

Crediting Juice 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 the fruits and vegetables components, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and the “[Fruits Component for CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” and “[Vegetables Component for CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” sections of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage.

For information on the CACFP adult meal patterns and the fruits and vegetables components, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage and the “[Fruits Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)” and “[Vegetables Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)” sections of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage.



Full-strength fruit juice credits as the fruits components and full-strength vegetable juice credits as the vegetables component in the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns. Juice served in the CACFP must be pasteurized full-strength 100 percent fruit juice, vegetable juice, or a combination of fruit and vegetable juices. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” The statements “natural” and “organic” do not indicate that a juice is full strength.

Juice products that are less than full strength, or that contain juice concentrates that are not fully reconstituted, do not credit in CACFP meals and snacks. With the exception of smoothies, juice cannot credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage (see “[Crediting Pureed Fruits and Vegetables in Smoothies](#)” in this document).

The USDA recommends serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice. Juice does not provide the same nutritional benefits as whole fruits and vegetables, which contain fiber, fewer calories, and more nutrients.



Crediting Juice in the CACFP

Crediting Juice Concentrates

Juice concentrates credit only when they are reconstituted with water to 100 percent full-strength juice, and served in the form of juice. Juice concentrates do not credit when used as an ingredient in another food or beverage product, such as gelatin or sherbet made with juice concentrates.

Juice made from concentrate is reconstituted with a volume of water that is several times the amount of the juice concentrate. A typical reconstitution ratio might be three parts water to one part concentrate, but this ratio may vary for different juice products. Commercial juice products made from concentrate will list “water” as the first ingredient followed by the type of juice concentrate, for example, “water, orange juice concentrate” and “filtered water, grape juice concentrate.” Juice made from concentrate that is labeled “100 percent juice” credits when the CACFP facility follows the manufacturer’s specific instructions for reconstituting.

Crediting Juice Blends

Juice blends credit if they are a combination of full-strength fruit juices, full-strength vegetable juices, or full-strength fruit and vegetable juices. Crediting is based on the first juice ingredient. If the first juice ingredient is fruit juice, the product contributes to the fruits component. If the first juice ingredient is vegetable juice, the product contributes to the vegetables component. For example, the product below credits toward the vegetables component because the first ingredient is a vegetable juice blend.

- Ingredients: *Reconstituted vegetable juice blend (water and concentrated juices of sweet potatoes, purple carrots, carrots)*, reconstituted fruit juices (water and concentrated juices of apples, white grapes, cranberries, blackberries), contains less than 2% of: natural flavoring, citric acid, lemon juice.

Crediting Frozen Juice Products

The meal pattern contribution of frozen fruit juice (such as full-strength frozen juice pops) is based on the fluid volume prior to freezing. CACFP facilities must request a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer to document this information. Frozen fruit juice counts toward the CACFP juice limit (see “[Juice Limit](#)”).

For information on PFS forms, review the CSDE’s resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP](#); and the USDA’s PFS form, [Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits](#). 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.



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Crediting Apple Cider

Apple cider credits as the fruits component if it is pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice. Pasteurized juice has been heat-treated to kill harmful bacteria. Check labels, as some brands of apple cider are not pasteurized. CACFP facilities cannot serve apple cider (or any other type of juice) that is not pasteurized. Apple cider counts toward the juice limit (see “[Juice Limit](#)” in this document).

Crediting Coconut Water

Coconut water labeled as 100 percent juice credits toward the fruits component based on the volume served. Coconut water must meet the same requirements as juice, and counts toward the juice limit (see “[Juice Limit](#)” in this document).

Crediting Pureed Fruits and Vegetables in Smoothies

Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice in the preschool meal patterns. Crediting is based on the volume (cups) of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving. For example, a smoothie that contains $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed strawberries credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit juice. Pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies count toward the preschool juice limit (see “[Juice Limit](#)” in this document).



Concentrated fruit puree and concentrated juice are added sugars. They do not credit as juice unless they are reconstituted to full-strength fruit puree or full-strength juice.

CACFP facilities must document the amount of pureed fruits and vegetables per serving with a standardized recipe for smoothies made on site. Commercial products require a PFS (or a CN label, if available, for fruit and vegetable smoothies that also contain yogurt). For information on standardized recipes, visit the “[Crediting Foods Prepared on Site in CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” or “[Crediting Foods Prepared on Site in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)” sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpages. For information on PFS forms, and CN labels, visit the 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. The CSDE’s resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP*, summarizes the requirements for crediting smoothies in CACFP meals and snacks.

Crediting Juice in the CACFP

Crediting Juice in Canned Fruit

A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed, but cannot include water or syrup. For example, ½ cup of canned peaches with juice credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. However, ½ cup of canned peaches with syrup does not credit as ½ cup of the fruits component because the serving does not contain ½ cup of fruit. The menu planner can credit only the amount of peaches without the syrup.



