National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

FOUR-DAY LUNCH MEAL PATTERN [1]

School Year 2016-17 (Effective July 1, 2016)

Food Components	GRADES K-5		GRADES 6-8		GRADES 9-12	
	Daily	Weekly [2]	Daily	Weekly [2]	Daily	Weekly [2]
Fluid Milk (cups) [3] *Low-fat (1%) unflavored or fat-free unflavored or flavored*	1	4	1	4	1	4
Fruits (cups) [4] *Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits*	½	2	½	2	1	4
Vegetables (cups) [5] *Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetables*	¾	3	¾	3	1	4
Dark Green [5, 6]	0	½	0	½	0	½
Red/Orange [5, 7]	0	¾	0	¾	0	1 ¼
Beans/Peas (Legumes) [5, 8]	0	½	0	½	0	½
Starchy [5, 9]	0	½	0	½	0	½
Other [5, 10]	0	½	0	½	0	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total [5, 11]	0	¼	0	¼	0	½
Grains (ounce equivalents) [12] *All grains must be whole grain-rich*	1	6.5-7	1	6.5-8	2	8-9.5
Meats and Meat Alternates (ounce equivalents) [13]	1	6.5-8	1	7-8	2	8-9.5

DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS)

Daily amount based on the average for a four-day week

Calories [14, 15]	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) [15]	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (milligrams) [15, 16]	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,420
Trans Fat (grams) [15]	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving		

◀ See page 2 for important menu planning notes ▶

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FOUR-DAY LUNCH MEAL PATTERN [1]

School Year 2016-17 (Effective July 1, 2016)

[1] The meal pattern shows the required amounts of each component that must be made available to each child to claim reimbursement for the meal. Meals may include larger amounts of any component if the weekly menu meets the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Food Buying Guide for School Meal Programs* to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For information on crediting processed foods, see *Child Nutrition (CN) Labels* and *Product Formulation Statements*.

[2] A week equals four days. This meal pattern is only for programs that regularly operate on a four-day week.

[3] Schools must offer at least two different varieties (fat content and/or flavor) of unflavored low-fat (1%) milk or fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored). Whole milk, reduced-fat (2%) milk, and flavored low-fat milk cannot be served.

[4] Fruits include fresh, frozen, canned in light syrup, water or juice, and dried. Fruits credit based on volume except dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of fruit. Fruit juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice and cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits (see *Crediting Juice*). Serving whole fruits instead of juice is recommended.

[5] Vegetables credit based on volume except raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served (e.g., 1 cup equals ½ cup of vegetables), and tomato paste and puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted (see the *Food Buying Guide)*. Vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice and cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetables (see *Vegetable Subgroups).*

[6] The dark green subgroup includes vegetables such as bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, mesclun, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, spinach, turnip greens, and watercress.

[7] The red/orange subgroup includes vegetables such as acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, pumpkin, tomatoes, tomato juice, and sweet potatoes.

[8] The beans and peas (legumes) subgroup includes vegetables such as black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soy beans, split peas, and white beans. It does not include green peas, green lima beans, and green (string) beans.

[9] The starchy subgroup includes vegetables such as black-eyed peas (not dry), corn, cassava, green bananas, green peas, green lima beans, parsnips, plantains, taro, water chestnuts, and white potatoes.

[10] The "other" vegetables subgroup includes all other vegetables such as artichokes, asparagus, avocado, beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, green peppers, iceberg lettuce, mushrooms, okra, onions, turnips, wax beans, and zucchini. The "other" vegetables requirement may be met with any additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) subgroups but not the starchy subgroup.

[11] Any vegetable subgroup may be offered as additional vegetables to meet the total weekly vegetable requirements.

[12] All grains must be whole grain-rich, i.e., the product contains at least 50 percent whole grains, any remaining grains are enriched, and any noncreditable grains are less than 2 percent (¼ ounce equivalent) of the product formula (see *Criteria for Whole Grain-rich Foods)*. All grains must meet the serving sizes specified in *Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for School Nutrition Programs*. Up to 2 ounce equivalents per week may be a grain-based dessert if menus meet the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. Menus are not required to comply with the maximums for grains, but must meet the minimums and stay within the weekly calorie range. The weekly maximum provides a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

[13] The serving size refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish as served, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone. A 1-ounce equivalent serving equals 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish, 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended), 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese (low-fat recommended), ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), ½ large egg, 2 tablespoons of nut butters, 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, ¼ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu (containing at least 5 grams of protein), ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt, and 1 ounce of alternate protein products (APP). APP must meet the USDA requirements specified in appendix A to Part 210 of the NSLP regulations. Meat and meat alternates must be served in a main dish, or a main dish and only one other food item. Allowable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soynuts. Nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than 50 percent of the meat/meat alternates requirement. They must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the minimum daily serving. Menus are not required to comply with the maximum for meat/meat alternates, but must meet the minimum and stay within the weekly calorie range. The weekly maximum provides a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

[14] The average daily amount of calories for a four-day school week must be at least the minimum value but no more than the maximum value.

[15] Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added if meals meet the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium.

[16] These intermediate sodium limits (first target) apply through June 30, 2017. The second sodium target must be reached by July 1, 2017 (≤935 milligrams for grades K-5; ≤1,035 milligrams for grades 6-8, and ≤1,080 for grades 9-12). The final sodium target must be reached by July 1, 2022 (≤640 milligrams for grades K-5; ≤710 milligrams for grades 6-8, and ≤740 milligrams for grades 9-12).

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For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals,* and the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Four-day Week Web page and Crediting Foods Web page, or contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 25 Industrial Park Road, Middletown, CT 06457.