

3 — MENU PLANNING

This section addresses the weekly menu planning requirements for dietary specifications (nutrition standards), shorter or longer weeks, juice limits, and minimum servings of grains and meat/meat alternates. It also addresses other menu planning considerations including additional servings of food beyond the minimum meal pattern requirements, multiple serving lines, pre-plated meals, vending machines, field trips, and meal identification signage.

Overview of Weekly Requirements

DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS

The dietary specifications are the USDA's nutrition standards for meals in the NSLP and SBP. The average weekly nutrition content of all lunches, and separately for all breakfasts, must meet the dietary specifications for calories (minimum and maximum levels), saturated fat, and sodium. In addition, Nutrition Facts labels and manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fats per serving for all food products and ingredients used to prepare school meals. For information on planning meals to meet the dietary specifications, see [section 5](#).

The first sodium target was effective July 1, 2014. The second sodium target must be reached by July 1, 2017. The final sodium target must be reached by July 1, 2022. For more information, see [appendix A](#) and [appendix B](#).



SHORTER OR LONGER WEEKS

The meal patterns for the NSLP and SBP are based on a five-day week. When a school week regularly operates on a shorter or longer cycle, menu planners must increase or decrease the weekly requirements by 20 percent for each day that deviates from the standard five-day week.

The daily requirements and dietary specifications are unaffected by longer or shorter weeks. Since the dietary specifications are daily averages, either fewer or more days are averaged together to meet the specified targets for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. [Appendix C](#) summarizes the required serving sizes for schools that regularly operate on three, four, six, or seven days each week.

Menu modifications are required only if the school regularly operates for a shorter or longer week. Schools with occasional decreases in the school week due to holidays, snow days or other reasons are not required to adjust the weekly requirements. However, menus must be consistent with the intent of the meal patterns. For example, menu planners must ensure that they do not consistently fail to offer certain vegetable subgroups.

Downloadable meal pattern handouts for four-day, five-day, and seven-day weeks are available on the CSDE's Meal Patterns Web pages, which are accessible from the CSDE's [Program Guidance](#) Web page.

MEAL PATTERNS

In addition to the daily requirements, lunch and breakfast menus must meet weekly requirements for each meal pattern component (milk, fruits, vegetables, grains, and meat/meat alternates). Tables 3-1 and 3-2 provide an overview of the weekly meal pattern requirements for lunch and breakfast. For more information, see [section 1](#).

For fruits, vegetables, and milk, the weekly requirements for all grades are the **sum** of the daily requirements. For example, for a five-day week, the daily milk requirement for breakfast and lunch is 1 cup and the weekly requirement is 5 cups.

The weekly requirements for grains and meat/meat alternates are different for each grade group. For grades 9-12 at lunch, the weekly requirements for grains and meat/meat alternates are the sum of the daily requirements.

- For a five-day week, lunch menus must provide at least 2 ounce equivalents of grains and meat/meat alternates daily and 10 ounce equivalents weekly.
- For a seven-day week, lunch menus must provide at least 2 ounce equivalents of grains and meat/meat alternates daily and 14 ounce equivalents weekly.

For grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch and breakfast, and grades 9-12 at breakfast, the weekly requirements for grains and meat/meat alternates are more than the sum of the daily requirements. For example, at breakfast, the daily grains requirement is 1 ounce equivalent for all grades. The weekly grains requirement for a five-day week is:

- 7 ounce equivalents for grades K-5;
- 8 ounce equivalents for grades 6-8; and
- 9 ounce equivalents for grades 9-12.

To meet the weekly requirement, schools must serve more than the minimum daily serving of grains on some days. For more information on meeting the weekly minimums for grains and meat/meat alternates, see [“Weekly Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates at Lunch”](#) and [“Weekly Grains at Breakfast.”](#)



Table 3-1. Weekly Meal Pattern Requirements for Lunch

| Food Components | GRADES K-5 | | GRADES 6-8 | | GRADES 9-12 | |
|---|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week |
| Milk (cups) | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 |
| Fruits (cups) | 2 ½ | 3 ½ | 2 ½ | 3 ½ | 5 | 7 |
| Vegetables (cups) * | 3 ¾ | 5 ¼ | 3 ¾ | 5 ¼ | 5 | 7 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents)** <i>All grains must be WGR</i> | 8-9 | 11-12.5 | 8-10 | 11-14 | 10-12 | 14-17 |
| Meat/Meat Alternates (ounce equivalents)** | 8-10 | 11-14 | 9-10 | 12.5-14 | 10-12 | 14-17 |

* The weekly vegetables requirement includes minimum servings of five vegetable subgroups. For more information, see the lunch meal patterns in [section 1](#) and “Vegetables” in [section 2](#).

** The maximum weekly servings of grains and meat/meat alternates are not required but provide a guide to help schools plan age-appropriate meals that meet the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

Table 3-2. Weekly Meal Pattern Requirements for Breakfast

| Food Components | GRADES K-5 | | GRADES 6-8 | | GRADES 9-12 | |
|---|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week |
| Milk (cups) | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 |
| Fruits (cups) * | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents)** <i>All grains must be WGR</i> | 7-10 | 10-14 | 8-10 | 11-14 | 9-10 | 12.5-14 |

* Vegetables may be substituted for fruits but at least two cups per week must be from the dark green, red/orange, beans and peas (legumes), or “other” vegetable subgroups. For more information, see “Vegetables at Breakfast” in [section 2](#).

** The maximum weekly servings of grains and meat/meat alternates are not required but provide a guide to help schools plan age-appropriate meals that meet the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. At breakfast, schools may substitute 1 ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternate for 1 ounce equivalent of grain after offering the minimum daily grains requirement (1 ounce equivalent). For more information, see “Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast” in [section 2](#).

Weekly Requirements for Lunch

WEEKLY JUICE LIMITS AT LUNCH

Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the total fruits offered during the week and vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the total vegetables offered during the week. The weekly juice limit is calculated based on the amount of fruits or vegetables that students are allowed to select at a given meal, regardless of the number of options or variety of fruits or vegetables available. Menu planners must calculate the menu's compliance with the weekly juice limit separately for fruits and vegetables.



- **Fruits:** Divide the total weekly amount of fruit juice that students can select by the total weekly fruit offerings.
- **Vegetables:** Divide the total weekly amount of vegetable juice that students can select by the total weekly vegetable offerings.

When calculating the total amount of juice that students can select, menu planners must count all sources of 100 percent juice served during the week. This includes:

- juice that is fresh, frozen or made from concentrate;
- frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice;
- pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies; and
- juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice, unless the canned fruit is drained. Canned fruit in light syrup or water does not count toward the weekly juice limit.

Tables 3-3 and 3-4 show the maximum weekly contribution of juice at lunch based on the meal pattern requirements for fruits and vegetables.



Table 3-3. Crediting Fruit Juice at Lunch

| Grade Group | FIVE-DAY WEEK | | | SEVEN-DAY WEEK | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Required Weekly Servings | Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution | Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings | Required Weekly Servings | Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution | Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings |
| K-5 | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups | 2 | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups | 3 |
| 6-8 | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups | 2 | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups | 3 |
| 9-12 | 5 cups | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 5 | 7 cups | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 7 |

Table 3-4. Crediting Vegetable Juice at Lunch

| Grade Group | FIVE-DAY WEEK | | | SEVEN-DAY WEEK | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Required Weekly Servings | Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution | Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings | Required Weekly Servings | Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution | Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings |
| K-5 | 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups | 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ cups | 3 | 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups | 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ cups | 5 |
| 6-8 | 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups | 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ cups | 3 | 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups | 2 $\frac{5}{8}$ cups | 5 |
| 9-12 | 5 cups | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 5 | 7 cups | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 7 |

Calculating Weekly Juice Offerings at Lunch

Table 3-5 shows a sample calculation for determining whether a five-day lunch menu meets the weekly fruit juice limit. This menu offers a daily variety of ½-cup fruit servings, including drained canned fruit, fresh fruit, and 100 percent fruit juice. Students can select two ½-cup servings of fruit daily (1 cup total) but no more than ½ cup of juice.



Since the menu offers 1 cup of fruit daily, the weekly fruit offering is 5 cups. Since the menu offers ½ cup of fruit juice daily, the weekly juice offering is 2 ½ cups. This menu meets the weekly juice limit because the weekly juice offerings are half (50 percent) of the weekly fruits offered to students.

Table 3-5. Calculating Compliance with Weekly Fruit Juice Limit for a Five-day Lunch Menu

| | | |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| <p>Choose TWO Fruits OR Choose ONE Fruit and ONE Juice</p> <p>DAILY FRUIT CHOICES ½ cup each</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drained canned fruit * • Fresh fruit • 100 percent fruit juice | STEP 1 – CALCULATE TOTAL WEEKLY FRUIT OFFERINGS | |
| | <p>Multiply the total daily amount of fruit that students are allowed to select by the number of days in the week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can select two ½-cup serving (1 cup) daily: 1 cup multiplied by 5 days equals 5 cups. | Weekly Fruit : 5 cups |
| | STEP 2 – CALCULATE TOTAL WEEKLY JUICE OFFERINGS | |
| | <p>Multiply the total daily amount of juice that students are allowed to select by the number of days in the week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can select one ½-cup serving daily: ½ cup multiplied by 5 days equals 2 ½ cups. | Weekly Juice: 2 ½ cups |
| | STEP 3 – CALCULATE WEEKLY PERCENTAGE OF JUICE OFFERINGS | |
| | <p>Divide the total weekly juice offerings from step 2 by the total weekly fruit offerings from step 1 and multiply by 100.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 ½ cups divided by 5 cups equals 0.5 multiplied by 100 equals 50 percent. <p>Are juice offerings 50 percent or less? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> | Percent Juice: 50 percent |
| <p>* In this example, the canned fruit in 100 percent juice is drained. If canned fruit in 100 percent juice is not drained, the juice counts toward the weekly juice limit.</p> | | |

Number of Allowable Weekly ½-Cup Juice Servings

For grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch, schools can serve up to 1 ¼ cups of fruit juice and 1 7/8 cups of vegetable juice weekly.

- For five-day menus, a ½-cup portion of fruit juice can be offered twice per week and a ½-cup portion of vegetable juice can be offered three times per week.
- For seven-day menus, a ½-cup portion of fruit juice can be offered three times per week and a ½-cup portion of vegetable juice can be offered five times per week.



Alternatively, elementary and middle schools could serve larger quantities of juice on one or two days if the weekly total does not exceed half of the total fruit or vegetable offerings. For example, a five-day lunch menu for grades 6-8 could offer 1 cup of fruit juice once a week instead of offering ½ cup of fruit juice twice a week.

For grades 9-12, schools can serve ½ cup of fruit juice and ½ cup of vegetable juice each day. If juice is offered daily, menu planners must be careful not to exceed the weekly calorie limit. Juice contains more calories than whole fruits and vegetables. For example, ½ cup of grape juice contains 76 calories while ½ cup of fresh grapes contains 34 calories. This also applies to canned fruit with juice, e.g., 1 cup of fresh sliced peaches contains 60 calories while 1 cup of canned sliced peaches in juice contains 109 calories. For more information, see table 5-1 in [section 5](#).

