

CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and  
Child/Family/School Partnerships  
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**OPERATIONAL MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** Sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

**FROM:** Charlene Russell-Tucker, Chief  
Bureau of Health and Nutrition Services and Child/Family/School Partnerships

**DATE:** April 13, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Operational Memorandum #17-07  
**Fluid Milk and Other Food Components/Menu Items in Reimbursable Lunches**

This is a reminder concerning fluid milk and how it is offered in reimbursable lunches served in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program. Under the food-based and nutrient-based USDA menu planning approaches, fluid milk is a separate food component. Regardless of the menu planning option used, the only item that can be counted as the milk component in the USDA meal programs is fluid milk that meets state and federal regulations.

Milk may **not** be offered as one choice in a beverage category; for instance, schools may not offer milk as a choice with juice. Additionally, milk may **not** be combined as one choice in a list of other food items or side dishes; for example, it is not acceptable for a menu to state: "Choose one: 1% chocolate milk, 1% white milk, carrot sticks or apple."

The "offer versus serve" provisions for all of USDA's menu planning approaches allow a student to decline fluid milk. However, the student's choice to decline milk does **not** enable the student to take **any other item** in its place.

Each of the required food components in food-based menu planning and menu items in nutrient-based menu planning plays a unique nutritional role in the menu planning approaches. Federal regulations prohibit schools from exchanging one food component or menu item for another one unless the student has a special dietary need that is documented by the appropriate medical statement. In general, permitting a student to exchange one food component/menu item for another does not support the nutritional mission of the National School Lunch Program and also undermines the educational value of the school dining experience.

Important: This is a numbered Operational Memorandum that contains important program information. Please read carefully and retain in a binder for your future reference. Operational Memoranda are also posted on the Child Nutrition website: <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320676>.

Questions pertaining to this memorandum may be directed to:

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