

Crediting Legumes 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). Legumes credit as the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component in the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns.

For information on the CACFP meal patterns for children and the meat/meat alternates and vegetables components, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpage and the “[Meat/Meat Alternates Component for CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” and “[Vegetables Component for CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. For information on the CACFP adult meal patterns and the meat/meat alternates and vegetables components, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage and the “[Meat/Meat Alternates 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.



Legumes include cooked dry beans and peas, such as black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), edamame (soybeans), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soy beans, split peas, and white beans. Legumes may credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but one serving cannot credit as both components in the same meal or snack. Menu planners must determine in advance how to credit legumes in a meal. A ¼-cup serving of legumes credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component or ¼ cup of the vegetables component.

Legumes may credit as either component in different meals. For example, lentils may credit as the vegetables component at one lunch, and as the meat/meat alternates component at another lunch. If the meal includes two servings of legumes, the menu planner may choose to credit one serving as the vegetables component and one serving as the meat/meat alternates component. For example, ¼ cup of garbanzo beans in a salad may credit as ¼ cup of the vegetables component and ½ cup of kidney beans in chili may credit as 2 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component.



Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Crediting Legumes as Vegetables

Foods in the vegetables component credit based on volume (cups). For example, a ½-cup serving (8 tablespoons) of legumes credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component. The minimum creditable amount for the vegetables component is ⅛ cup (2 tablespoons). The serving refers to the amount of legumes without added ingredients. For example, to credit as ½ cup of legumes, a serving of baked beans must contain ½ cup of beans, excluding added ingredients such as sauce and pork fat.

The menu planner must round down the amount of legumes to the nearest ⅛ cup (2 tablespoons). For example, a recipe with 2½ tablespoons of kidney beans per serving credits as ⅛ cup of the vegetables component. If the menu item contains less than the full serving of the vegetables component, the menu planner must include additional vegetables to provide the full-required serving for each age group.

Crediting Legumes as Meat/Meat Alternates

Legumes credit as the meat/meat alternates component based on volume. A ¼-cup serving (4 tablespoons) of legumes credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. The minimum creditable amount is 1 tablespoon. At lunch and supper, the meat/meat alternates component must be served in a main dish, or in a main dish and one other food item.

The menu planner must round down the amount of legumes to the nearest ¼ ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. For example, a recipe that contains 2½ tablespoons of kidney beans (0.625 ounces of meat/meat alternates) per serving rounds down to 0.5 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. Table 1 shows the CACFP meal pattern contribution for different serving sizes of legumes.

Table 1. Crediting legumes as the meat/meat alternates component	
Serving size (volume)	Meal pattern contribution (ounces)
8 tablespoons (½ cup)	2
7 tablespoons	1¾
6 tablespoons (¾ cup)	1½
5 tablespoons	1¼
4 tablespoons (¼ cup)	1
3 tablespoons	¾
2 tablespoons (⅛ cup)	½
1 tablespoon (⅓ cup)	¼ (minimum creditable amount)

Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Roasted or Dried Legumes

Roasted or dried legumes, such as garbanzo beans (chickpeas) and soybeans, may credit as the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetables component, but not both in the same meal or snack.

- **Meat/meat alternates:** Roasted or dried legumes credit as the meat/meat alternates component based on weight. A 1-ounce serving of roasted or dried legumes provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. At lunch and supper, roasted or dried legumes cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. Roasted or dried legumes must be combined with another food from the meat/meat alternates component to meet the full requirement.
- **Vegetables:** Roasted or dried legumes credit as the vegetables component based on volume (cups). For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of roasted or dried legumes credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component.

The USDA recommends using discretion when offering snack-type legumes (such as individually wrapped soy nuts) as part of reimbursable meals, due to their perception as snack foods.

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding whether offer roasted or dried legumes in CACFP menus. This consideration is also important for children and adult participants whose disability requires dietary restrictions. For additional guidance, visit the "[Choking Prevention](#)" section of the CSDE's [Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.



Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Crediting Legumes in Recipes

The crediting information for recipes depends on whether the menu planner credits the legumes as the vegetables component or the meat/meat alternates component. To determine the crediting information for a recipe, the menu planner must first determine the total volume (cups) of legumes in the recipe.

- **Vegetables:** The minimum creditable amount of the vegetable component is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup. To determine the number of $\frac{1}{8}$ -cup servings of legumes in one serving of the recipe, divide the total cups of legumes in one serving of the recipe by 0.125, then round down to the nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ cup. Table 2 shows an example of how to calculate the vegetables contribution of legumes in a recipe.
- **Meat/meat alternates:** A $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup serving of legumes provides 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. To determine the ounces of the meat/meat alternates component in one serving of the recipe, divide the total cups of legumes in one serving of the recipe by 0.25, then round down to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ ounce. Table 3 shows an example of how to calculate the meat/meat alternates contribution of legumes in a recipe.

For assistance with recipe calculations, use the equivalent volume measures in the ICN's *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster* and the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the "Introduction" section of the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG). 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.



Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Table 2. Determining the vegetables contribution of legumes in a recipe

A recipe provides 50 servings and contains 1 gallon and 1 quart of chickpeas. How many cups of vegetables does the recipe provide per serving?

- Determine the total cups of legumes in the recipe: Use the ICN's *Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster* to convert larger measurements to cups. Use the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the FBG's "Introduction" section to convert fractions to decimals.

A	20 cups
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1 gallon (16 cups) plus 1 quart (4 cups) of chickpeas equals 20 cups of chickpeas.