Juice does not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits and vegetables. Whole fruits and vegetables should be served most often, as recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. School menus might exceed the weekly calorie limits if juice is served frequently. For more information, see “Decreasing Calories” in [section 5](#).

For all grades, menus and signage must clearly indicate the specific amount of fruits, vegetables and juice that students can select with each meal, for example:

- “choose any two fruit servings;”
- “select up to two servings of fruit;”
- “choose two fruit servings and two vegetable servings;” and
- “choose one fruit and one juice.”

For more information, see “Meal Identification Signage” in [section 3](#).

Table 3-6 shows the weekly limit for the number of ½-cup servings of juice at lunch based on the weekly meal pattern requirements for fruits and vegetables. For more information on the juice requirements at lunch, see “Crediting Juice” in [appendix D](#).

Table 3-6. Weekly Limit for ½-cup Juice Servings at Lunch

| Grades | Number of Times Per Week | | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| | FIVE-DAY WEEK | | SEVEN-DAY WEEK | |
| | Fruit Juice ¹ | Vegetable Juice ² | Fruit Juice ³ | Vegetable Juice ⁴ |
| K-5 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| 6-8 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| 9-12 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 7 |

¹ The weekly fruits requirement is 2 ½ cups for grades K-5 and 6-8, and 5 cups for grades 9-12. The weekly fruit juice limit is 1 ¼ cups for grades K-5 and 6-8, and 2 ½ cups for grade 9-12.

² The weekly vegetables requirement is 3 ¾ cups for grades K-5 and 6-8, and 5 cups for grades 9-12. The weekly vegetable juice limit is 1 7/8 cups for grades K-5 and 6-8, and 2 ½ cups for grade 9-12.

³ The weekly fruits requirement is 3 ½ cups for grades K-5 and 6-8, and 7 cups for grades 9-12. The weekly fruit juice limit is 1 ¾ cups for grades K-5 and 6-8, and 3 ½ cups for grade 9-12.

⁴ The weekly vegetables requirement is 5 ¼ cups for grades K-5 and 6-8, and 7 cups for grades 9-12. The weekly vegetable juice limit is 2 5/8 cups for grades K-5 and 6-8, and 3 ½ cups for grade 9-12.



WEEKLY GRAINS AND MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES AT LUNCH

Table 3-7 shows the minimum weekly meal pattern requirements for grains and meat/meat alternates at lunch. In July 2013, the USDA eliminated the maximums for meat/meat alternates and grains. The lunch meal patterns still include weekly maximums for each grade group, which provide a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the calorie, saturated fat, and sodium requirements.

Menu planners must consider the weekly dietary specifications when serving larger amounts of grains and meat/meat alternates. Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of these food components might exceed the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, see “[Dietary Specifications](#)” in this section and [section 5](#).



| Table 3-7. Weekly Requirements for Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates at Lunch | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Grades | Ounce Equivalents * | | | |
| | GRAINS | | MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES | |
| | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week |
| K-5 | 8-9 | 11-12.5 | 8-10 | 11-14 |
| 6-8 | 8-10 | 11-14 | 9-10 | 12.5-14 |
| 9-12 | 10-12 | 14-17 | 10-12 | 14-17 |

* The maximum weekly servings of grains and meat/meat alternates are not required but provide a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, see “[Dietary Specifications](#)” in this section and [section 5](#).



Calculating Weekly Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates at Lunch

The weekly servings of grains and meat/meat alternates at lunch are determined by adding the ounce equivalents of all daily offerings during the week, separately for each component. Menu planners must calculate the weekly total based on the smallest serving (ounce equivalents) offered each day. For example, if the menu offers two daily grain choices that include a 1 ½-ounce equivalent item and a 2-ounce equivalent item, the menu planner must count the 1 ½-ounce equivalent item toward the weekly total.

When menus include choices of different serving sizes of grains or meat/meat alternates each day or over the week, menu planners must ensure that the menu complies with the minimum weekly requirements. Table 3-8 shows examples of how to calculate weekly grains and meat/meat alternates with a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5.

Table 3-8. Examples of Calculating Weekly Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates at Lunch

| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|-------|---|
| Menu | Ounce Equivalents (oz eq) Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Requirements? DAILY: 1 oz eq WEEKLY: 8 oz eq |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Week 1 | 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1 | 1 | 6 | No. While all daily choices are at least the required minimum, the weekly total is less than the required minimum. |
| Week 2 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 8 | Yes. All daily choices are at least the required minimum and the weekly total is the same as the required minimum. |
| Week 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | Yes. All daily choices are at least the required minimum and the weekly total exceeds the required minimum. |
| Week 4 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | Yes. All daily choices are at least the required minimum and the weekly total is the same as the required minimum. |
| Week 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 9 * | Yes. All daily choices are at least the required minimum and the weekly total exceeds the required minimum. |
| * Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of grains or meat/meat alternates might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. | | | | | | | |

Offering the Minimum Daily Serving at Lunch

For grades 9-12, lunch menus that offer the minimum daily serving of grains or meat/meat alternates will always meet the minimum weekly requirement because the sum of the daily servings is the same as the minimum weekly amount. For example, a high school menu that offers all grain choices as 2 ounce equivalents provides 10 ounce equivalents over the week for five-day menus and 14 ounce equivalents over the week for seven-day menus.

For grades K-5 and 6-8, lunch menus that offer only the minimum daily serving of grains or meat/meat alternates will not meet the weekly requirement because the sum of the daily servings is less than the minimum weekly amount. For example, a middle school menu that offers 1 ounce equivalent of grains daily provides only 5 ounce equivalents over the week for five-day menus and 7 ounce equivalents over the week for seven-day menus. To meet the minimum weekly requirement, menu planners must offer more than the minimum daily serving on some days.

Varying Serving Sizes of Daily Choices between Days

When lunch menus offer the same serving size for all choices of grains or meat/meat alternates on an individual day and varies the serving sizes between days, each daily choice must be at least the required minimum and the sum of all offerings during the week must be at least the required minimum. Table 3-9 shows examples of acceptable menu planning with the grains component for a five-day lunch menu. The menu offers three daily choices of grains with the same serving size, and varies the serving size between days.

Table 3-10 shows examples of unacceptable menu planning with the grains component for a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8. The menu offers three daily choices of grains with the same serving size, and varies the serving size between days. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement but the menu does not meet the minimum weekly requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily grain serving is less than the minimum weekly requirement.



For grades 9-12, lunch menus that offer at least the minimum daily serving of grains (2 ounce equivalents) will always meet the minimum weekly requirement for both five-day and seven-day menus. The weekly sum of the daily grain servings is the same as the minimum weekly requirement.

| Table 3-9. Acceptable Menu Planning for Varying Serving Sizes of Grains Between Days | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|-----------|--|--------|---------|--|
| GRADES K-5 AND 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | Yes. Each daily choice is at least the required minimum and the weekly total is the same as the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | |
| GRADES 9-12 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 2 ounce equivalents | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 10 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2.25 | 2.5 | 2 | 2 | 10.75 * | Yes. Each daily choice is at least the required minimum and the weekly total exceeds the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 2.5 | 2 | 2 | 10.75 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2.25 | 2.5 | 2 | 2 | 10.75 * | |
| * Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of grains or meat/meat alternates might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. | | | | | | | |

| Table 3-10. Unacceptable Menu Planning for Varying Serving Sizes of Grains Between Days | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|-------|--|
| GRADES K-5 AND 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | |

Table 3-11 shows examples of acceptable menu planning with the meat/meat alternates component for a five-day lunch menu. The menu offers three daily choices of meat/meat alternates with the same serving size, and varies the serving size between days. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily meat/meat alternate serving is at least the minimum weekly requirement.

Table 3-12 shows examples of unacceptable menu planning with the meat/meat alternates component for a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8. The menu offers three daily choices of meat/meat alternates with the same serving size, and varies the serving size between days. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement but the menu does not meet the minimum weekly requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily meat/meat alternate serving is less than the minimum weekly requirement.

For grades 9-12, lunch menus that offer at least the minimum daily serving of meat/meat alternates (2 ounce equivalents) will always meet the minimum weekly requirement for both five-day and seven-day menus. The weekly sum of the daily meat/meat alternate servings is the same as the minimum weekly requirement.



Table 3-11. Acceptable Menu Planning for Varying Serving Sizes of Meat/Meat Alternates Between Days

| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|-----------|--|--------|---------|---|
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | Yes. Each daily choice is at least the required minimum and the weekly total is the same as the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | |
| GRADES K- 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 9 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 9 | Yes. Each daily choice is at least the required minimum and the weekly total exceeds the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 9 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 9 | |
| GRADES 9-12 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 2 ounce equivalents | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 10 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2.25 | 2.5 | 2 | 2 | 10.75 * | Yes. Each daily choice is at least the required minimum and the weekly total exceeds the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2.25 | 2.5 | 2 | 2 | 10.75 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2.25 | 2.5 | 2 | 2 | 10.75 * | |
| * Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of grains or meat/meat alternates might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. | | | | | | | |

Table 3-12. Unacceptable Menu Planning for Varying Serving Sizes of Meat/Meat Alternates Between Days

| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|-------|--|
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | |
| GRADES 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 9 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 8 | |



Offering Different Sizes of Daily Choices at Lunch

When lunch menus offer different serving sizes of grain or meat/meat alternate choices on an individual day, the sum of the smallest grain serving (ounce equivalents) offered each day must meet the minimum weekly grains requirement and the sum of the smallest meat/meat alternate serving (ounce equivalents) offered each day must meet the minimum weekly meat/meat alternates requirement.

Table 3-13 shows examples of acceptable menu planning with three different daily serving sizes of the grains component for a five-day lunch menu. The menu offers three different serving sizes of grains each day. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily serving is at least the minimum weekly requirement.

Table 3-14 shows examples of unacceptable menu planning with the grains component for a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8. The menu offers three different serving sizes of grains each day. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement but the menu does not meet the minimum weekly requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily grain serving (1.5 ounce equivalent) is less than the minimum weekly requirement.

For grades 9-12, lunch menus that offer at least the minimum daily serving of grains (2 ounce equivalents) will always meet the minimum weekly requirement for both five-day and seven-day menus. The weekly sum of the daily servings is the same as the minimum weekly requirement.

When the lunch menu offers two or more daily grain choices with different ounce equivalents, each choice must be at least the required minimum. The determination of whether the menu meets the minimum weekly grains is based on the smallest grain serving offered each day.



| Table 3-13. Acceptable Menu Planning for Different Sizes of Daily Grain Choices | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|-----------|--|--------|---------|---|
| GRADES K-5 AND 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 * | Yes. The smallest daily choice provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | |
| GRADES 9-12 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 2 ounce equivalents | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 10 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | Yes. The smallest daily choice provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 11.25 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 12.5 * | |
| * Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of grains might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. | | | | | | | |

| Table 3-14. Unacceptable Menu Planning for Different Sizes of Daily Grain Choices | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|-------|---|
| GRADES K-5 AND 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 7.5 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the sum of the smallest serving offered each day is less than the minimum weekly requirement. |
| Choice 2 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | |

Table 3-15 shows examples of acceptable menu planning with three different daily serving sizes of the meat/meat alternates component for a five-day lunch menu. The menu offers three different serving sizes of meat/meat alternates each day. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily serving is at least the minimum weekly requirement.

