



MEPD and TW Bulletin 26-07

Date: March 20, 2026

To: State and Regional Operations Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Policy Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2106

Subject: SNAP Purchase Restrictions

The information in this bulletin will be included in a future handbook revision. Until the handbook is updated, staff must use the information in this bulletin. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook](https://hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/medicaid-elderly-people-disabilities-handbook) (MEPDH) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/medicaid-elderly-people-disabilities-handbook>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](https://hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/twh-policy-bulletins) at <https://hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/twh-policy-bulletins>.

SNAP Purchase Restrictions

Background

Senate Bill 379, passed by the 89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, prohibits the purchase of sweetened drinks and candy with SNAP benefits. On August 4, 2025, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved Texas' healthy foods waiver which allows the state to implement the new purchase limitations.

Current Policy

SNAP

During the interview, explain the following rules for using SNAP benefits:

- SNAP benefits can be used to buy eligible food items and garden seeds from USDA approved retailers, including approved online retailers.
- SNAP benefits cannot be used to buy hot or ready-to-eat foods prepared in the store, pay online fees of any type such as delivery, shipping, service and convenience charges, or pay off charge accounts.
- Retailers cannot give change on SNAP food purchases, and sales tax cannot be charged on any items bought with SNAP benefits ([TWH A-1554, Use of SNAP Benefits](#)).

New Policy

SNAP

During the interview, explain the following rules for using SNAP benefits:

- SNAP benefits can be used to buy eligible food items and garden seeds from USDA approved retailers, including approved online retailers.
- SNAP benefits cannot be used to buy candy, sweetened drinks, hot or ready-to-eat foods prepared in the store, pay online fees of any type such as delivery, shipping, service and convenience charges, or pay off charge accounts.
- Retailers cannot give change on SNAP food purchases, and sales tax cannot be charged on any items bought with SNAP benefits.

For any questions, refer households to the dedicated [HHS SNAP Purchase Restrictions](#) webpage.

Candy

Candy is defined as a confection made with natural or artificial sweeteners. Examples include candy bars; gum; drops; taffy; nuts, raisins, and fruits that have

been candied, crystalized, glazed, or coated with chocolate, yogurt, or caramel; and nuts roasted with a sweetener.

The term does not include snack items and products used exclusively for cooking, such as chocolate bits and cake sprinkles.

Snack items are:

- Breakfast bars, granola bars, nutrition bars, sports bars, protein bars, and yogurt bars, unless they are labeled and marketed as candy;
- Snack mix and trail mix;
- Nuts, but not including pine nuts or nuts that have been candied, crystalized, glazed, coated with chocolate, yogurt, or caramel, or roasted with a sweetener;
- Popcorn;
- Chips, crackers, hard pretzels, pork rinds, and corn nuts;
- Sunflower seeds and pumpkin seeds;
- Ice cream, sherbert, and frozen yogurt; and
- Ice pops, juice pops, sorbet, and other frozen fruit items containing not more than 50 percent fruit juice by volume.

Sweetened Drinks

Sweetened drinks are defined as nonalcoholic beverages made with water that contain five grams or more of added sugar or any amount of artificial sweetener.

Excluded from this definition are beverages:

- Containing milk or milk products;
- Containing soy, rice, or similar milk substitutes;
- Containing more than 50 percent of vegetable or fruit juice by volume;
- Containing natural sweeteners derived from plants (such as Stevia, Stevia Leaf Extract, and Monk Fruit) with less than five grams of added sugar; or
- Considered medical grade electrolyte drinks. Medical grade electrolyte drinks are beverages used for illness related to dehydration and do not include any beverage marketed primarily as a sports drink.

Automation

Changes to TIERS are currently scheduled to be implemented with TIERS Release 123.0 on July 25, 2026.

Correspondence

Changes to Form H1185, Important Information About Your Lone Star Card, will be implemented in a future update.

Changes to Form H1805, SNAP Food Benefits – Your Rights and Program Rules, will be implemented July 25, 2026.

Handbook

Updates to the MEPDH are not required.

The TWH is currently scheduled to be updated in the October 2026 revision.

Training

Beginning in February 2026, information about the upcoming changes is available to staff on The Loop's [SNAP Purchase Restrictions](#) webpage.

Effective Date

This policy is effective April 1, 2026.