

Offer versus Serve in Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Offer versus serve (OVS) is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows adult participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS is not allowed at snack. CACFP adult day care centers that choose to implement OVS must notify the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [CACFP staff](#) and receive approval prior to implementing OVS.

Under OVS, the determination of a reimbursable meal is based on the participant's selection of the full serving of a minimum number of food components (lunch and supper) or food items (breakfast).

- A **food component** is one of the food groups that comprise a reimbursable meal. The breakfast meal pattern requires three components (milk, vegetables/fruits, and grains). The lunch meal pattern requires five components (milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains). The supper meal pattern is the same as lunch, except milk is optional.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five food components. For example, a ½-cup serving of applesauce and a ½-cup serving of blueberries are two food items from one food component (fruits). A 1-cup serving of brown rice and a 2-ounce whole-grain bagel are two food items from one food component (grains).
- A **combination food** contains more than one food component. Examples include lasagna, beef stew, pizza, burritos, chef's salad, and smoothies made with yogurt and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains component) and cheese (meat/meat alternates component). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza or burrito) or are not intended to be separated (such as hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).
- A **full serving** is the minimum required amount in the CACFP adult meal patterns.



For a reimbursable breakfast with OVS, adult day care centers must offer the full serving of at least four different food items, including one food item from each of the three required food components (milk, vegetables/fruits, and grains); plus one additional different food item from the vegetables/fruits, grains, or meat/meat alternates components. Participants must select the full serving of at least three food items for a reimbursable breakfast.

For a reimbursable lunch with OVS, adult day care centers the full serving of at least one food item from each of the five food components (milk, vegetables, fruits, grains, and meat/meat alternates). At supper, milk is optional. For a reimbursable supper with OVS, adult day care centers must offer

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the full serving of at least one food item from the other four required food components. Participants must select the full serving of at least three different components for a reimbursable lunch or supper.

Signage

If the CACFP menu offers combination foods, or two or more food items from one food component (such as bread and rice), the adult day care center must provide instructions or signs about the OVS requirements. This signage must indicate what choices make up a reimbursable meal and let participants know that they cannot select two of the same food items (breakfast) or components (lunch/supper). For example, a participant cannot select two pieces of toast and milk for a reimbursable breakfast because this choice provides only two food items (grains and milk). A participant cannot select two servings of chicken and one serving of rice for a reimbursable lunch because this choice provides only two components (meat/meat alternates and grains).

Breakfast

For a reimbursable breakfast, the adult day care center must **offer** the full serving of at least four different food items, and participants must **select** the full serving of at least three food items. Participants can decline any one food item. Table 1 summarizes the requirements for OVS at breakfast.

Table 1. OVS breakfast requirements for CACFP adult day care centers	
Adult day care center must offer at least four food items ¹	Participants must select
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Milk, unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored/flavored fat-free (1 cup) ² 2. Vegetables/fruits (½ cup) 3. Grains (two servings) ³ 4. Meat/meat alternates (1 ounce) or additional vegetables/fruits (½ cup) or additional grains (1 serving) ^{2,4} 	<p>At least three different food items (can decline any one food item)</p>
<p>¹ Each food item must provide the full serving indicated in the CACFP adult breakfast meal pattern.</p> <p>² The USDA’s <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends only unflavored milk.</p> <p>³ Through September 30, 2021, grains must meet the applicable weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in the USDA’s grain servings chart, or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, <i>Grain Servings for the CACFP</i> and <i>Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP</i>. Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for the grains component change to ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, <i>Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</i>.</p> <p>⁴ The fourth food item may be a meat/meat alternate item (1 ounce), a different vegetable or fruit item (½ cup), or a different grain item (1 serving).</p>	

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Breakfasts in adult day care centers must meet the criteria below to be reimbursable under OVS.