Table 3-16 shows examples of unacceptable menu planning with different daily servings of the meat/meat alternates component for a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8. The menu offers three different serving sizes of meat/meat alternates each day. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement but the menu does not meet the minimum weekly requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily meat/meat alternate serving is less than the minimum weekly requirement.

For grades 9-12, lunch menus that offer at least the minimum daily serving of meat/meat alternates (2 ounce equivalents) will always meet the minimum weekly requirement for both five-day and seven-day menus. The weekly sum of the daily servings is the same as the minimum weekly requirement.



When the lunch menu offers two or more daily meat/meat alternate choices with different ounce equivalents, each choice must be at least the required minimum. The determination of whether the menu meets the minimum weekly meat/meat alternates is based on the smallest meat/meat alternate serving offered each day.

Table 3-15. Acceptable Menu Planning for Different Sizes of Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices

| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|-----------|--|--------|---------|--|
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 * | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 11.25 * | |
| GRADES 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 9 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 11.25 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 12.5 * | |
| GRADES 9-12 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 2 ounce equivalents | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 10 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 11.25 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 12.5 * | |
| * Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of meat/meat alternates might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. | | | | | | | |

Table 3-16. Unacceptable Menu Planning for Different Sizes of Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices

| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|-------|---|
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 7.5 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total for choice 1 is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | |
| GRADES 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 9 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Meat/Meat Alternate Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total for choice 1 is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | |
| Choice 3 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 11.25 | |



Weekly Requirements for Breakfast

WEEKLY JUICE LIMITS AT BREAKFAST

Fruit juice together with vegetable juice (including fruit and vegetable juice blends) cannot exceed half of the total fruits offered during the week at breakfast. The weekly juice limit is calculated based on the amount of fruits or vegetables that students are allowed to select at a given meal, regardless of the number of options or variety of fruits or vegetables available.

To calculate the menu's compliance with the weekly juice limit, divide the total weekly amount of juice that students can select by the total weekly fruit and vegetable offerings. Table 3-17 shows the maximum weekly contribution of juice at breakfast based on the meal pattern requirement for fruits.

Table 3-17. Crediting Fruit Juice at Breakfast *

| Grade Group | FIVE-DAY WEEK | | | SEVEN-DAY WEEK | | |
|-------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| | Required Weekly Servings | Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution | Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings | Required Weekly Servings | Maximum Weekly Juice Contribution | Maximum Weekly $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup Servings |
| K-5 | 5 cups | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 5 | 7 cups | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 7 |
| 6-8 | 5 cups | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 5 | 7 cups | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 7 |
| 9-12 | 5 cups | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 5 | 7 cups | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 7 |

* The breakfast meal pattern does not include the vegetables component. Vegetables (including juice) may be substituted for fruits, but the first two cups per week must be from the dark green, red/orange, beans and peas (legumes), or "other" vegetable subgroups. For more information, see "Vegetables at Breakfast" in [section 2](#).

Breakfast menus must include a minimum of 1 cup of fruits daily. If the menu allows students to select any two choices from a variety of $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup fruit and juice choices, students cannot select more than one juice ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) to comply with the weekly juice limit. For more information, see "Assorted Juice Choices" under "Offer versus Serve at Breakfast" in [section 4](#).



If the breakfast menu offers more than 1 cup of fruits daily, the maximum amount of juice that can be served also increases. For example, a menu that offers 2 cups of fruits daily could also offer 1 cup (8 fluid ounces) of juice daily. If juice is offered daily, menu planners must be careful not to exceed the weekly calorie limit. Juice contains more calories than whole fruits and vegetables. For example, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of grape juice contains 76 calories while $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh grapes contains 34 calories. This also applies to canned fruit with juice, e.g., 1 cup of fresh sliced peaches contains 60 calories while 1 cup of canned sliced peaches in juice contains 109 calories. For more information, see table 5-1 in [section 5](#).

Juice does not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits and vegetables. Whole fruits and vegetables should be served most often, as recommended by the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. School menus might exceed the weekly calorie limits if juice is served frequently.

For all grades, menus and signage must clearly indicate the specific amount of fruits, vegetables and juice that students can select with each meal, for example:

- “choose any two fruit servings;”
- “select up to two servings of fruit;”
- “choose two fruit servings and two vegetable servings;” and
- “choose one fruit and one juice.”

For more information, see “Meal Identification Signage” in [section 3](#).

Calculating Weekly Juice Offerings at Breakfast

Menu planners calculate the breakfast menu’s compliance with the weekly juice limit by dividing the total amount of 100 percent juice available at all breakfasts during the week by total weekly fruit offerings. When calculating the total amount of juice that students can select, menu planners must count all sources of 100 percent juice served during the week. This includes:

- juice that is fresh, frozen or made from concentrate, including fruit juice, vegetable juice and vegetable/fruit juice blends;
- frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice;
- pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies; and
- juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice, unless the canned fruit is drained. Canned fruit in light syrup or water does not count toward the weekly juice limit.



For a sample calculation of the weekly juice limit, see [table 3-5](#) under “Weekly Juice Limits at Lunch.” For more information on the juice requirements at breakfast, see “Crediting Juice” in [appendix D](#).

No more than half of the weekly offerings of fruits or vegetables may be in the form of full-strength juice. The weekly juice limit is calculated based on the amount of fruits or vegetables that children are allowed to select. Cafeteria menus and signage must clearly indicate the specific amount of juice that students can select with each meal, for example, “choose one fruit and one juice.”

WEEKLY GRAINS AT BREAKFAST

Table 3-18 shows the minimum weekly meal pattern requirements for grains at breakfast. In July 2013, the USDA eliminated the maximum for grains. The breakfast meal patterns still include the weekly maximums for each grade group, which provide a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the calorie, saturated fat, and sodium requirements.

Menu planners must consider the dietary specifications when serving larger amounts of grains and optional meat/meat alternate substitutions. Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of these food components might exceed the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, see “[Dietary Specifications](#)” in this section and [section 5](#).

| Table 3-18. Weekly Requirements for Grains at Breakfast | | |
|---|-------------------|----------------|
| Grades | Ounce Equivalents | |
| | FIVE-DAY WEEK | SEVEN-DAY WEEK |
| K-5 | 7-10 | 10-14 |
| 6-8 | 8-10 | 11-14 |
| 9-12 | 9-10 | 12.5-14 |

* The maximum weekly serving is not required but provides a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. Schools may substitute 1 ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternate for 1 ounce equivalent of grain after offering the minimum daily grains requirement (1 ounce equivalent). For more information, see “[Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast](#)” in [section 2](#).



When the breakfast menu offers two or more daily grain choices with different ounce equivalents, each choice must be at least the required minimum. The determination of whether the menu meets the minimum weekly grains is based on the smallest grain serving offered each day.

Calculating Weekly Grains at Breakfast

The weekly servings of grains at breakfast (including meat/meat alternate substitutions) are determined by adding the ounce equivalents of all daily offerings during the week. Menu planners must calculate the weekly total based on the smallest grain serving (ounce equivalents) offered each day. For example, if the menu offers two daily grain choices that include a 1 ½-ounce equivalent item and a 2-ounce equivalent item, the menu planner must count the 1 ½-ounce equivalent item toward the weekly total.

When menus include choices of different serving sizes of grains each day or over the week, menu planners must ensure that the menu complies with the minimum weekly requirements. Table 3-19 shows examples of how to calculate weekly grains with a five-day breakfast menu for grades 6-8.

Table 3-19. Examples of Calculating Weekly Grains at Breakfast

| GRADES 6-8 | | | | | | | |
|------------|---------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|-------|---|
| Menu | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Requirements? DAILY: 1 ounce equivalent WEEKLY: 8 ounce equivalents |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Week 1 | 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1 | 1 | 6 | No. While all daily choices are at least the required minimum, the weekly total is less than the required minimum. |
| Week 2 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 2 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 8 | Yes. All daily choices are at least the required minimum and the weekly total is the same as the required minimum. |
| Week 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | Yes. All daily choices are at least the required minimum and the weekly total exceeds the required minimum. |
| Week 4 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 8 | Yes. All daily choices are at least the required minimum and the weekly total is the same as the required minimum. |
| Week 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 9 * | Yes. All daily choices are at least the required minimum and the weekly total exceeds the required minimum. |

* Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of grains might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

Offering the Minimum Daily Serving of Grains at Breakfast

For all grades, breakfast menus that offer the minimum daily serving of grains will not meet the weekly requirement because the sum of the daily servings is less than the minimum weekly amount. For example, a breakfast menu that offers 1 ounce equivalent daily provides only 5 ounce equivalents for five-day weeks and 7 ounce equivalents for seven-day weeks.



For five-day weeks, the breakfast meal pattern requires at least 7 ounce equivalents for grades K-5, at least 8 ounce equivalents for grades 6-8, and at least 9 ounce equivalents for grades 9-12. For seven-day weeks, the breakfast meal pattern requires at least 10 ounce equivalents for grades K-5, at least 11 ounce equivalents for grades 6-8, and at least 12.5 ounce equivalents for grades 9-12. To reach these minimums, menu planners must offer more than the minimum daily serving on some days.



Varying Serving Sizes of Daily Grain Choices between Days

When breakfast menus offer the same serving size for all grain choices on an individual day and vary the serving sizes between days, each daily choice must be at least the required minimum and the sum of all offerings during the week must be at least the required minimum. Table 3-20 shows examples of acceptable menu planning with the grains component for a five-day breakfast menu. The menu offers three daily choices of grains with the same serving size, and varies the serving size between days.