- Number of servings in the recipe:

B	50 servings
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- Determine the cups of legumes per serving: Divide the total cups of legumes (A) by the number of servings in the recipe (B).

C	0.4 cups per serving *
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20 cups of chickpeas divided by 50 servings equals 0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving.

*** Note:** If the decimal amount for the cups of legumes per serving (C) converts to an **even multiple of 1/8 cup**, such as 0.5 (1/2) cup, 0.25 (1/4) cup, or 0.125 (1/8) cup, this is the final meal pattern contribution for the vegetables component. **Do not complete steps 4 and 5.**

- Determine the number of 1/8-cup servings (minimum creditable amount) of legumes in one serving of the recipe: Divide the cups of legumes per serving (C) by 0.125.

D	3.2 servings of 1/8 cup
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0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving divided by 0.125 equals 3.2 servings of 1/8 cup.

- Round down the number in D to nearest 1/8-cup serving.
3.2 servings round down to 3 servings of 1/8 cup (or 3/8 cup). One serving of the recipe contains 3/8 cup of the vegetables component.

E	3 servings of 1/8 cup
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Meal pattern contribution: 3/8 cup of the vegetables component

Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Table 3. Determining the meat/meat alternates contribution of legumes

A recipe provides 50 servings and contains 1 gallon and 1 quart of chickpeas. How many ounces of the meat/meat alternates component does the recipe provide per serving?

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------------|-----|--------------------|
| <p>1. Determine the total cups of legumes in the recipe: Use the ICN's <i>Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster</i> to convert larger measurements to cups. Use the decimal fraction equivalents chart (table 6) in the FBG's "Introduction" section to convert fractions to decimals.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1 gallon (16 cups) plus 1 quart (4 cups) of chickpeas equals 20 cups of chickpeas.</p> | <table border="0" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #006633; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">A</td> <td style="padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">20</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">cups</td> </tr> </table> | A | 20 | cups |
| A | 20 | cups | | |
| <p>2. Number of servings in the recipe:</p> | <table border="0" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #006633; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">B</td> <td style="padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">50</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">servings</td> </tr> </table> | B | 50 | servings |
| B | 50 | servings | | |
| <p>3. Determine the cups of legumes per serving: Divide the total cups of legumes (A) by the number of servings in the recipe (B).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">20 cups of chickpeas divided by 50 servings equals 0.4 cup of chickpeas per serving.</p> | <table border="0" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #006633; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">C</td> <td style="padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">0.4</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">cups per serving</td> </tr> </table> | C | 0.4 | cups per serving |
| C | 0.4 | cups per serving | | |
| <p>4. Determine the ounces of meat/meat alternates per serving: Divide the cups of legumes per serving (C) by 0.25 (1 ounce = ¼ cup (0.25) of legumes).</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">0.4 cups of chickpeas per serving divided by 0.25 equals 1.6 ounces of meat/meat alternates.</p> | <table border="0" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #006633; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">D</td> <td style="padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">1.6</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">ounces per serving</td> </tr> </table> | D | 1.6 | ounces per serving |
| D | 1.6 | ounces per serving | | |
| <p>5. Round down the number in D to the nearest ¼ ounce.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">1.6 ounces rounds down to 1.5 ounces of meat/meat alternates. One serving of the recipe contains 1.5 ounces of the meat/meat alternates component.</p> | <table border="0" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="background-color: #006633; color: white; padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">E</td> <td style="padding: 5px; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">1.5</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">ounces per serving</td> </tr> </table> | E | 1.5 | ounces per serving |
| E | 1.5 | ounces per serving | | |

Meal pattern contribution: 1½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component *

Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Pasta Products Made of Legume Flours

Pasta products made of legume flours may credit as either the vegetables component or the meat/meat alternates component, but not both in the same meal or snack.

- **Meat/meat alternates:** Crediting pasta products that contain legume flours as the meat/meat alternates component is the same as crediting legumes. A ¼-cup serving of cooked pasta made of 100 percent legume flours credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

Legume flour pasta must be offered with additional meat/meat alternates, such as tofu, cheese, or meat. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that meat/meat alternates are in a form that is recognizable to children. The nutrition education aspect of the Child Nutrition Programs includes the goal of helping children recognize the food groups that contribute to healthy meals and snacks.



- **Vegetables:** Pasta products that contain 100 percent vegetable flours may credit as the vegetables component. For example, ½ cup of pasta made of 100 percent red lentil flour credits as ½ cup of the vegetables component.

Alternatively, manufacturers and CACFP sponsors may credit legume flour pasta using the bean flour yield information on page C-1 of [Appendix C](#) of the FBG, or with appropriate documentation on the manufacturer's product formulation statement (PFS). 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 forms, *Product Formulation Statement (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate Products* and *Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Vegetables and Fruits*.

For additional guidance on documentation for commercial products, 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.

Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

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

Appendix C: Food Items for Further Processing, Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_FoodItemsForFurtherProcessing_YieldTable.pdf

Choking Prevention (CSDE's Food Safety for Child Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Food-Safety-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#ChokingPrevention>

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

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

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>

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

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

Crediting Legumes in the CACFP

Resources for the CACFP Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/ResourcesCACFPMealPattern.pdf](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

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

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-
files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf)

USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019 and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:

[https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-
programs](https://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs)

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>

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

Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-
/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/VegetableSubgroupsCACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/VegetableSubgroupsCACFP.pdf)

Crediting Legumes in the CACFP



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/CreditLegumesCACFP.pdf>.

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- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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