- Breakfast menus must include the **full serving** of at least four **different** food items. Breakfast menus cannot include two servings of the same food item. For example, a breakfast menu of with a serving of milk, a serving of banana, and two servings of toast (one slice of enriched cinnamon-raisin bread and one slice of whole-wheat bread) is not reimbursable because the two servings of toast are the **same** food item.
- Larger servings of the **same** component count as only one food item. For example, 1 cup of strawberries counts as one food item (vegetables/fruits). A 3-ounce whole-wheat bagel or two servings of whole-grain toast each count as one food item (grains).
- If the breakfast menu offers the full daily serving of a component as two **separate** food items, participants must take **both** servings to count as one food item for OVS. The examples below illustrate this requirement.
 - The adult breakfast meal pattern requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables/fruits component. If the menu offers $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sliced peaches and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of pineapple tidbits, participants must select both servings to count as one food item (vegetables/fruits).
 - The adult breakfast meal pattern requires two servings of the grains component. If the menu offers one serving of whole-grain cereal and one serving of whole-grain muffin, participants must select both servings to count as one food item (grains).
- Amounts **less** than a full serving do not count as a food item for OVS. For example, a selection of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cantaloupe does not count as a food item because $\frac{1}{2}$ cup is the full serving for the vegetables/fruits component at breakfast.
- If a combination food contains two or more food items and the breakfast menu offers only four food items, participants cannot decline the combination food. For example, a breakfast menu offers a fruit smoothie made with yogurt (meat/meat alternates) and strawberries (vegetables/fruits); an enriched corn muffin (grains); and milk (milk). Participants must select the smoothie (two food items) and at least one other food item for a reimbursable breakfast.
- Participants may decline any one of the four food items, including milk.



Examples of OVS at Breakfast

Tables 2 and 3 show examples of OVS at breakfast in CACFP adult day care centers. Breakfast menu 1 contains four different food items and breakfast menu 2 contains five different food items.

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Table 2. Sample breakfast menu 1 (four food items)

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CACFP adult meal pattern for OVS	Planned menu	Meal pattern contribution	
		Servings	Food items
Grains (G), 2 servings	Whole-grain bagel, 2 ounces	2	1 G
Vegetables and fruits (VF), ½ cup	Strawberries, ½ cup	1	1 VF
Milk (M), 1 cup ¹	Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, 1 cup	1	1 M
Meat/meat alternates (MMA) (1 ounce) ² or additional VF (½ cup) or G (1 serving)	Orange slices, ½ cup	1	1 VF
Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food items			
Participant selects	Number of food items	Reimbursable meal?	
Strawberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 VF and 1 M).	
Bagel (1 G) Strawberries (1 VF)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 VF).	
Bagel (1 G) Milk (1 M)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 M).	
Strawberries (1 VF) Orange slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (2 VF and 1 M).	
Bagel (1 G) Orange slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).	
Strawberries (1 VF) Orange slices (1 VF) Bagel (1 G)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (2 VF and 1 G).	
¹ Allowable types of milk include unflavored low-fat (1%), unflavored fat-free (skim), or flavored fat-free. The USDA's <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends serving only unflavored milk.			

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Table 3. Sample breakfast menu 2 (five food items)

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CACFP adult meal pattern for OVS	Planned menu	Meal pattern contribution	
		Servings	Food items
Grains (G), 2 servings	Whole-wheat toast, 1-ounce slice Whole-grain cereal, 1 ounce	2	2 G
Vegetables and fruits (VF), ½ cup	Blueberries, ½ cup	1	1 VF
Milk (M), 1 cup ¹	Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, 1 cup	1	1 M
Meat/meat alternates (MMA) (1 ounce) ² or additional VF (½ cup) or G (1 serving)	Peanut butter, 2 Tablespoons ³	1	1 MMA
Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food items			
Participant selects	Number of food items	Reimbursable meal?	
Toast (1 G) Cereal (1 G) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (2 G and 1 M).	
Toast (1 G) Peanut butter (1 MMA) Blueberries (1 VF)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 MMA, and 1 VF).	
Toast (1 G) Cereal (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (2 G and 1 VF).	
Toast (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).	
Toast (1 G) Peanut butter (1 MMA) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 MMA, and 1 M).	
Peanut butter (1 MMA) Blueberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (1 MMA, 1 VF, and 1 M).	