Table 3-20. Acceptable Menu Planning for Varying Serving Sizes of Grains Between Days

| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|--------|--|
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 7 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.5 | 1.75 | 1 | 2 | 1.5 | 7.75 * | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 1.5 | 1.75 | 1 | 2 | 1.5 | 7.75 * | |
| Choice 3 | 1.5 | 1.75 | 1 | 2 | 1.5 | 7.75 * | |
| GRADES 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.5 | 1.75 | 2 | 2 | 1.5 | 8.75 * | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 1.5 | 1.75 | 2 | 2 | 1.5 | 8.75 * | |
| Choice 3 | 1.5 | 1.75 | 2 | 2 | 1.5 | 8.75 * | |
| GRADES 9-12 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 9 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 11.5 * | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 11.5 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2.5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 11.5 * | |
| * Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of grains might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. | | | | | | | |

Table 3-21 shows examples of unacceptable menu planning with the grains component for a five-day breakfast menu. The menu offers three daily choices of grains with the same serving size, and varies the serving size between days. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement but the menu does not meet the minimum weekly requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily grain serving is less than the minimum weekly requirement.

| Table 3-21. Unacceptable Menu Planning for Varying Serving Sizes of Grains Between Days | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|-------|---|
| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 7 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6.5 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total for is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 1.5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6.5 | |
| Choice 3 | 1.5 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 6.5 | |
| GRADES 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1 | 2 | 1.5 | 7.5 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total for is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1 | 2 | 1.5 | 7.5 | |
| Choice 3 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1 | 2 | 1.5 | 7.5 | |
| GRADES 9-12 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 9 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 8 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total for is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 8 | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 8 | |

Offering Different Sizes of Daily Grain Choices at Breakfast

When breakfast menus offer different serving sizes of grain choices on an individual day, the sum of the smallest grain serving (ounce equivalents) offered each day must meet the minimum weekly requirement. Table 3-22 shows examples of acceptable menu planning with different daily serving sizes of the grains component for a five-day breakfast menu. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily serving is at least the minimum weekly requirement.

| Table 3-22. Acceptable Menu Planning for Different Sizes of Daily Grain Choices | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|---------|--|
| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 7 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 7.5 * | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | |
| GRADES 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 * | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 11.25 * | |
| GRADES 9-12 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 9 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | Yes. The menu provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements. |
| Choice 2 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 2.25 | 11.25 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 12.5 * | |
| * Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of grains might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. | | | | | | | |

Table 3-23 shows examples of unacceptable menu planning for a five-day breakfast menu. The menu offers three different serving sizes of grains each day. Each choice provides at least the minimum daily requirement but the menu does not meet the minimum weekly requirement. The weekly sum of the smallest daily grain serving is less than the minimum weekly requirement.

| Table 3-23. Unacceptable Menu Planning for Different Sizes of Daily Grain Choices | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------|-----------|---|--------|--------|---|
| GRADES K-5 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 7 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total for choice 1 is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | |
| GRADES 6-8 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 8 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 7.5 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total for choice 1 is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | |
| GRADES 9-12 | | | | | | | |
| DAILY REQUIREMENT: 1 ounce equivalent | | | | WEEKLY REQUIREMENT: 9 ounce equivalents | | | |
| Daily Grain Choices | Ounce Equivalents Offered | | | | | | Meets Minimum Daily and Weekly Requirements? |
| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | TOTAL | |
| Choice 1 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 1.75 | 8.75 | No. All daily choices provide at least the required minimum but the weekly total for choice 1 is less than the required minimum. |
| Choice 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 * | |
| Choice 3 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 12.5 * | |
| * Menus that consistently provide larger amounts of grains might exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. | | | | | | | |

Additional Servings

If meals include additional servings of food beyond the minimum meal pattern requirements, menu planners must be careful to ensure that menus meet the weekly dietary specifications. The guidance below assists schools with planning meals to meet these requirements.

EXTRA OR ADDITIONAL FOODS

Extra foods are creditable or noncreditable foods that are served in addition to the minimum meal pattern requirements. Creditable extra foods are additional servings of a meal pattern component, such as larger servings of fruits and vegetables. Noncreditable extra foods are foods that do not credit toward the meal pattern, such as enriched white rice, ice cream, pudding, gelatin, and condiments.

All extra foods (creditable and noncreditable) offered to students with reimbursable meals must be counted toward the weekly dietary specifications. Extra foods must contain zero trans fats and their inclusion cannot cause the menu to exceed the average weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information on noncreditable foods, see [appendix F](#).

When menus do not meet the minimum weekly calories, menu planners should add calories from nutrient-dense creditable foods, following the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. For best nutrition, additional calories should come from more servings of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. The USDA's meal patterns allow additional servings of any meal pattern component if the average weekly calories do not exceed the limit for each grade group. For more information, see “[Dietary Specifications](#)” in this section and [section 5](#).

Creditable Extra Foods at Lunch

Lunches can include additional foods from the meal pattern components if the weekly menu meets the dietary specifications. These foods must count toward both the daily and weekly requirements. The following examples illustrate this requirement.

- If the menu planner includes yogurt as an extra menu item at lunch, it must count toward the minimum daily and weekly meat/meat alternate requirements. It must also count toward the weekly dietary specifications.
- If the menu planner includes a creditable grain-based dessert as an extra menu item at lunch, it must count toward the minimum daily and weekly grain requirements, including the weekly limit of no more than 2 ounce equivalents of grain-based desserts. It must also count toward the weekly dietary specifications. For more information, see “[Limit for Grain-based Desserts](#)” in [section 2](#).



When lunch menus include additional creditable foods, the SFA must ensure that school food service personnel receive appropriate training on how to identify reimbursable meals under OVS. The menu planner must clearly communicate with school food service staff regarding how to count these foods. For information on OVS at lunch, see [section 4](#).

Creditable Extra Foods at Breakfast

Menu planners can choose to count meat/meat alternates as extra foods at breakfast. Schools may substitute 1 ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternate for 1 ounce equivalent of grain at breakfast after offering the minimum daily grains requirement. For example, a breakfast menu could include $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt or two tablespoons of peanut butter if it also includes at least 1 ounce equivalent of a whole-grain bagel. For more information, see “Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast” in [section 2](#).

If the breakfast menu provides the minimum daily serving of the fruits component, menu planners can choose to offer starchy vegetables such as hash-brown potatoes as an extra food. When vegetables are offered as extras (not as a substitute for fruits), the weekly menu is not required to offer at least 2 cups of nonstarchy vegetables before substituting vegetables for fruits. For more information, see “Vegetables at Breakfast” in [section 2](#).

Extra vegetables offered at breakfast must fit within the weekly dietary specifications. They must contain zero trans fats and their inclusion cannot cause the menu to exceed the average weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

When breakfast menus include additional creditable foods, the SFA must ensure that school food service personnel receive appropriate training on how to identify reimbursable meals under OVS. The menu planner must clearly communicate with school food service staff regarding how to count these food items. For information on OVS at breakfast, see [section 4](#).

EXTRA SERVINGS OF VEGETABLES AND FRUITS

The USDA does not limit the amount of vegetables or fruits that schools may offer or students may select, provided the weekly menu meets the dietary specifications. However, all second servings and extra foods must be included in the nutrient analysis of menus. When offering extra servings of vegetables and fruits, menu planners should determine how these foods affect the menu’s nutrient content. Menus should limit additional vegetables and fruits with added fat, sugar, and salt.



Menu planners should consider the types of foods that students are more likely to select as a second serving and determine how these foods affect the nutrient analysis of school meals. Modifying how certain vegetables and fruits are offered can help menus comply with the dietary specifications. For example, schools can allow students to:

- “choose up to one serving” of foods that would negatively alter the nutrient analysis if chosen as a second or extra, e.g., buttered corn, coleslaw made with mayonnaise, and fruit crisp made with butter and sugar; and
- “choose one or more servings” of foods that do not negatively alter the nutrient analysis if chosen as a second or extra, e.g., fresh vegetables and fruits without added fat, sugar, or salt.

For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.

SECOND SERVINGS

If the SFA allows students to take second servings of any component of the reimbursable meal at no charge, these foods must count toward the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements, as well as the dietary specifications. Second servings of any food must contain zero trans fats and their inclusion cannot cause the menu to exceed the average weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, see “[Dietary Specifications](#)” in this section and [section 5](#).

If second helpings or second meals are sold a la carte, they do not count toward the meal pattern components or dietary specifications for reimbursable meals. For more information, see “[Second Meals](#)” on the next page. A la carte foods are not included in the nutrient analysis of reimbursable school meals.

The SFA must determine whether to charge for additional servings of meal components. Schools must clearly identify the number of servings of each component that students may take as part of the reimbursable meal. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.

The USDA does not allow exceptions for second servings in RCCIs. If RCCIs allow students to take second servings of any meal components, they must count toward the daily and weekly requirements and dietary specifications.



SECOND MEALS

Schools can claim only one reimbursable lunch and one reimbursable breakfast for each child per day. Second meals cannot be claimed for reimbursement but schools can choose to sell them a la carte. Second meals sold a la carte do not count toward the daily and weekly requirements and are not included in the nutrient analysis of reimbursable school meals. However, schools must charge an appropriate cost for a la carte meals based on the USDA's requirements.

The USDA's interim rule, *National School Lunch Program: School Food Service Account Revenue Amendments Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, requires SFAs participating in the NSLP to ensure that sufficient funds are provided to the nonprofit school food service account for lunches served to students who are not eligible for free or reduced-price meals. The interim rule addresses revenue from paid reimbursable lunches (7 CFR 210.14(e)) and revenue from foods sold outside of reimbursable meals when those foods are purchased with school food service account funds (7 CFR 210.14 (f)). For more information on paid lunch equity, see the CSDE's operational memoranda below.



- USDA Memo SP 09-2016: *Paid Lunch Equity: School Year 2016-17 Calculations and Tool*
www.fns.usda.gov/paid-lunch-equity-school-year-2016-2017-calculations-and-tool
- *Questions and Answers on Paid Lunch Equity* (USDA 2011):
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/qaple.pdf
- CSDE Operational Memorandum 17-15: *Paid Lunch Equity: Guidance for School Years 2015-16 and 2016-17*
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/opmemos/15/om_17-15.pdf
- PLE Exemption – Factors for Consideration (March 2015):
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/opmemos/15/om_18-15attach1.pdf
- *Equity in School Lunch Pricing – Why do I have to raise the cost of my paid lunches?* (USDA, July 2011): www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/opmemos/11/om_17-11attach1.pdf
- *Equity in School Lunch Pricing Fact Sheet* (USDA March 2011):
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/opmemos/11/om_17-11attach2.pdf

LEFTOVERS

Occasional small quantities of leftover food served on another day do not count toward the meal component requirements, including the vegetable subgroups. Leftovers should not be planned. The USDA specifies that state agencies will determine whether such leftovers are a reasonable amount and are not occurring on a regular basis. Schools may also freeze leftovers following standard Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) protocols, and serve them first on the serving line the next time that particular item reappears in the menu cycle.

If schools offer leftovers to students on the serving line as part of the reimbursable meal, they are subject to the dietary specifications. They must contain zero trans fats and their inclusion cannot cause the menu to exceed the average weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, see “[Dietary Specifications](#)” in this section and [section 5](#).

Leftovers are included in the nutrient assessment of school menus conducted by the CSDE as part of the administrative review of school nutrition programs. For more information, see “[Nutrient Analysis](#)” under “Menu Records” in this section. If the SFA conducts their own nutrient analysis, leftovers must also be included.

When schools consistently have leftovers to add to each day’s menus, the menu planner should consider participation trends in an effort to provide one reimbursable lunch for each child every day. Leftovers served to students on the same day as they are initially offered are considered seconds. For more information, see “[Second Servings](#)” in this section.



Other Requirements

This section addresses additional menu planning considerations, including multiple serving lines, pre-plated meals, vending machines, field trip lunches, and meal identification signage.

MULTIPLE SERVING LINES

The USDA regulations require that schools offering a variety of meals or multiple serving lines must make all required food components available to all students on every lunch line in at least the minimum required amounts. For the purposes of meeting the meal pattern requirements, menu planners should think of each serving line as its own entity. The daily and weekly requirements must be in place for each line. For example, when schools have multiple serving lines with different menu items, each serving line must offer all of the vegetable subgroups during the week and meet the minimum weekly grains and meat/meat alternates.

