

BREAKFAST MEAL PATTERN

(FOUR-DAY WEEK)

Required Meal Components	Grades Pre-K Ages 3-5	Grades K- 5		Grades 6- 8		Grades K- 8 ¹		Grades 9- 12	
		Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly
Fruits and/or Vegetables (Cups)	1/2*	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4
Grains and/or Meat/Meat Alternates (oz eq.)	1/2	1	5.5-8 ²	1	6.5-8 ²	1	6.5-8 ²	1	7-8 ²
Milk (Cups)	3/4	1	4	1	4	1	4	1	4

Required Nutrient Standards	Grades Pre-K	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
Calorie Range (daily average over week)	-	350-500	400-550	400-500	450-600
Saturated Fat (% of total calories)	-	<10	<10	<10	<10
Added Sugars Beginning SY 2027-2028	-	<10% of total calories per week	<10% of total calories per week	<10% of total calories per week	<10% of total calories per week
Sodium (mg) Target 1A Through June 30, 2027	-	540 mg or less	600 mg or less	540 mg or less	640 mg or less
Sodium (mg) Implemented by July 1, 2027	-	485 mg or less	535 mg or less	485 mg or less	570 mg or less

¹The K-8 meal pattern is only for schools with grade configurations that prevent students from being separated into the required grade groups (K-5 and 6-8) at breakfast. Examples include schools with grades K-8 or grades 5-8 where students from different grade groups eat together during the same breakfast period. If students can be served separately in their appropriate grade groups, schools must use the required meal patterns for grades K-5 and 6-8.

²There is no maximum grain requirement. Menus must meet the minimum requirement and stay within the calorie range. The weekly maximum provides a guide to help schools plan age-appropriate meals that meet the calorie, saturated fat and sodium requirements.

Additional Notes:

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Preschool Meal Pattern:

Preschool students are required to follow the CACFP preschool meal pattern, however, the USDA allows flexibility for co-mingled students. Schools that serve meals to preschoolers and K-5 students in the same service area at the same time may choose to follow the grade-appropriate meal patterns for each grade group or serve the K-5 meal pattern to both grade groups.

Fruits and/or Vegetables:

- *May serve fruits, vegetables, or combination of both to meet the combined vegetables/fruits component.
- May serve 100% juice once per day. If juice is served at breakfast, it cannot be served at lunch or snack.

Grains and/or Meat/Meat Alternates:

- One of the grain items served daily must be whole-grain rich (WGR). Enriched grains may be served at breakfast if WGR items are served at lunch.
- Meat/meat alternates may be substituted for the entire grain requirement a maximum of three times a week. When substituting the meat/meat alternates at breakfast, it must be substituted for the entire grain component.
- Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of added sugar per dry ounce.
- Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces. (2 grams of added sugar per ounce)
- Desserts: Grain-based desserts do not count toward meeting the grains requirement (cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, sweet pie crusts, doughnuts, toaster pastries, cake, brownies, etc.).
 - Please note: Sweet crackers are not defined as a grain-based dessert in the CACFP meal patterns.

Milk: For 3–5-year-olds: either unflavored low-fat (1 percent) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk must be served.

K-12 Meal Pattern:

Fruits and/or Vegetables:

- May serve fruits, vegetables, or combination of both to meet the combined vegetables/fruits component.
- Fruit juice may only be offered to meet 50% of the weekly fruit component. Only 100% full strength pasteurized juice is allowed.
- Fruit includes fresh, frozen, canned in light syrup, water or juice and dried.
- All fruits credit based on volume, except dried fruit credits as twice the volume served (e.g., ¼ cup dried fruit credits as ½ cup fruit).
- Larger amounts of fruit may be offered if meals do not exceed the weekly limit for calories, saturated fat and sodium.
- Schools may substitute vegetables for fruits in the School Breakfast Program with the following guidelines.
 - Schools that choose to offer vegetables in place of fruits at breakfast one day per school week may offer any vegetables, including starchy vegetables.
 - Schools that choose to offer vegetables in place of fruits at breakfast for two or more days more than one day per school week must offer vegetables from at least two different vegetable subgroups.

- All vegetables credit based on volume except raw leafy greens, tomato puree and tomato paste.
 - Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served (e.g., 1 cup romaine lettuce equals ½ cup vegetable).
 - Tomato puree and tomato paste credit using the whole food equivalency (volume of tomatoes prior to pureeing) rather than the actual volume served.
- Additional fruit and/or vegetable servings may be offered if the calorie level in the average breakfast offered over the week is within the calorie range established in the meal pattern for each age/grade group.

Grains and/or Meats/Meat Alternates:

- May serve grains, meat/meat alternates, or combination of both to meet the combined grains and/or meats/meat alternates component.
- At least 80% of the grains served in school meals per week must be whole grain-rich (WGR) and the remaining grains served must be enriched. To meet USDA's WGR criteria, a product must contain at least 50% whole grains, and the remaining grain content of the product must be enriched. If whole grain-rich or enriched products include non-creditable ingredients, the non-creditable grains must be less than 2% of the product formula by weight (or less than 0.25 oz. eq.) for the grain product to be creditable at breakfast.
- For more information, see USDA's [Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs](#).
- The serving size of meat/meat alternates refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish served (i.e., cooked lean meat without bone).
- A 1-ounce equivalent (oz. eq.) serving equals of meat/meat alternates: 1 oz. lean meat, poultry, fish or most cheeses, ¼ cup cooked beans/peas (lentils), ½ large egg, 2 Tbsp. nut butters, 1 oz. nuts or seeds, ½ cup yogurt or soy yogurt, ¼ cup commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams protein.

Milk:

- At least two varieties must be offered daily from the choices listed below. Please note, one of the selections must be unflavored milk:
 - Low fat (1%) unflavored or flavored
 - Fat free unflavored or flavored

Nutrient Standards:

- Nutrient standards are daily amounts based on the average for a five-day week
- **Sodium:**
 - Maintain Target 1A Sodium Limits through SY 2026-2027.
 - Beginning July 1, 2027, schools must implement the 10% reduction in sodium as listed above
- **Saturated fat:**
 - School lunches offered to all age/grade groups must, on average over the school week, provide less than 10 percent of total calories from saturated fat.
- **Added Sugars:**
 - **Breakfast Cereals** must not contain more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce
 - **Yogurt** must not contain more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces
 - **Flavored Milk** must not contain more than 10 grams of added sugars per 8 fluid ounces/1 cup
- Beginning in the 2027-2028 School Year, added sugars must be less than 10% of calories per week. These weekly limits will be in addition to product-based limits.