



School Lunch Meal Pattern



Back 2 School Conference **July 25-26, 2023**

Equity • Quality • Collaboration • Community



Why does USDA set meal patterns and dietary specifications for school meals?



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National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^b	2½ (½)	2½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^b	3¾ (¾)	3¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark green ^c	½	½	½
Red/Orange ^c	¾	¾	1¼
Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^e	1	1	1½
Grains (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid milk (cups) ^g	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^h	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Interim Target 1 (mg) ^h	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,420
Sodium Interim Target 1A (mg) ^h	≤ 1,110	≤ 1,225	≤ 1,280
<i>Trans</i> fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

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The Footnotes!

^a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.

^b One-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

^c Larger amounts of these vegetables may be served.

^d This category consists of "Other vegetables" as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(E) of this section. For the purposes of the NSLP, the "Other vegetables" requirement may be met with any

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additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) vegetable subgroups as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii) of this section.

^e Any vegetable subgroup may be offered to meet the total weekly vegetable requirement.

^f At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched.

^g All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be flavored or flavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.

^h Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, *trans* fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent are not allowed.

ⁱ Sodium Interim Target 1A must be met no later than July 1, 2023 (SY 2023-2024).



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Fruits

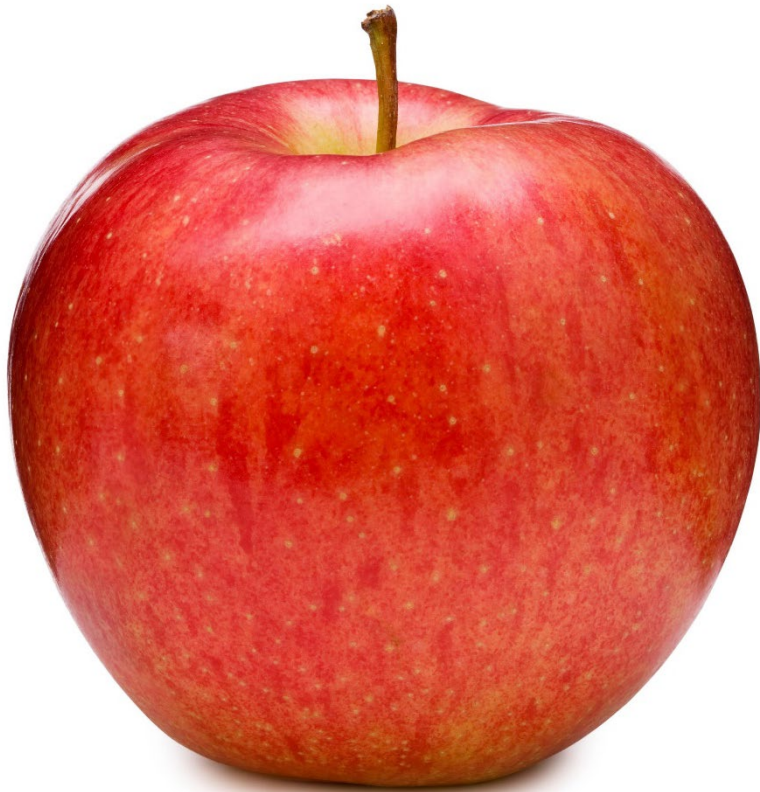


- Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned in light syrup, water, or fruit juice
- Pasteurized, full-strength (100%) fruit juice to meet up to one-half of the fruits component offered over a week

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Dried Fruit



- Whole dried fruit and whole dried fruit pieces credit for twice the volume served.
 - For example, a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raisins contributes $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fruit toward the fruit requirement.
- Dried fruit is sometimes processed with sugar to keep the fruit pieces separated, and may be added to frozen fruits to help preserve color and vitamins.



Juice Limits

- No more than half of the fruits and vegetables offered applies over a week.
- The vegetable juice and fruit juice limits are assessed separately.





Frozen Juice



- Frozen 100% fruit juice, with or without added sugar, can be credited.
 - For grades K-12, liquid or frozen 100% juice may be used to meet up to half of the weekly fruits component at lunch or breakfast.



Products That Do Not Meet Requirements

- Snack-type foods made from fruits, such as fried banana chips
- Pickle relish, jam, or jelly; or
- Home canned products (for food safety reasons).





Fruit Component Questions? Comments? Stories?

How do you serve fruit at your school?



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Vegetables (cups) ^b	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ($\frac{3}{4}$)	3 $\frac{3}{4}$ ($\frac{3}{4}$)	5 (1)
Dark green ^c	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
Red/Orange ^c	$\frac{3}{4}$	$\frac{3}{4}$	1 $\frac{1}{4}$
Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
Starchy ^c	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$
Other ^{c d}	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{3}{4}$
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^e	1	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Grains (oz eq)	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid milk (cups) ^g	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
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Types of Vegetables Required

- Fresh
- Frozen
- Canned
- Dry Beans
- Peas (Legumes)
- Pasteurized, full-strength (100%) vegetable juice





Vegetable Subgroups

- Dark Green
- Red/Orange
- Bean/Pea
- Starchy
- Other





Leafy Greens



- Raw, leafy greens
 - Credit for half the volume served
- Cooked leafy greens
 - e.g. sauteed spinach
 - Credit by volume served



100% fruit strips, drops or other F/V products

- Foods that do not credit
 - Fruit strips, drops, and leathers
 - Freeze-dried
 - Fried banana chips; and
 - Potato/vegetable chips.





Vegetable Component Questions? Comments? Stories?

Do you serve any uncommon or unique veggie at your school?