When schools have serving stations where students can go to several different places to select different components of the meal before passing the POS, all stations as a whole must meet the daily and weekly requirements. An example might be a food court or scatter system where every student can select meal components from an entree line, a salad bar with vegetables and fruits, a pasta and bread station, and a milk cooler, before reaching the cashier.

It is important to note that these types of food service systems are not typical in most Connecticut schools. In general, menu planners must plan to make all required daily and weekly food components available to all students on every lunch line.



All required food components must be available to all students on every lunch line in at least the minimum required amounts.

PRE-PLATED MEALS AND VENDING MACHINES

Pre-plated meals offer all food components or food items in the quantities required for each grade group in an entirely or partially pre-served manner. Pre-plated meals and vending machines must offer all components and quantities required for each grade group, including the daily and weekly minimums and vegetable subgroups. For example, a meal vending machine that allows students to choose one sandwich would meet the weekly vegetable subgroups requirement if it also offers a selection of all vegetable subgroups during the week.

To the extent possible, schools are encouraged to modify their meal service systems to include OVS opportunities such as pre-plating some items and allowing students a choice of others, e.g., providing a basket with a variety of fruits or a separate cooler with milk choices. For more information on OVS, see [section 4](#).

FIELD TRIP LUNCHES

Meals offered to students for field trips must meet the daily meal component requirements. However, menu planners are not required to:

- adjust the planned weekly menu to account for occasional field trips; or
- pack the same vegetable offering from that day’s “hot” lunch menu for a field trip.

Menu planners have the option to offer a different vegetable from another subgroup or a different vegetable from the same subgroup. For example, if the regular menu includes cooked carrots (red/orange subgroup), the field trip lunch could include raw carrot sticks (red/orange subgroup) or celery (“other” subgroup). Schools must include field trip meals when planning meals that meet the weekly minimum grains and meat/meat alternates and the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For more information, see “[Dietary Specifications](#)” in this section and [section 5](#).

MEAL IDENTIFICATION SIGNAGE

Students, servers and cashiers must be able to identify what constitutes a reimbursable meal. The HHFKA requires that SFAs must identify the foods or food components that are part of the reimbursable meal near or at the beginning of the serving line and prior to the POS. This requirement is intended to prevent unintentional purchases of a la carte items and help students choose a reimbursable meal. The foods that are a part of the reimbursable meal do not have to be adjacent to each other but they must be labeled, listed or otherwise identified near or at the beginning of the serving line. This requirement applies to all schools, including those that implement family-style meal service.

SFAs have discretion as to how to identify the foods that are part of reimbursable meals, based on their facilities, layout and other considerations. Providing detailed information about the food components, such as identifying the vegetable subgroups, is an excellent teaching tool but is not required. Some examples of acceptable signage include menu boards, posters, signs, labels, and table tents.



Schools must use meal identification signage to instruct students on how much food to select from each component daily for a reimbursable meal, based on the planned serving sizes for each grade group. For example, if a high school offers fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings and allows students to select two servings of fruits and two servings of vegetables to meet the minimum daily requirement (1 cup), the cafeteria signage must clearly communicate that students are allowed to select up to two servings of fruits and two servings of vegetables with each meal.

Menus are not required to itemize specific portion sizes or food items such as the vegetable subgroups if all details are listed on the school’s production records. For example, a menu can list “daily salad bar,” “fruit choice,” or “vegetable choice” if the school’s production record includes all food items and amounts served with appropriate documentation on file, e.g., a CN label (see [appendix G](#)), PFS (see [appendix H](#)), standardized recipes, nutrition information sheets, and product ingredients statements and labels. For more information, see “[Production Records](#)” in this section.

While not required, the CSDE strongly encourages schools to provide detailed information on food items and choices whenever possible within the constraints of the menu and serving line. This helps promote the school nutrition programs and makes it easier for students to understand exactly what school meals include.

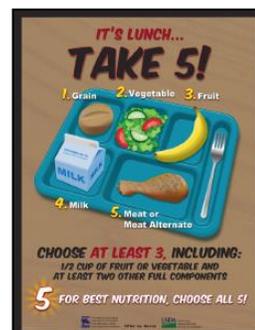
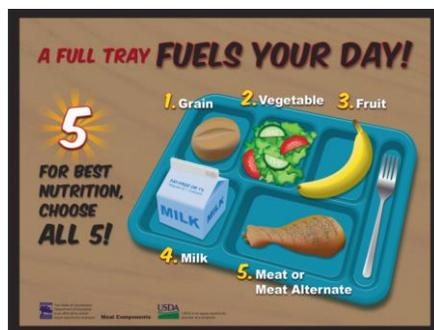
Signage is not required for field trips, breakfast in the classroom, and other venues where signage may be problematic. If choices are offered, other methods should be used to inform students about what to select and whether OVS is implemented. For more information on signage for OVS, see the OVS examples for breakfast and lunch in [section 4](#).

Sample Signage

The CSDE has developed some posters and signs that school can use to help students select reimbursable meals. They include:

- [Lunch Offer Versus Serve Poster](#);
- [Lunch Meal Pattern Components Poster](#); and
- [Offer versus Serve Sign for Lunch](#).

Schools are not required to use these resources but must have signage in place. For more resources, see “Signage and Posters” in the “Menu Planning and Food Production” section of the CSDE’s [Nutrition Resources](#) list.



TRAINING FOR SCHOOL NUTRITION STAFF

The USDA final rule, *Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel as Required by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010*, establishes minimum professional standards for school nutrition personnel who manage and operate the NSLP and SBP. It also requires minimum hiring standards for new state directors of school nutrition programs, state directors of distributing agencies that oversee USDA Foods, and school nutrition program directors.

Table 3-24 summarizes the annual training hours required for school nutrition employees effective school year 2016-17 and beyond. Each school year, SFAs are responsible for ensuring that the minimum annual continuing education/training is completed by all school nutrition program managers and all staff who work an average of at least 20 hours per week. Individuals can track their training using the training tracker tool available on the USDA's [Professional Standards](#) Web page. Training documentation records must be available for review by the CSDE during the SFA's Administrative Review.

| Table 3-24. Annual Training Hours for School Nutrition Program Employees * | |
|---|----|
| Directors ** | 12 |
| Managers | 10 |
| All Other Staff (excluding director and managers) | 6 |
| Part-time Staff (work less than 20 hours per week) | 4 |
| <p>* If hired January 1 or later during any school year, an employee must only complete half of the required training hours.</p> <p>** In addition to 12 hours of annual training, new food service directors that have not completed at least 8 hours of food safety training within five years prior to their start date must complete food safety training within 30 calendar days of their starting date.</p> | |

Training can be provided in a variety of formats, and from different sources such as the district, CSDE and other state agencies, and national organizations. Table 3-25 summarizes the required topics for annual training. SFAs may also include additional training topics specific to local needs.

The USDA's *Professional Standards Learning Objectives* and *Professional Standards Learning Topics* summarize learning objectives, topics and learning codes for four key training areas for school nutrition programs:

- Nutrition;
- Operations;
- Administration; and
- Communications/Marketing.

Table 3-25. Required Continuing Education/Training Standards

| Employee | Required Topics * |
|---|--|
| Directors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative practices (including training in application, certification, verification, meal counting, and meal claiming procedures) • Any specific topics identified by USDA, as needed, to address program integrity or other critical issues <p>This required training is in addition to the required food safety training.</p> |
| Managers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative practices (including training in application, certification, verification, meal counting, and meal claiming procedures) • Identification of reimbursable meals at the point of service • Nutrition, health and safety standards • Any specific topics identified by USDA, as needed, to address program integrity or other critical issues |
| All Other Staff that work an average of at least 20 hours per week (excluding director and managers) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free and reduced-price eligibility • Application, certification, and verification procedures • Identification of reimbursable meals at the point of service • Nutrition, health and safety standards • Any specific topics identified by USDA, as needed, to address program integrity or other critical issues |
| * Annual training must include, but is not limited to, the topics indicated. | |

The USDA resources below provide more information on the professional standards.

- Professional Standards for School Nutrition Program Employees:
www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/psbrochure.pdf
- Professional Standards Frequently Asked Questions:
www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/ps_faqs.pdf
- Professional Standards Training Database:
<http://professionalstandards.nal.usda.gov/>
- Summary of the Final Rule: Professional Standards for All School Nutrition Program Employees:
www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cn/profstandards_flyer.pdf

For more information, visit the USDA's [Professional Standards](#) Web page.

Multiple Grade Groups

Some schools have different grade configurations that prevent the use of the three required grade groups. Examples include schools with grades K-8, grades 5-8, or grades 6-12. The USDA allows some alternate menu planning options when students from different grade groups eat together in the same meal period.

When one menu is used for multiple grade groups, the meal pattern requirements must overlap and the weekly amounts cannot exceed the highest level or go below the lowest level for each grade group. There are four different grade configurations that meet these criteria:

- preschool and grades K-5 (breakfast and lunch);
- grades K-8 (breakfast and lunch);
- grades K-12 (breakfast only); and
- grades 6-12 (breakfast only).

Since calories for grades 6-8 and 9-12 at lunch do not overlap, SFAs cannot use one meal pattern with the same amounts of food to meet the lunch requirements for these two grade groups. SFAs must plan menus differently to meet the meal pattern requirements when students from grades 6-12 eat together in the same meal period. For more information, see [“Lunch for Schools with Grades 6-8 and 9-12”](#) in this section.



LUNCH FOR SCHOOLS WITH PRESCHOOL AND GRADES K-5

Schools may use one menu with the same portion sizes to meet the meal pattern requirements for preschoolers (ages 3-4) and grades K-5 when students eat together during the same lunch period. The changes required to use one menu for preschool through grade 5 are summarized below.

- **Meat/Meat Alternates:** Since the preschool meal pattern requires a daily minimum of 1 ½ ounces of meat/meat alternates, one menu for both groups must include at least 1 ½ ounces of meat/meat alternates daily. This is an increase from the minimum daily serving of 1 ounce equivalent for grades K-5. The menu must also meet the minimum weekly meat/meat alternates for grades K-5 (8 ounce equivalents).
- **Other Components:** The minimum daily servings for milk, fruits, vegetables and grains for grades K-5 exceed the minimum preschool requirements. Since the preschool meal pattern does not have a calorie limit, menus can include larger servings of any component. The weekly grains requirement for preschoolers (8 servings per week) is the same as the minimum weekly grains requirement for grades K-5.

Table 3-26 compares the daily lunch meal pattern requirements for preschool and grades K-5. The last two columns on the right show the daily and weekly requirements for five-day and seven-day weeks for schools serving the same lunch to students in preschool through grade 5. These portion sizes may be too large for many preschoolers. When possible, the CSDE encourages schools to structure the meal periods so that preschoolers can receive separate meals that meet the serving sizes in the current preschool meal pattern for the NSLP.

For preschool through grade 5, the five-day lunch meal pattern is in [appendix I](#) and the seven-day meal lunch pattern is in [appendix J](#). For downloadable meal pattern handouts, access the CSDE's Meal Patterns Web pages from the [Program Guidance](#) Web page.

Note: The USDA final rule, *Child and Adult Care Food Program: Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010* (81 FR 24348) updates the meal pattern requirements for preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP, effective October 1, 2017. The current NSLP and SBP preschool meal pattern requirements under [7 CFR 226](#) remain in effect through September 30, 2017. For more information, see "Preschool" in [section 1](#).

