store authorizations. The food stamp program provides low-income households with electronic benefits (SNAP) they can use like cash. Here is some information about becoming authorized:



- **How can my store become eligible to accept SNAP benefits (SNAP)?** A store must sell food for home preparation and consumption and meet at least one of the criteria below:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/retail-store-eligibility-usda-supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>

Offer for sale at least three different varieties of food in each of the following four staple food groups, with perishable foods in at least two categories, on a daily basis:

- × Breads and grains
- × Dairy
- × Fruits and vegetables
- × Meat, poultry and fish

OR

At least 50 percent of the total sales (e.g., food, non-food, services, etc.) at your store must be from the sale of eligible staple food.

- **How do I apply?** Stores can apply online. We can assist you through this process.

Online Application:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/re>

Local Produce Vendors and Growers

The Illinois Department of Agriculture provides a location based lookup tool to find local, farm producers, roadside stands, u pick farms and farmer's markets. The following link under the Where to Find Fresh Produce heading contains the lookup tool:

<http://www.agr.state.il.us/wherefreshis/>

Technical Assistance/Project Consultants

<http://www.healthycornerstores.org/corner-store-project-consultants>

Food Handling and Safety:

U.S. Food and Drug Administration produce handling guide:
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm114299>

Healthy Eating: Understanding Health Issues and Identifying Healthy Foods:

Center for Disease and Control Prevention (CDC)'s *Nutrition for Everyone Program*, <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/index.html>

CDC's Fruit and Veggies Matter Program,
<http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>

CDC's *Rethink Your Drink*,
http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/nutrition/pdf/rethink_your_drink.pdf

USDA's *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010*,
<http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2010.asp>

FDA's *How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Fact Label*,
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute's keep the Beat: Heart Healthy Recipes,
http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/other/ktb_recipebk/ktb_recipebk.pdf

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (aka Food Stamp Program):

SNAP Retailer Eligibility, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/retailers/store-eligibility.htm>

SNAP Application Process, <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/retailers/application-process.htm>

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Office-The staff of the local FNS field office is available to answer your questions and advise you on SNAP rules and procedures.

Illinois WIC Nutrition Program:

<https://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=30513>

Other Healthy Stores Projects and Resources:

Baltimore Healthy Stores
<http://healthystores.org/BHSMaterials.html>

California Food Policy Advocates
<http://www.cfpa.net/Grocery.PDF>

DC Healthy Convenience Store Program
<http://www.dchung.org/projects/Conveniencestore.html>

Hartford's Healthy Food Retailer
http://www.hartfordfood.org/pubs/healthy_retailers.pdf

Healthy Convenience Store Network
<http://www.healthyConvenienceStores.org/index.php>

Healthy Convenience Stores for Healthy New Orleans Neighborhoods,
http://www.sph.tulane.edu/PRC/Files/NOLA_Healthy_Convenience_Stores_Toolkit.pdf

Literacy for Environmental Justice's Good Neighbor Program, (San Francisco, CA) <http://www.leiyouth.org/programs/food.html>

Network for a Healthy California's Retail Program,
<http://www.networkforahealthycalifornia.net>

Snackin' Fresh, a program of The Food Trust in Philadelphia, PA,
<http://www.thefoodtrust.org/php/SnackinFresh/about.html>