The juice from canned fruit counts toward the juice limit if the menu planner credits the juice toward the fruits component. For example, if canned pears in juice credit as the fruits component at lunch, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or the vegetables component at any other CACFP meal or snack that same day.

Juice from canned fruit does not count toward the juice limit if the juice is planned as an extra noncreditable food. An example is ½ cup of canned fruit portioned in a 5½-ounce container with the juice added after measuring the full ½-cup serving of fruit.

Juice Ingredients

Juice ingredients may vary among manufacturers. The Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) labeling regulations allow 100 percent juice to contain added ingredients and still be labeled "100% juice." Some 100 percent juices contain added ingredients such as artificial flavors, artificial colors (e.g., red 40, blue 1, yellow 5 and 6, and titanium dioxide), preservatives (e.g., sodium potassium sorbate), flavor enhancers (e.g., ethyl maltol), and emulsifiers or thickeners (e.g., glycerol esters of wood rosin and xanthan gum). The CSDE encourages menu planners to read the product's ingredients statement and choose 100 percent juices without these added ingredients.



Crediting Juice in the CACFP

Juice Limit

Full-strength juice credits as either the vegetables component or the fruits component at only one CACFP meal or snack per day, between all meals and snacks served in the CACFP facility. Menu planners must count all sources of 100 percent juice toward the juice limit, including:

- 100 percent juice (fresh, frozen, and made from concentrate) (see “[Crediting Juice Concentrates](#)” in this document);
- frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice (see “[Crediting Frozen Juice Products](#)” in this document);
- pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies (see “[Crediting Pureed Fruits and Vegetables in Smoothies](#)” in this document); and
- juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice (see “[Crediting Juice in Canned Fruit](#)” in this document).



If a CACFP meal or snack includes any type of juice as the fruits component or vegetables component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at any other meal or snack that same day.

The examples below illustrate this requirement.

- Lunch and supper cannot contain a smoothie and juice as the only servings of the fruits component and vegetables component. For example, the lunch menu cannot offer a strawberry smoothie as the fruits component and vegetable juice as the vegetables component because both credit as juice.
- If the breakfast menu includes juice as the fruits component, canned fruit in juice cannot credit as the fruits component at lunch, supper, or snack.
- If the lunch menu includes a frozen 100 percent fruit juice pop as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, snack, or supper.
- If the snack menu includes a mango smoothie as the fruits component, juice cannot credit as the fruits component or vegetables component at breakfast, lunch, or supper.

Crediting Juice in the CACFP

Juice at Snack

The snack meal pattern requires two of the five food components (milk; meat/meat alternates; vegetables; fruits; and grains). A reimbursable snack could include:

- a serving of vegetable and a serving of fruit;
- a serving of vegetable and a serving of fruit juice; or
- a serving of fruit and a serving of vegetable juice.

A reimbursable snack cannot include a serving of vegetable juice (including pureed vegetables in smoothies) and a serving of fruit juice (including pureed fruits in smoothies, juice in canned fruit, and frozen juice pops) as the only two snack components. For example, a snack that contains a vegetable smoothie and apple juice is not reimbursable because both components credit as juice. In addition, juice cannot be served when milk is the only other snack component.

The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving a variety of fruits and choosing whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice; and serving a fruit or vegetable as at least one of the two required snack components. For guidance on serving and crediting fruits and vegetables in CACFP meals and snacks, visit the "[Fruits Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)" or "[Fruits Component for CACFP Child Care Programs](#)" sections and "[Vegetables Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)" or "[Vegetables Component for CACFP Child Care Programs](#)" sections of the CSDE's CACFP webpages.

Offering Juice as an Extra Menu Item

CACFP facilities may choose to offer juice as an extra menu item that does not credit toward the CACFP meal patterns. However, the USDA encourages CACFP facilities to limit juice in CACFP menus to ensure that meals and snacks meet participants' nutrition needs. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving a variety of fruits and choosing whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice.



Crediting Juice in the CACFP

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

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

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

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

Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

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

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

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

Crediting Smoothies in the CACFP (CSDE):

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Fruits Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

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

Fruits Component for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

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

Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Adult-Centers>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, Summer Food Service Program, and NSLP Afterschool Snacks (USDA):

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

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

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

Crediting Juice in the CACFP

USDA Memo CACFP 25-2016: Vegetable and Fruit Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/vegetable-and-fruit-requirements-child-and-adult-care-food-program-questions-and-answers>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019 and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP (CSDE):

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

Vegetables Component for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

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

Vegetables Component for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

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

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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/CreditJuiceCACFP.pdf>.

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- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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