Table 3-26. Comparison of Daily Lunch Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-5

| Food Component | PRESCHOOL (AGES 3-4) | GRADES K-5 | | REQUIRED MEAL PATTERN FOR PRESCHOOL THROUGH GRADE 5 | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| | | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week |
| Fluid Milk ¹ | ¾ cup | 1 cup daily (5 cups weekly) | 1 cup daily (7 cups weekly) | 1 cup daily (5 cups weekly) | 1 cup daily (7 cups weekly) |
| Vegetables and Fruits | ½ cup (two or more servings of different vegetables or fruits or both) | Fruits: 1 cup daily (5 cups weekly) Vegetables: ¾ cup daily (3 ¾ cups weekly) ² | Fruits: 1 cup daily (7 cups weekly) Vegetables: ¾ cup daily (5 ¼ cups weekly) ² | Fruits: 1 cup daily (5 cups weekly) Vegetables: ¾ cup daily (3 ¾ cups weekly) ² | Fruits: 1 cup daily (7 cups weekly) Vegetables: ¾ cup daily (5 ¼ cups weekly) ² |
| Grains | 1 serving (½ ounce equivalent) (8 per week) | 1 ounce equivalent daily (8-9 weekly) ³ | 1 ounce equivalent daily (11-12.5 weekly) ³ | 1 ounce equivalent daily (8-9 weekly) ³ | 1 ounce equivalent daily (11-12.5 weekly) ³ |
| Meat/Meat Alternates | 1 ½ ounces | 1 ounce equivalent daily (8-10 weekly) ³ | 1 ounce equivalent daily (11-14 weekly) ³ | 1 ½ ounce equivalents daily (8-10 weekly) ³ | 1 ½ ounce equivalents daily (11-14 weekly) ³ |
| DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS): Daily Amount Based on the Average for a Five-day or Seven-day Week | | | | | |
| Calories | | 550-650 | | 550-650 | |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | | < 10 | | < 10 | |
| Sodium (milligrams) ⁴ | | ≤1,230 | | ≤ 1,230 | |
| Trans Fat (grams) | | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | | |
| <p>¹ Schools must offer at least two different varieties (fat content and/or flavor) of unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free unflavored or flavored milk. Whole, reduced-fat (2%), and flavored low-fat milk cannot be served.</p> <p>² The weekly vegetable servings must include the minimum amounts of the five vegetable subgroups (dark green, red/orange, beans/peas, starchy, and other). For more information, see “Vegetables” in section 2.</p> <p>³ The weekly maximum does not apply. For more information, see “Weekly Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates” in this section.</p> <p>⁴ This intermediate sodium limit (first target) applies through June 30, 2017 (see appendix B).</p> | | | | | |

LUNCH FOR SCHOOLS WITH GRADES K-5 AND 6-8

Schools may serve the same food quantities for lunch to students in grades K-5 and 6-8 because the daily requirements are the same and the weekly requirements overlap. Examples include schools with grades K-8 or grades 5-8 where students from different grade groups eat together during the same lunch period. Menu planners must be careful to meet the more restrictive sodium and calorie requirements when grades K-8 are grouped together.

Tables 3-25 and 3-26 show the overlap in the lunch meal pattern requirements between grades K-5 and 6-8 for five-day and seven-day weeks. The last two columns on the show the daily and weekly requirements for schools serving the same lunch to students in grades K-8.

Table 3-27. Comparison of Five-day Lunch Requirements for Grades K-5 and 6-8

| Food Components | GRADES K-5 | | GRADES 6-8 | | REQUIRED MEAL PATTERN FOR GRADES K-8 | |
|--|---|--------|------------|--------|--------------------------------------|--------|
| | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly |
| Fluid Milk (cups) , low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Fruits (cups) | ½ | 2 ½ | ½ | 2 ½ | ½ | 2 ½ |
| Vegetables (cups) | ¾ | 3 ¾ | ¾ | 3 ¾ | ¾ | 3 ¾ |
| Dark Green | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ |
| Red/Orange | 0 | ¾ | 0 | ¾ | 0 | ¾ |
| Beans/Peas (Legumes) | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ |
| Starchy | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ |
| Other | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ |
| Additional vegetables to reach total | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents) * | 1 | 8-9 | 1 | 8-10 | 1 | 8-9 |
| Meat/Meat Alternates (ounce equivalents) * | 1 | 8-10 | 1 | 9-10 | 1 | 9-10 |
| DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS): Daily Amount Based on the Average for a Five-day Week | | | | | | |
| Calories | 550-650 | | 600-700 | | 600-650 | |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | |
| Sodium (milligrams) ** | ≤ 1,230 | | ≤ 1,360 | | ≤ 1,230 | |
| Trans Fat (grams) | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | | | | |
| * The weekly maximum does not apply. For more information, see “ Weekly Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates ” in this section. | | | | | | |
| ** This intermediate sodium limit (first target) applies through June 30, 2017 (see appendix B). | | | | | | |

Table 3-28. Comparison of Seven-day Lunch Requirements for Grades K-5 and 6-8

| Food Components | GRADES K-5 | | GRADES 6-8 | | REQUIRED MEAL PATTERN FOR GRADES K-8 | |
|--|---|---------|------------|---------|--------------------------------------|---------|
| | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly |
| Fluid Milk (cups) , low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Fruits (cups) | ½ | 3 ½ | ½ | 3 ½ | ½ | 3 ½ |
| Vegetables (cups) | ¾ | 5 ¼ | ¾ | 5 ¼ | ¾ | 5 ¼ |
| Dark Green | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ |
| Red/Orange | 0 | ¾ | 0 | ¾ | 0 | ¾ |
| Beans/Peas (Legumes) | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ |
| Starchy | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ |
| Other | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ | 0 | ½ |
| Additional vegetables to reach total | 0 | 2 ½ | 0 | 2 ½ | 0 | 2 ½ |
| Grains (ounce equivalents) * | 1 | 11-12.5 | 1 | 11-14 | 1 | 11-12.5 |
| Meat/Meat Alternates (ounce equivalents) * | 1 | 11-14 | 1 | 12.5-14 | 1 | 12.5-14 |
| DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS): Daily Amount Based on the Average for a Seven-day Week | | | | | | |
| Calories | 550-650 | | 600-700 | | 600-650 | |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | |
| Sodium (milligrams) ** | ≤ 1,230 | | ≤ 1,360 | | ≤ 1,230 | |
| Trans Fat (grams) | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | | | | |
| * The weekly maximum does not apply. For more information, see “ Weekly Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates ” in this section. | | | | | | |
| ** This intermediate sodium limit (first target) applies through June 30, 2017 (see appendix B). | | | | | | |

[Appendix I](#) contains the “Five-day Lunch Meal Pattern for Schools with Grades K-8.” [Appendix J](#) contains the “Seven-day Lunch Meal Pattern for Schools with Grades K-8.” For downloadable meal pattern handouts, access the CSDE’s Meal Patterns Web pages from the [Program Guidance](#) Web page.



LUNCH FOR SCHOOLS WITH GRADES 6-8 AND 9-12

Table 3-27 compares the dietary specifications for grades 6-8 and 9-12. The required calorie ranges for grades 6-8 (600-700 calories) and grades 9-12 (750-850 calories) do not overlap. Therefore, schools cannot serve the same meal pattern to each grade group.

Menu planners must modify menus to offer appropriate serving sizes when students from grades 6-8 and 9-12 eat together in the same lunch period, since one single menu with the same amounts of food will not meet the meal pattern requirements. Schools that consist of both grade groups must develop menus accordingly to meet the needs of these two separate groups.



One menu with the same amounts of food for students in grades 6-8 and 9-12 will not meet the meal pattern requirements for lunch.

Table 3-29 Comparison of Dietary Specifications for Grades 6-8 and 9-12

| Daily Amount Based on Weekly Average | GRADES 6-8 | GRADES 9-12 | OVERLAP |
|--|---|-------------|---------|
| Calories | 600-700 | 750-850 | NONE |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | < 10 | < 10 | < 10 |
| Sodium (milligrams) * | ≤ 710 | ≤ 740 | ≤ 710 |
| Trans Fat (grams) | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | |
| * These are the final sodium targets that must be reached by July 1, 2022 (see appendix B). | | | |

Menu Planning Options

During the meal service, food service personnel must adjust the serving sizes or food components for grades 6-8 and 9-12 group so that meals provide appropriate calories for each grade group. The two options on the following pages provide guidance for appropriate meal modifications that will meet the meal pattern requirements for each grade group when students from grades 6-8 and 9-12 eat together during the same lunch period.

With both options, menu planners must be careful to limit starchy vegetables and vegetables or fruits with added fat or sugar to prevent meals for grades 6-8 from exceeding the average weekly limit of 700 calories. Menu planners must also be sure to meet the minimum of 750 calories for grades 9-12. Each menu planning option requires clear signage and education for students regarding the food items that each grade group can select. For more information, see “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.

Option 1 – Increase vegetables or fruits: The simplest menu planning method for schools with grades 6-8 and 9-12 in the same lunch period is to start with the components that overlap and make minor adjustments to the vegetables or fruits components to increase calories for grades 9-12. Schools can use the following procedures to implement this option.



- Plan 2 ounce equivalents of daily grains and 2 ounce equivalents of daily meat/meat alternates for both grade groups. This provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirements for both grade groups.
- Offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.
 - Grades 6-8 can select one serving (½ cup) of fruits and two servings (1 cup) of vegetables. For grades 6-8, ½ cup of fruit is the minimum daily serving and 1 cup of vegetables provides ¼ cup more than the minimum daily ¾-cup serving. Since additional vegetables are offered, menu planners must ensure that meals do not exceed the weekly limit of 700 calories for grades 6-8.
 - Grades 9-12 can select two servings (1 cup total) of fruits and two servings (1 cup total) of vegetables. These are the minimum daily servings for grades 9-12.
- Post signage at or near the beginning of the serving line to assist students in selecting appropriate quantities based on the planned menu amounts for each grade group. For example, “Grades 6-8: Select one fruit choice and two vegetable choices” and “Grades 9-12: Select two fruit choices and two vegetable choices.”

Table 3-30 shows an example of option 1.

| Table 3-30. Sample Daily Lunch Menu for Grades 6-8 and 9-12 with Option 1 | | |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| Food Components | Amounts Offered to Grades 6-8 | Additional Amounts Offered to Grades 9-12 |
| Milk, low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored (cups) | 1 | 0 |
| Fruits (cups) ¹ | ½ | ½ |
| Vegetables (cups) ² | 1 | 0 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents) ³ | 2 | 0 |
| Meat/Meat Alternates (ounce equivalents) ³ | 2 | 0 |
| <p>¹ Offer fruits in ½-cup servings. Grades 6-8 can take one serving (½ cup) and grades 9-12 can take two servings (1 cup).</p> <p>² Offer vegetables in ½-cup servings. Both grade groups can take two servings (1 cup). Weekly amounts must include the minimum vegetable subgroups for each grade group.</p> <p>³ Offer 2 ounce equivalents of grains and 2 ounce equivalents of meat/meat alternates to each grade group.</p> | | |

Option 2 – Vary grains or meat/meat alternates: This option uses the same procedures as option 1 but varies the serving size of grain or meat/meat alternate components on some days to provide a larger serving to older students. This option relies more heavily on student education and signage, but provides more flexibility for menu planners. Schools can use the following procedures to implement this option.