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Table 3. Sample breakfast menu 2 (five food items), *continued*

Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food items		
Participant meal		Reimbursable meal?
Participant selects	Number of food items	
Cereal (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).
¹ Allowable types of milk include unflavored low-fat (1%), unflavored fat-free (skim), or flavored fat-free. The USDA’s <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends serving only unflavored milk. ² With OVS, breakfast menus may include a serving of meat/meat alternates every day as the fourth breakfast food item. Without OVS, breakfast menus may substitute a meat/meat alternate for the entire grains component up to three times per week. One ounce of meat/meat alternates (such as half of a large egg, ½ cup of yogurt, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, and 1 ounce of cheese) substitutes for one ounce of grains. For more information, visit the USDA’s webpage, <i>Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast</i> .		

OVS at Lunch and Supper

At lunch and supper, the CACFP adult day care centers must **offer** the full serving of at least one food item from each of the five food components. For a reimbursable meal, participants may decline any two food items but must **select** the full serving of at least three different components. Table 4 summarizes the OVS requirements for lunch and supper in CACFP adult day care centers.

Table 4. OVS lunch and supper requirements for CACFP adult day care centers

Adult day care center must offer all five components ¹	Participants must select
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Milk, unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored/flavored fat-free (1 cup) ² 2. Fruits (½ cup) 3. Vegetables (½ cup) 4. Grains (two servings) ³ 5. Meat/meat alternates (2 ounces) 	At least three food components (can decline any two food components)
¹ Each food component must provide the full serving in the CACFP adult meal pattern. ² Milk is optional in the CACFP adult supper meal pattern. ³ Through September 30, 2021, grains must meet the applicable weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in the USDA’s grain servings chart, or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, see the CSDE’s handouts, <i>Grain Servings for the CACFP</i> and <i>Calculation Methods for Grain Servings in the CACFP</i> . Effective October 1, 2021, the required amounts for the grains component change to ounce equivalents. For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, <i>Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</i> .	

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Lunches in adult day care centers must meet the criteria below to be reimbursable under OVS.

- Each lunch must include the **full serving** (the required amount in the CACFP adult lunch meal pattern) of the five lunch components. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Care Centers](#) webpage.
- Larger servings of the **same** component count as only one food item. For example, 1 cup of broccoli counts as only one food component (vegetables). Two 1-ounce slices of whole-grain bread (two servings) count as only one food component (grains).
- If the menu offers the full serving of a component as two **separate** food items, participants must take **both** items to credit as one component for OVS. The examples below illustrate this requirement.
 - The lunch meal pattern requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables. If the lunch menu offers $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of corn, participants must select both servings to count as the full vegetables component.
 - The lunch meal pattern requires two servings of grains. If the menu offers one serving of brown rice and one serving of whole-wheat roll, participants must select both servings to count as the full grains component.
- Amounts **less** than the full serving do not count as a food component for OVS. For example, a selection of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of broccoli does not count as the vegetables component.
- If a combination food contains three or more food components and the lunch menu offers only five food components, a participant cannot decline the combination food. For example, a lunch menu offers spinach lasagna made with cheese (meat/meat alternates), lasagna noodles (grains), and spinach and tomato sauce (vegetables); apple slices (fruits); and milk (milk). Participants must select at least the lasagna (three components) for a reimbursable meal.
- Participants may decline any one or two food components, including milk.
- Supper follows the same meal pattern as lunch, except milk is optional. If milk is not served, the adult day care center must offer the four required food components (meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains). For a reimbursable meal, participants must select the full serving of at least three of the four components.

Examples of OVS at Lunch

Tables 5 and 6 show examples of OVS at lunch in adult day care centers.



