

## LUNCH MEAL PATTERN (SEVEN DAY WEEK)

Required Meal Components	Grades Pre-K Ages 3-5	Grades K-5		Grades 6-8		Grades K-8		Grades 9-12	
		Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly	Daily	Weekly
Fruit (Cups)	1/4	1/2	3 1/2	1/2	3 1/2	1/2	3 1/2	1	7
Vegetables (Cups)	1/4	3/4	5 1/4	3/4	5 1/4	3/4	5/14	1	7
Dark Green	-		½		½		½		½
Red/Orange	-		¾		¾		¾		1 ¼
Beans/Peas (Legumes)	-		½		½		½		½
Starchy	-		½		½		½		½
Other	-		½		½		½		¾
Additional to reach total	-		2 1/2		2 1/2		2 1/2		3 1/2
Grains (oz. equivalents)	1/2	1	11-12.5**	1	11-14**	1	11-12.5**	2	14-17**
Meat/Meat Alternate (oz. equivalents)	1 ½	1	11-14**	1	12.5-14**	1	12.5-14**	2	14-17**
Fluid Milk (Cups)	3/4	1	7	1	7	1	7	1	7

Required Dietary Specifications	Grades Pre-K	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
Calorie Range (daily average)	-	550-650	600-700	600-650	750-850
Saturated Fat (% of total calories)	-	<10	<10	<10	<10
Trans Fat (grams)	-	0	0	0	0
Sodium (mg) Target 1 SY 2022-2023	-	1230 mg or less	1360 mg or less	1230 mg or less	1420 mg or less
Sodium (mg) Target 1A SY 2023-2024	-	1100 mg or less	1225 mg or less	1100 mg or less	1280 mg or less

**Important Notes:**

**CACFP Preschool Meal Pattern:**

- ❖ **\*Fruits/Vegetables:** May serve fruits, vegetables, or combination of both to meet the combined vegetables/ fruit component. Can serve 100% juice once per day. For example, if juice is served at breakfast, it cannot be served at lunch.
- ❖ **Grains:** One of the grain components must be whole grain-rich every day. Enriched grains may be served at lunch if whole grain-rich items are served at breakfast. Cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce. Grain based desserts may not credit toward the grains component. Sweet crackers (graham and animal crackers) are allowable and can count toward the grains component.
- ❖ **Milk:** For 3-5 year olds: unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk.
- ❖ **Meat/Meat Alternates:** Meat and meat alternates may be used to substitute the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week. When substituting the meat/meat alternates at breakfast, it must be substituted for the entire grains component. Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces.

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 either the K-5 meal pattern or the CACFP preschool meal pattern.

**K-8 Meal Pattern**

The 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 lunch. Examples include schools with grades K-8 or grades 5-8 where students from different grade groups eat together during the same lunch 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.**

**Preschool Meal Pattern**

Schools serving preschool and K-5 students in same food service area can choose to follow separate meal patterns (Preschool and K-5) or serve K-5 meal pattern to everyone. If preschool students eat separately in their classroom, schools must follow the preschool meal pattern. Specific preschool meal pattern requirements are available under Resources in SNEARS

**\*\*Weekly Grains and Meat/Meat Alternate Ranges**

**THERE IS NO MAXIMUM GRAIN OR MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE REQUIREMENT.** Menus are not required to comply with the maximums indicated, but must meet the minimum requirements and stay within the calorie ranges. The weekly maximums provide a guide to help schools plan age-appropriate meals that meet the calorie, saturated fat and sodium requirements.

## Meat/Meat

### Alternate:

- The serving size refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish served (i.e. cooked lean meat without bone)
- Meat/meat alternates must be served in a main dish or a main dish and one other food item
- A 1 ounce equivalent (oz. eq.) serving equals:
  - 1 oz. lean meat, poultry, fish or cheese
  - ¼ cup cooked beans/peas (legumes)
  - 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

## Fruit

- 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

## Vegetables:

- All vegetables credit based on volume except raw leafy greens count as half the volume served. (e.g. 1 cup equals ½ cup vegetable)
- Vegetable subgroup requirements are weekly, however, daily minimum vegetable requirements must be met. Refer to the *School Lunch Meal Pattern Subgroup Fact Sheet (#138)* for specific vegetables in each subgroup.
- Any vegetable subgroup may be offered as “additional” vegetables to meet the total weekly vegetable requirements
- Larger amounts of vegetables may be offered if meals do not exceed the weekly limit for calories, saturated fat and sodium

## Grains:

- 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 whole grain-rich 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 lunch or breakfast.
- All grains must meet the serving sizes specified in the Whole Grain-Rich Ounce Equivalency Requirements for School Meal Programs (Form #33).

- Up to 2 oz. eq. per week may be a grain-based dessert as long as menus meet all dietary specifications.
- For more information, see USDA's Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs.

**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
- The Target 1 sodium limit will continue for school lunch and breakfast in SY 2022-2023. Sodium Interim Target 1A will be effective for school lunch beginning in SY 2023-2024.