1. Plan 2 ounce equivalents of daily grains and 2 ounce equivalents of daily meat/meat alternates for both grade groups. This provides at least the minimum daily and weekly requirement for both grade groups.
2. Offer all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings.
 - Grades 6-8 can select one serving (½ cup) of fruits and two servings (1 cup) of vegetables. For grade 6-8, ½ cup of fruit is the minimum daily serving and 1 cup of vegetables provides ¼ cup more than the minimum daily ¾-cup serving. Since additional vegetables are offered, menu planners must ensure that meals do not exceed the weekly limit of 700 calories for grades 6-8.
 - Grades 9-12 can select two servings (1 cup total) of fruit and two servings (1 cup total) of vegetables. These are the minimum daily servings for grades 9-12.
3. Increase grains or meat/meat alternates on some days to provide a larger serving for students in grades 9-12, e.g., another slice of bread or piece of cheese.
4. Post signage at or near the beginning of the serving line to assist students in selecting appropriate quantities based on the planned menu amounts for each grade group, e.g., “Grades 6-8: Select one fruit choice, two vegetable choices and one grain choice” and “Grades 9-12: Select two fruit choices, two vegetable choices and two grain choices.”

Table 3-31 shows some examples of option 2.

Table 3-31. Sample Daily Lunch Menu for Grades 6-8 and 9-12 with Option 2

| Food Components | Amounts Offered to Grades 6-8 | Additional Amounts Offered to Grades 9-12 | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|-----------|-----------|
| | | Example 1 | Example 2 | Example 3 |
| Milk, low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored (cups) | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Fruits (cups) ¹ | ½ | ½ | ½ | ½ |
| Vegetables (cups) ² | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents) ³ | 2 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Meat/Meat Alternates (ounce equivalents) ³ | 2 | 0 | 1 | ½ |

¹ Offer fruits in ½-cup servings. Grades 6-8 can take one serving (½ cup) and grades 9-12 can take two servings (1 cup).
² Offer vegetables in ½-cup servings. Both grade groups can take two servings (1 cup). Weekly amounts must include the required vegetable subgroups for each grade group.
³ Offer 2 ounce equivalents of grains and 2 ounce equivalents of meat/meat alternates to each grade group but increase grains or meat/meat alternates on some days to provide students in grades 9-12 with a larger serving.



BREAKFAST FOR SCHOOLS WITH GRADES K-12

Schools may serve the same food quantities for breakfast to students in grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 because the daily requirements are the same and the weekly requirements overlap. Menu planners must be careful to meet the sodium and calorie requirements when using one breakfast menu for grades K-12. The calorie range that fits all grade groups is quite narrow (450-500 calories). Menus must also meet the sodium limit for the youngest grade group (K-5).



Tables 3-32 and 3-33 show the overlap in the breakfast meal pattern requirements between all grades for five-day and seven-day weeks. The last four columns on the right show the daily and weekly requirements for schools serving the same breakfast to students in grades K-12 and K-8. This meal pattern is for schools with grade configurations that prevent students from being separated into the required grade groups at breakfast. An example is a RCCI where students in grades 5-12 eat together during the same breakfast period.

Table 3-32. Comparison of Five-day Breakfast Requirements

| Food Components | Grades K-5 | | Grades 6-8 | | Grades 9-12 | | REQUIRED MEAL PATTERN | | | |
|---|---|--------|------------|--------|-------------|--------|-----------------------|--------|------------|--------|
| | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly | Grades K-12 | | Grades K-8 | |
| | | | | | | | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly |
| Milk (cups), low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Fruits (cups) | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents)** | 1 | 7-10 | 1 | 8-10 | 1 | 9-10 | 1 | 9-10 | 1 | 9-10 |
| DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS): <i>Daily amount based on the average for a five-day week</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Calories | 350-500 | | 400-550 | | 450-600 | | 450-500 | | 400-500 | |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | |
| Sodium (milligrams) * | ≤ 540 | | ≤ 600 | | ≤ 640 | | ≤ 540 | | ≤ 540 | |
| Trans Fat (grams) | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | | | | | | | | |
| * The weekly maximum for grains does not apply. For more information, see “Weekly Grains at Breakfast” in this section. | | | | | | | | | | |
| ** This intermediate sodium limit (first target) applies through June 30, 2017 (see appendix B). | | | | | | | | | | |

Table 3-33. Comparison of Seven-day Breakfast Requirements

| Food Components | GRADES K-5 | | GRADES 6-8 | | GRADES 9-12 | | REQUIRED MEAL PATTERN | | | |
|---|---|--------|------------|--------|-------------|---------|-----------------------|---------|------------|---------|
| | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly | Grades K-12 | | Grades K-8 | |
| | | | | | | | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly |
| Fluid Milk (cups), low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat- free unflavored or flavored | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Fruits (cups) | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents)* | 1 | 10-14 | 1 | 11-14 | 1 | 12.5-14 | 1 | 12.5-14 | 1 | 12.5-14 |
| DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS): <i>Daily amount based on the average for a seven-day week</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| Calories | 350-500 | | 400-550 | | 450-600 | | 450-500 | | 400-500 | |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | |
| Sodium (milligrams) ** | ≤ 540 | | ≤ 600 | | ≤ 640 | | ≤ 540 | | ≤ 540 | |
| Trans Fat (grams) | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | | | | | | | | |
| * The weekly maximum for grains does not apply. For more information, see “ Weekly Grains at Breakfast ” in this section. | | | | | | | | | | |
| ** This intermediate sodium limit (first target) applies through June 30, 2017 (see appendix B). | | | | | | | | | | |

[Appendix K](#) contains the “Five-day Breakfast Meal Pattern for Schools with Grades K-12” and the “Five-day Breakfast Meal Pattern for Schools with Grades K-8.” [Appendix N](#) contains the “Seven-day Breakfast Meal Pattern for Schools with Grades K-12” and the “Seven-day Breakfast Meal Pattern for Schools with Grades K-8.” For downloadable meal pattern handouts, access the CSDE’s Meal Patterns Web pages from the [Program Guidance](#) Web page.



BREAKFAST FOR SCHOOLS WITH GRADES 6-8 AND 9-12

Schools may serve the same food quantities for breakfast to students in grades 6-8 and 9-12 because the daily requirements are the same and the weekly requirements overlap. However, menu planners must be careful to meet the sodium and calorie requirements when using one breakfast menu for grades 6-12. The calorie range that fits these two grade groups is quite narrow (450-550 calories). Menus must also meet the sodium limit for the youngest grade group (6-8).

Tables 3-34 and 3-35 show the overlap in the breakfast meal pattern requirements between grades 6-8 and 9-12 for five-day and seven-day weeks. The last two columns on the right show the daily and weekly requirements for schools serving the same breakfast to students in grades 6-12.

This meal pattern is for schools with grade configurations that prevent students from being separated into the required grade groups at breakfast. An example is a RCCI where students in grades 6-12 eat together during the same breakfast period.

Table 3-34. Comparison of Five-day Breakfast Requirements for Grades 6-8 and 9-12

| Food Components | GRADES 6-8 | | GRADES 9-12 | | REQUIRED MEAL PATTERN FOR GRADES 6-12 | |
|---|---|--------|-------------|--------|---------------------------------------|--------|
| | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly |
| Fluid Milk (cups) , low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Fruits (cups) | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents)* | 1 | 8-10 | 1 | 9-10 | 1 | 9-10 |
| DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS): <i>Daily amount based on the average for a five-day week</i> | | | | | | |
| Calories | 400-550 | | 450-600 | | 450-550 | |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | |
| Sodium (milligrams) ** | ≤ 600 | | ≤ 640 | | ≤ 600 | |
| Trans Fat (grams) | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | | | | |
| * The weekly maximum for grains does not apply. For more information, see “ Weekly Grains at Breakfast ” in this section. | | | | | | |
| ** This intermediate sodium limit (first target) applies through June 30, 2017 (see appendix B). | | | | | | |

Table 3-35. Comparison of Seven-day Breakfast Requirements for Grades 6-8 and 9-12

| Food Components | GRADES 6-8 | | GRADES 9-12 | | REQUIRED MEAL PATTERN FOR GRADES 6-12 | |
|---|---|--------|-------------|---------|---------------------------------------|---------|
| | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly | Daily | Weekly |
| Fluid Milk (cups), low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Fruits (cups) | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 1 | 7 |
| Grains (ounce equivalents) * | 1 | 11-14 | 1 | 12.5-14 | 1 | 12.5-14 |
| DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS): <i>Daily amount based on the average for a seven-day week</i> | | | | | | |
| Calories | 400-550 | | 450-600 | | 450-550 | |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | < 10 | | < 10 | | < 10 | |
| Sodium (milligrams) ** | ≤ 600 | | ≤ 640 | | ≤ 600 | |
| Trans Fat (grams) | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | | | | |
| * The weekly maximum for grains does not apply. For more information, see “ Weekly Grains at Breakfast ” in this section. | | | | | | |
| ** This intermediate sodium limit (first target) applies through June 30, 2017 (see appendix B). | | | | | | |

[Appendix K](#) contains the “Five-day Breakfast Meal Pattern for Schools with Grades 6-12.” [Appendix N](#) contains the “Seven-day Breakfast Meal Pattern for Schools with Grades 6-12.” For downloadable meal pattern handouts, access the CSDE’s Meal Patterns Web pages from the [Program Guidance](#) Web page.



BREAKFAST FOR SCHOOLS WITH PRESCHOOL AND GRADES K-5

One breakfast menu with the same portion sizes will meet the meal pattern requirements for preschoolers (ages 3-4) and grades K-5 when students eat together during the same breakfast period. These portion sizes may be too large for many preschoolers. When possible, the CSDE encourages schools to structure the meal periods so that preschoolers can receive separate meals that meet the serving sizes in the current preschool meal pattern.

Table 3-34 compares the breakfast meal pattern requirements for preschool and grades K-5. The last two columns on the right under “Required Meal Pattern for Preschool through Grade 5” show the daily and weekly requirements for five-day and seven-day weeks when schools serve the same breakfast to students in preschool through grades 5. One menu will meet the requirements for both groups because the K-5 breakfast meal pattern exceeds the minimum preschool requirements. Since the current preschool meal pattern does not have a calorie limit, menus can include larger servings of any components.

Downloadable lunch and breakfast meal pattern handouts for all multiple grade groups are available on the CSDE’s Meal Patterns Web pages, which is accessible from the CSDE’s [Program Guidance](#) Web page.



