

Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). For information on the CACFP meal patterns for children and crediting foods, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpages. For information on the CACFP adult meal patterns and crediting foods, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages.



Deli meats (such as turkey, chicken, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna) credit as the meat/meat alternates component in the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns. CACFP sponsors must ensure that the serving of deli meat provides the required amount of the meat/meat alternates component for CACFP meals and snacks. The amount of deli meat that provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component depends on the product's ingredients, and varies greatly between different brands and types.

- **100 percent meat:** Products that are 100 percent meat without added liquids (e.g., water or broth), binders, and extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis (actual serving weight). For example, 1 ounce of deli meat that is 100 percent meat credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.
- **Added liquids, binders, and extenders:** Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula. A 1-ounce serving of these products does **not** credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. The crediting depends on the amount of meat per serving, excluding added ingredients. For example, one brand of deli meat might require 1.6 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, while another brand might require 2.3 ounces to credit as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.



Required Crediting Documentation

CACFP sponsors must obtain appropriate crediting documentation for all deli meats with added liquids, binders, and extenders. Acceptable documentation includes 1) an original Child Nutrition (CN) label from the product carton, or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or 2) a product formulation statement (PFS) signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of the meat/meat alternates component contained in one

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serving of the product. For more information, review the CSDE’s resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the CACFP](#), [Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP](#); and the USDA’s PFS form, [Product Formulation Statement \(Product Analysis\) for Meat/Meat Alternate Products](#). For additional guidance, visit the “Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Child Care Programs” or “Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers” sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpages.

Liquids, Binders, and Extenders

The ingredients statements below show examples of turkey breast products that contain added liquid, binders, and extenders.

- Ingredients: Turkey breast, *water*, *modified cornstarch*, contains less than 2% of sodium lactate, salt, sugar, sodium phosphates, *carrageenan*, natural flavor, sodium diacetate, potassium chloride, sodium ascorbate, sodium nitrite, caramel color.
- Ingredients: Turkey breast meat, *turkey broth*, contains 2% or less salt, sugar, *carrageenan*, sodium phosphate, sodium acetate, sodium diacetate, flavoring.



Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the meat/meat alternates component without a CN label or PFS stating the amount of the meat/meat alternates component per serving. Menu planners must review product labels and ingredients to determine if commercial products contain added liquids, binders, and extenders.

Table 1 lists examples of ingredients that are binders and extenders.

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Table 1. Examples of binders and extenders ¹

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Agar-agar | Dried milk | Sodium caseinate |
| Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid) | Dry or dried whey | Soy flour (APP) ² |
| Bread | Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate | Soy protein concentrate (APP) ² |
| Calcium-reduced dried skim milk | Gums, vegetable | Starchy vegetable flour |
| Carrageenan | Isolated soy protein (APP) ² | Tapioca dextrin |
| Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum) | Locust bean gum | Vegetable starch |
| Cereal | Methyl cellulose | Wheat gluten |
| | Modified food starch | Whey |
| | Reduced lactose whey | Whey protein concentrate (APP) ² |
| | Reduced minerals | Xanthan gum |

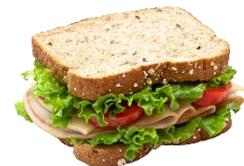
¹ Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA’s regulations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (9 CFR 318.7).

² Products may contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA’s requirements for alternate protein products (APPs). For more information, review the CSDE’s resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the CACFP](#).

Developing Recipes for Deli Meats

Different brands and types of deli meat credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, CACFP sponsors should develop standardized recipes for menu items that contain deli meats, such as sandwiches and other entrees. The recipes should indicate the deli meat’s contribution to the meat/meat alternates component based on a specific weight of a specific brand. For ease of portioning, round up the weight of the deli meat in the recipe to the nearest measure. For example, the recipe should list 1.2 ounces as 1.25 ounces and 1.6 ounces as 1.75 ounces.

If a CACFP sponsor makes the same food item using different brands of deli meats that credit differently, the standardized recipe should include the required weight of each brand. For example, if a center makes a turkey sandwich using either ABC brand turkey breast or XYZ brand turkey breast, the standardized recipe should include the required weight of ABC brand and the required weight of XYZ brand. Alternatively, the CACFP sponsor could develop a separate standardized turkey sandwich recipe for each brand of deli meat. For information on standardized recipes, visit the [“Crediting Foods Prepared on Site in CACFP Child Care Programs”](#) and [“Crediting Foods Prepared on Site in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers”](#) sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpages.



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Comparing Cost

The deli product with the lowest cost per pound might not be the least expensive. CACFP sponsors should consider the cost per ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, instead of the cost per ounce of meat. This provides a more accurate reflection of the product's cost in CACFP meals and snacks. Table 2 shows a sample cost comparison.

| Food item | Price per pound | Price per ounce | Amount to provide 1 ounce of meat/meat alternates ¹ | Cost of 1 ounce of meat/meat alternates |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|---|--|
| Sample product A: Deli meat with liquids, binders, and extenders | \$4.99 | \$.31 | 1.7 ounces ² | \$.53 |
| Sample product B: Deli meat without liquids, binders, and extenders | \$6.99 | \$.44 | 1 ounce | \$.44 |

¹ Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders require a CN label or PFS to document the amount of the meat/meat alternates component per serving. For more information, review the CSDE's resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the CACFP](#) and [Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP](#).

² This information would be obtained from the product's PFS.

Sample product A (deli meat with liquids, binders, and extenders) costs \$2 less per pound than sample product B (deli meat without liquids, binders, and extenders). However, when the menu planner compares the cost based on 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, a serving of sample product A costs 53 cents and a serving of sample product B costs 44 cents. Sample product A requires almost twice the weight of sample product B to provide 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component, due to the added liquids, binders, and extenders.

Determining the cost per ounce of meat/meat alternates helps CACFP sponsors decide if the required meal pattern serving for a specific brand of deli meat is reasonable and cost effective.

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Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Large chunks or cubes of deli meats are choking hazards. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding how to offer deli meats in preschool menus. This consideration is also important for children or adult participants with a disability that requires dietary restrictions. For additional guidance, visit the “[Choking Prevention](#)” section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocumentationCACFP.pdf>

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditCommercialMMACACFP.pdf>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Meat/Meat Alternates Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#MMA>

Meat/Meat Alternates Component for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#MMA>

Product Formulation Statement (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Document_Meat_Meat_Alternate.pdf

Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (APP) (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/questions-and-answers-alternate-protein-products-app>

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/ResourcesCACFPMealPattern.pdf>

Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

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Standardized Recipes (CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

Standardized Recipes (CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CNlabelCACFP.pdf>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/PFScacfp.pdf>

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CreditDeliCACFP.pdf>.

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