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Table 5. Sample lunch menu 1

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CACFP Adult Meal Pattern	Planned Menu	Meal pattern contribution	
		Servings	Components
Meat/meat alternates (MMA), 2 ounces	Turkey, 2 ounces	1	MMA
Grains (G), 2 servings	Whole-wheat bread, two 1-ounce slices	2	G
Vegetables (V), ½ cup	Broccoli florets, ½ cup,	1	V
Fruits (F), ½ cup	Cantaloupe slices, ½ cup	1	F
Milk (M), 1 cup ¹	Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, 1 cup	1	M
Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food components			
Participant selects	Food components	Reimbursable meal?	
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two components (MMA and G).	
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Milk (M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and M).	
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe slices (F)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and F).	
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli florets (V)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and V).	
Broccoli florets (V) Cantaloupe slices (F) Milk (M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (V, F, and M).	
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli florets (V) Milk (M)	4	Yes. The selected meal contains four components (MMA, G, V, and M).	
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe slices (F) Milk (M)	4	Yes. The selected meal contains four components (MMA, G, F, and M).	
¹ Allowable types of milk include unflavored low-fat (1%), unflavored fat-free (skim), or flavored fat-free. The USDA's <i>CACFP Best Practices</i> recommends serving only unflavored milk.			

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Table 6. Sample lunch menu 2

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CACFP adult meal pattern	Planned menu	Meal pattern contribution	
		Servings	Components
Meat/meat alternates (MMA), 2 ounces	Meat sauce, 2 ounces of cooked hamburger	1	MMA
Grains (G), 2 servings	Spaghetti, 1 cup ¹	2	G
Vegetables (V), ½ cup	Tossed garden salad, 1 cup ² Tomato sauce in meat sauce, ¼ cup ³	1 ½	V
Fruits (F), ½ cup	Fruit salad, ½ cup	1	F
Milk (M), 1 cup ⁴	Unflavored low-fat (1%) milk, 1 cup	1	M
Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food components			
Participant selects	Food components	Reimbursable meal?	
Spaghetti (G) ¹ Meat sauce (MMA)	2	No. The selected meal contains only two components (G and MMA).	
Spaghetti (G) ¹ Fruit salad (F) Milk (M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (G, F, and M).	
Spaghetti (G) ¹ Meat sauce (MMA) Tossed salad (V) Milk (M)	4	Yes. The selected meal contains four components (G, MMA, V, and M).	
Salad (V) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (V, F, and M).	
Spaghetti (G) ¹ Meat sauce (MMA) Milk (M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (G, MMA, and M).	

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Table 6. Sample lunch menu 2, *continued*

Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food components		
Participant meal		Reimbursable meal?
Participant selects	Food components	
Spaghetti (G) ¹ Meat sauce (MMA) Fruit salad (F)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (G, MMA, and F).
Salad (V) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M)	3	Yes. The selected meal contains three components (V, F, and M).

¹ Larger servings of the same food item count as only one food component, e.g., 1 cup of spaghetti (two servings of grains) counts as one food component (grains).

² Raw leafy greens such as spinach and lettuce credit as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup of lettuce credits as ½ cup (one serving) of vegetables.

³ Amounts less than a full serving do not count as a food component for OVS. For example, ¼ cup of tomato sauce does not count as the vegetables component for OVS because it is less than the full ½-cup serving.

⁴ Allowable types of milk include unflavored low-fat (1%), unflavored fat-free (skim), or flavored fat-free. The USDA’s *CACFP Best Practices* recommends serving only unflavored milk.

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Resources

Adult Day Care: A Child and Adult Care Food Program Handbook (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/CACFPAdult%20DayCareHandbook.pdf>

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

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

CACFP Meal Patterns for Adults:

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

Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE):

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

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

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

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPOfferVersusServe.pdf>

USDA Memo CACFP 05-2017: Offer Versus Serve and Family Style Meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/offer-versus-serve-and-family-style-meals-child-and-adult-care-food-program>



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For more information on the CACFP adult meal patterns, visit the [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages or contact the CACFP staff in the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This handout is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/OVSAultCACFP.pdf>.

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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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