Table 3-36. Comparison of Daily Breakfast Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-5

| Component | Preschool (Ages 3-4) | Grades K-5 | | Required Meal Pattern for Preschool through Grade 5 | |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|
| | | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week | Five-day Week | Seven-day Week |
| Fluid Milk ¹ | ¾ cup | 1 cup daily 5 cups weekly | 1 cup daily 7 cups weekly | 1 cup daily 5 cups weekly | 1 cup daily 7 cups weekly |
| Fruits | ½ cup | 1 cup daily 5 cups weekly | 1 cup daily 7 cups weekly | 1 cup daily 5 cups weekly | 1 cup daily 7 cups weekly |
| Grains and Meat/Meat Alternates | Two servings of grains/meat and meat alternates (select one of the following): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one serving (½ ounce) of grain and one serving (½ ounce) of meat/meat alternate • two servings of grains (1 ounce) • two servings of meat/meat alternates (1 ounce) | Grains: 1 ounce equivalent daily 7-10 ounce equivalents weekly ³ | Grains: 1 ounce equivalent daily 10-14 ounce equivalents weekly ³ | Grains: 1 ounce equivalent daily 7-10 ounce equivalents weekly ³ | Grains: 1 ounce equivalent daily 10-14 ounce equivalents weekly ³ |
| | | Meat/Meat Alternates: None | Meat/Meat Alternates: None | Meat/Meat Alternates: None | Meat/Meat Alternates: None |
| DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS): <i>Daily amount based on the average for a five-day or seven-day week</i> | | | | | |
| Calories | | 350-500 | | 350-500 | |
| Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) | | < 10 | | < 10 | |
| Sodium (milligrams) ⁴ | | ≤ 540 | | ≤ 540 | |
| Trans Fat (grams) | | Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving. | | | |
| ¹ Schools must offer at least two different varieties (fat content and/or flavor) of unflavored low-fat (1%) or fat-free unflavored or flavored milk. Whole, reduced-fat (2%), and flavored low-fat milk cannot be served. ² Schools may substitute 1 ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternate for 1 ounce equivalent of grains after offering the minimum daily grains requirement. For more information, see “Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast” in section 2 . ³ The weekly maximum for grains does not apply. For more information, see “ Weekly Grains at Breakfast ” in this section. ⁴ This intermediate sodium limit (first target) applies through June 30, 2017 (see appendix B). | | | | | |

EXCEPTION FOR GRADE GROUPS IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES

The USDA allows juvenile detention or correctional facilities (RCCIs) that meet specific criteria to serve one meal pattern even when the ages/grades being served span more than one grade group. This exemption applies only if the RCCI:

- is a juvenile detention or correctional facility;
- consists of more than one grade group; and
- has legitimate safety concerns or state juvenile justice laws or regulations related to offering meals with varying amounts of food within the same meal period.

This provision also applies to any other RCCIs that can demonstrate operational limitations to separating age/grade groups and can show legitimate safety concerns if students are served different portions.

RCCIs that meet the criteria above may serve breakfasts and lunches with the same amount of food at the meal service. To ensure nutritional adequacy, meals must meet the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for the highest grade group being served during the meal service.

RCCIs that meet the criteria above may also meet the milk variety requirement over the week rather than daily, if there are potential, legitimate safety concerns about offering different types of milk to students. For example, a RCCI may offer all students flavored nonfat milk on some days of the week and unflavored low-fat milk on other days. For more information, see “Milk Variety Exemption for RCCIs” in [section 2](#).

To implement this provision, eligible RCCIs must submit a written waiver request to the CSDE using the CSDE’s [Meal Pattern Exception Request Form](#). RCCIs must obtain approval from the CSDE prior to implementing this option. The CSDE will consider RCCI requests to implement this option on a case-by-case basis, if the above criteria are met.

This grade group exception applies only to RCCIs that meet the criteria described above. All other facilities and schools must use the meal pattern grade groups specified in the USDA regulations for the NSLP and SBP.

For more information, SFAs should contact their assigned CSDE school nutrition consultant. Contact information for school nutrition programs staff is listed under “CSDE Contact Information” in the “[Contents](#)” section of this guide.



Menu Records

School meals must provide each grade group with the minimum daily and weekly servings of all meal components, as documented by the menu, production records, standardized recipes, CN labels, product formulation statements, nutrition labels and product ingredient statements. Menu planners should use the USDA's *Food Buying Guide* to determine the correct amount of food to meet the meal pattern portion sizes.

MENUS

SFAs must maintain menu records that document the service of reimbursable meals to students. The CSDE recommends that schools develop cycle menus. A cycle menu is series of menus planned for a specific period of time, such as a four weeks, with a different menu for each day. Cycle menus can help schools comply with the meal pattern requirements, increase variety, control food cost, control inventory, and save time.

The USDA's menu worksheets indicated whether school menus comply with the USDA meal patterns. These worksheets are available on the CSDE's [Certification of Meal Pattern Compliance](#) Web page.

The CSDE's lunch menu planning checklists assist schools with reviewing menus and determining whether lunches meet the meal pattern requirements. There are separate v for each of the three grade groups (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12), and two additional checklists for schools with different grade configurations that prevent the use of the three required grade groups. These include grades K-8 and preschool through grade 5.

The checklists for five-day weeks are available on the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Five-day Week](#) Web page. Checklists for seven-day menus are available on the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Residential Child Care Institutions](#) Web page. Checklists for four-day menus are available on the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Four-day Week](#) Web page.

For sample menus and other resources on school meals, see the "Menu Planning and Food Production" section of the CSDE's [Nutrition Resources](#).



PRODUCTION RECORDS

USDA regulations require that all schools and institutions participating in school nutrition programs must complete daily menu production records for all meals. Production records must show how the offered meals contribute to the required food components and food quantities for each grade group every day. SFAs must maintain production records on file in accordance with USDA guidance.

USDA regulations also require that SFAs must adjust future menu cycles to reflect production and how often the food items are offered. Menu planners may need to change the food offerings based on student selections, and may also need to modify recipes and other specifications to ensure that the meal requirements are met.

The CSDE has developed menu production records for lunch and breakfast that schools may use or adapt. These forms include seven production records based on food items and seven production records based on food components. They are available on the CSDE's [Production Records](#) Web page.

STANDARDIZED RECIPES

The USDA defines a standardized recipe as one that has been tried, adapted and retried several times for use by a given foodservice operation and has been found to produce the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes have many benefits. They help to ensure:

- consistent food quality;
- predictable yield;
- consistent nutrient content;
- customer satisfaction;
- food cost control;
- efficient purchasing procedures;
- inventory control;
- labor cost control;
- increased employee confidence;
- reduced record keeping; and
- successful completion of the state administrative review.



USDA regulations require that all schools and institutions develop and follow standardized recipes. When foods are prepared from scratch, SFAs must use standardized recipes to document that the serving provides the appropriate portion size of each meal pattern component. For example, if the menu planner credits macaroni and cheese as 2 ounce equivalents of meat/meat alternates and 2 ounce equivalents of grains, schools must maintain a recipe on file that documents each serving contains 2 ounces of cheese and 1 cup of whole grain-rich pasta.

The ICN's manuals, *Measuring Success with Standardized Recipes* and *On the Road to Professional Food Preparation*, assist schools with developing and using standardized recipes. Other helpful tools include the USDA's *Recipes for Schools*, *Food Buying Guide* and *Food Buying Guide Online Calculator*. The CSDE's [Menu Planning](#) Web page provides additional resources on standardized recipes.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION FOR COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS

When school meals include commercially processed foods, the menu planner must ensure that these products provide the actual amount of each component being credited toward the meal pattern. SFAs must obtain documentation from the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component per serving based on either an original CN label from the product carton or a PFS signed by an official of the manufacturer. Documentation must also include the product's nutrition label and ingredients statement.

Any crediting information received from a manufacturer other than a valid CN label should be checked by the SFA for accuracy prior to the item being included in reimbursable meals. Schools must keep this information on file to document meal pattern compliance for auditing purposes.

For more information, see "Crediting Commercial Entree Products" in section 2, [appendix G](#) and [appendix H](#). For additional guidance on accepting product documentation, see the CSDE's handout, *Accepting Processed Product Documentation*, and [Operational Memo 10-15](#), *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*.



NUTRITION INFORMATION

Schools must obtain nutrition information, such as Nutrition Facts labels and manufacturer product formulation statements, for all commercially prepared foods used to prepare school meals. If a processed product does not have a Nutrition Facts panel, schools must obtain the product's nutrition information from the manufacturer. This information must be readily available for use by the CSDE in conducting the nutrient analysis of school menus as part of the SFA's administrative review of school nutrition programs.

The USDA encourages schools to inform students, parents, and the public about efforts they are making to meet the meal requirements for school lunches. The USDA's requirements for obtaining and providing nutrition information are summarized below.



Trans Fats

Labels or manufacturer specifications for all food products and ingredients used to prepare school meals must indicate zero grams of trans fats per serving. Menu planners cannot use nutrient databases to determine values for trans fats because nutrient databases do not currently have complete data for trans fats.

SFAs must add the specification for zero trans fats to procurement contracts and request the required documentation (nutrition label or manufacturer specifications) from manufacturers. Menu planners must review all commercially prepared products for trans fats content before purchasing. For information on how to read a food label, see table 5-8 in [section 5](#).

The trans fats requirement applies only to artificial sources of trans fats. Artificial trans fats are a type of saturated fat made from vegetable oils through a process called hydrogenation. Food manufacturers use this process to make products more solid at room temperature, which increases shelf life and helps maintain the flavor and texture of foods. Artificial trans fats are found in processed foods and oils such as vegetable shortenings, some margarines, crackers, candies, cookies, snack foods, fried foods, and baked goods.



The trans fats requirement does not apply to foods that contain a minimal amount of naturally occurring trans fats such as beef, lamb and dairy products made with whole milk. If a commercially prepared food contains both naturally occurring and added trans fats (partially hydrogenated oils), the menu planner must obtain documentation from the manufacturer that indicates the amount of each.

For more information, see “Trans Fats” in [section 5](#).

Nutrient Analysis

During the administrative review of the NSLP and SBP, the CSDE must assess whether meals offered to students in grades K-12 are consistent with the USDA's standards for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For more information, see "[Dietary Specifications](#)" in this section and [section 5](#).

The CSDE's administrative review of school nutrition programs will include the SFA's:

- menus;
- production records;
- standardized recipes;
- product formulation statements and CN labels; and
- if applicable, nutrition information showing how the products contribute toward the meal pattern requirements.

The CSDE's nutrient assessment will include all foods (including condiments) and beverages offered as part of reimbursable meals during the one-week review period. SFAs must maintain records of the latest nutrient analysis of school menus conducted by the CSDE.

SFAs are not required to conduct a nutrient analysis of their own menus because they are expected to follow the meal patterns to meet nutrient targets. However, SFAs can choose to conduct a nutrient analysis of menus to assist in their efforts to ensure they are meeting the dietary specifications.

Nutrition Disclosure

SFAs must ensure that schools accurately represent foods on lunch and breakfast menus. Menus cannot claim that a food item is beef, pork, poultry (such as chicken or turkey) or seafood (such as fish or tuna) if the food item contains more than 30 percent APP. The names used for these menu items must reflect that they are not 100 percent meat, poultry, or fish. For more information on APPs, see in "[Alternate Protein Products and Vegetable Protein Products](#)" in [section 2](#).