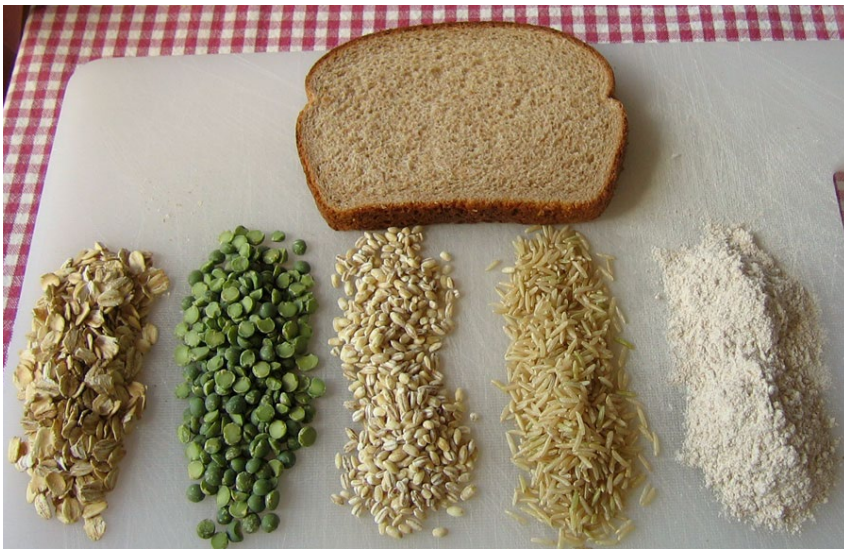


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Fruits (cups) ^b	2½ (½)	2½ (½)	5 (1)
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Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach	1	1	1½
Grains (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid milk (cups) ^g	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
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Ingredients Considered Creditable Grains:



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- Whole grains (i.e. whole wheat, whole-wheat meal/flour, brown rice, rolled oats, whole corn)
- Enriched grains (i.e. enriched wheat meal/flour, enriched rice)
- Bran or germ can be used to meet the enriched grain requirements
- Note: nixtamalized corn, (i.e., corn treated with lime), such as hominy, corn masa, and masa harina are considered whole grain when evaluating products for CNP meal requirements.



Whole Grain-Rich

- At least 80% of the weekly grains offered must be whole grain-rich
- Any remaining grains offered must be enriched
- There is no daily whole grain-rich requirement



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Methods to evaluate if a grain product meets the WGR criteria



- Use Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs
- Use the FDA-Approved Whole Grain Health Claim
- Use the Ingredient Statement (List)



Grain Based Desserts

- Limit to 2 oz. eq. of grain-based desserts per week
- There is not a specific amount of sugar and/or fat that classifies a grain food as a dessert
- Depends on how the product is used in the meal and how children consume the product.





Grain Component Questions? Comments? Stories?

Do you serve any uncommon or unique grains at your school?



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Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^c	1	1	1½
Cereals (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fruit and milk (cups)	2 (1)	2 (1)	2 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
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Meats and Meat Alternates (M/MA)

- Meat
- Poultry
- Fish
- Cheese
- Yogurt
- Whole eggs
- Dry beans and peas*
- Soy yogurt*
- Tofu*
- Tempeh*
- Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters*
- Nuts and seeds*





Can you serve more?



- Yes! Provided that meals (on average) meet the weekly dietary specifications.
- Schools receive the same per meal reimbursement, even if the maximum is exceeded.

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More on Meat Alternatives

Enriched with fortified protein



Made from bean or legume flours



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M/MA Component Questions? Comments? Stories?

What type of M/MA products do you serve at your school?



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Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^c	1	1	1½
Grains (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
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Types of Milk Allowed

Must offer students a variety (at least two different options) of fluid milk

Fat-free (unflavored or flavored) and low-fat (1%) milk (unflavored or flavored)

Unflavored milk must also be available at each meal service





Water Instead of Milk?

- **No**
 - Must not promote or offer water, juice, or any other beverage as an alternative selection to fluid milk in a reimbursable meal throughout the food service area.
- Potable water must be available to students at no charge during meals





Recombined/Reconstituted Milk



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- Yes, if the milk meets the State and local standards for pasteurized fluid milk.
 - Final rule. Fluid Milk Substitutions in the School Nutrition Programs (73 CFR 52903, published September 12, 2008). Available at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2008-09-12/pdf/E8-21293.pdf>.



Non-Dairy Milk Substitutes for Non-disability

- Must obtain a written statement from the student's parent/guardian to support the request
- Do not have to be fat-free or low-fat and there are no flavor requirements
- The non-dairy substitute must meet nutritionally equivalent to cow's milk





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Milk Component Questions? Comments? Stories?

How do you promote milk at your school?



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Trans Fat & Saturated Fat (% of total calories)

- *Saturated fats* occur naturally in many foods. Most come from animal sources, including meat and dairy products, as well as tropical fats like coconut, palm and palm kernel
- The *trans fat* prohibition only applies to added (or synthetic) trans fats, which are listed as partially hydrogenated oil in the ingredient statement



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Sodium

- Applies to the average meal offered during the school week.
 - Menu planners may be able to offer a relatively high sodium meal or high sodium food at some point during the week if meals with lower to moderate sodium content are offered the rest of the week.



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Sodium. School lunches offered to each age/grade group must meet, on average over the school week, the levels of sodium specified in the following table within the established deadlines:

National School Lunch Program: Sodium Timeline & Limits

Age/Grade Group	Target 1: Effective July 1, 2022 (mg)	Interim Target 1A: Effective July 1, 2023 (mg)
K-5	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,110
6-8	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,225
9-12	≤ 1,420	≤ 1,280



The School Lunch Meal Pattern

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Questions?