This guidance applies to the meal patterns for grades K-12 in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, which follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. For additional guidance on the NSLP and SBP meal patterns and crediting requirements for the grains component, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 and visit the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs and Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpages. Note: The grains/breads component of the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) meal pattern for grades K-12 requires different quantities. Refer to the CSDE’s resource, Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12.

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Overview of Ounce Equivalents (Oz Eq) Chart

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs, summarizes the required quantities for nine groups (A-I) of grain foods. These quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The chart in this document lists the Exhibit A oz eq that apply to creditable grain foods in the meal patterns for grades K-12.

Groups A-G include baked goods such as crackers, breads, rolls, taco shells, muffins, waffles, pancakes, and grain-based desserts, e.g., cookies, cake, granola bars, and pastries. Group H includes cereal grains like pasta, cooked breakfast cereals, and other cereal grains, e.g., amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat. Group I includes ready-to-eat (RTE) cold breakfast cereals.

The amount of a creditable grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For example, to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, a roll (group B) must weigh 28 grams or 1 ounce and a blueberry muffin (group D) must weigh 55 grams or 2 ounces. The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is ¼ oz eq.

Creditable Grain Foods

To credit as the grains component, commercial grain products and foods made from scratch must be made with creditable grains. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran (such as oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran), and germ (such as wheat germ). Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains.

- Creditable foods include commercial grain products and foods made from scratch that are whole-grain rich (WGR) or enriched. For guidance on the grain crediting requirements and how to identify WGR and enriched grains, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) resources, Crediting Whole Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program and Crediting Enriched Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program,

- Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals include WGR, enriched, and fortified cereals. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE’s Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

Additional resources on the grains component of the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12, visit the “Grains Component for Grades K-12” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.
Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement

Effective July 1, 2022, at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast must be WGR. Grains that are not WGR must be enriched and cannot exceed 20 percent of the offered grains. WGR foods include 100 percent whole grains and foods that contain a blend of whole (at least 50 percent) and enriched grains. For guidance on identifying WGR foods, refer to the CSDE’s guide, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

Limit for Noncreditable Grains

To credit in school meals, all commercial grain products (including WGR foods and enriched grains) must comply with the limit for noncreditable grains. Noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for group H. For guidance on meeting the limit for noncreditable grains, refer to the CSDE’s resources, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and *Crediting Enriched Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Grain-based Desserts

Grain-based desserts are in groups B-G and are indicated in blue or red. Only certain grain-based desserts are allowed at breakfast and lunch.

- **Breakfast and lunch:** Grain-based desserts in blue (footnote 1) are allowed at lunch and breakfast. Examples include sweet crackers (e.g., animal crackers and graham crackers), coffee cakes, cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, and fruit turnovers.

- **Lunch only:** Grain-based desserts in red (footnote 2) are allowed only at lunch. Examples include cookies, cakes, cupcakes, plain brownies, and piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan).

The lunch meal pattern requires a weekly limit of no more than 2 oz eq, including all WGR and enriched grain-based desserts. For example, the lunch menu may include a 2-oz eq grain-based dessert once per week or a 1-oz eq grain-based dessert twice per week. **Note:** School food authorities (SFAs) cannot offer graham crackers (or any other grain-based desserts) as the grains component of daily alternate lunch choices because this exceeds the 2 oz eq weekly limit.

The breakfast meal pattern does not require a weekly limit for grain-based desserts but restricts the types that are allowed. The CSDE recommends limiting grain-based desserts at breakfast. Menus that frequently include grain-based desserts might not meet the weekly dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE’s *Crediting Grain-based Desserts for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*. 
Using the Grain Oz Eq Chart

The oz eq chart in this document (refer to pages 4-5) indicates the required weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H and I) for each group of grain products to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. It also indicates the required quantities for ¼ oz eq, ½ oz eq, and ¼ oz eq (the minimum creditable amount).

SFAs must know the grain item’s serving weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H and I) to use this chart. Oz eq are calculated by dividing the grain item’s serving weight/volume by the required weight/volume for 1 oz eq of the applicable grain group.

- The serving weight/volume for commercial products is listed on the Nutrition Facts label or product formulation statement (PFS).
- The serving weight/volume for foods made from scratch is determined from the SFA’s standardized recipe. If the standardized recipe does not provide this information, SFAs must either determine the average serving weight/volume by weighing or measuring several portions (refer to the CSDE’s Yield Study Data Form for Child Nutrition Programs) or use the creditable grains method for determining oz eq (refer to the CSDE’s resource, Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program).

The steps for using the oz eq chart are indicated in the CSDE’s resource, How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Training is available in module 13 of the CSDE’s training program, What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12. For detailed guidance on both methods for determining the oz eq of commercial grain products and standardized recipes, refer to the CSDE’s resource, Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

When a PFS is required

The oz eq chart can only be used for creditable grain foods. A manufacturer’s PFS is required when a commercial product’s ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if it meets the crediting criteria. For guidance on when a PFS is required and what it must include, refer to the CSDE’s resources, When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs and Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs.
Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

Grain Oz Eq Chart

This chart reflects the required quantities for nine groups (A-I) of grain foods in the USDA’s *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*. Grain-based desserts in groups B-G are indicated in blue or red. Grain-based desserts in blue (footnote 1) are allowed at lunch and breakfast. Grain-based desserts in red (footnote 2) are allowed only at lunch and cannot exceed 2 oz eq per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group A</th>
<th>Group B</th>
<th>Group C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oz eq</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread-type coating</td>
<td>1 oz eq = 22 grams or 0.8 ounce</td>
<td>Bagels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breadsticks, hard</td>
<td>½ oz eq = 11 grams or 0.4 ounce</td>
<td>Batter-type coating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chow Mein noodles</td>
<td>¼ oz eq = 6 grams or 0.2 ounce</td>
<td>Biscuits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crackers, savory, e.g., saltines and snack crackers</td>
<td></td>
<td>Breads, e.g., white, wheat, whole wheat, French, Italian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croutons</td>
<td></td>
<td>Buns, hamburger and hot dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretzels</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crackers, sweet, e.g., graham crackers and animal crackers, all shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuffing, dry (weights apply to bread in stuffing)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Egg roll skins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English muffins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pita bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pizza crust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pretzels, soft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rolls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taco shells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tortilla chips</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tortillas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cookies, plain, including vanilla wafers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cornbread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Corn muffins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Croissants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pancakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Piecrust (dessert pies, cobblers, fruit turnovers, and meat or meat alternate pies)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Waffles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Allowed at lunch in the NSLP and breakfast in the SBP. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.
2. Allowed only at lunch in the NSLP. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.
## Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group D</th>
<th>Group E</th>
<th>Group F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foods</td>
<td>Oz eq</td>
<td>Foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, plain</td>
<td>1 oz eq = 55 grams or 2 ounces</td>
<td>Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, with nuts, dried fruit, and/or chocolate pieces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ oz eq = 42 grams or 1.5 ounces</td>
<td>Cookies, with fillings or coverings, nuts, raisins, chocolate pieces, and/or fruit purees</td>
<td>¼ oz eq = 52 grams or 1.8 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ oz eq = 28 grams or 1.0 ounce</td>
<td>Doughnuts, cake and yeast raised, frosted or glazed</td>
<td>½ oz eq = 35 grams or 1.2 ounces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>¼ oz eq = 14 grams or 0.5 ounce</td>
<td>French toast</td>
<td>¼ oz eq = 18 grams or 0.6 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doughnuts, cake and yeast raised, unfrosted</td>
<td>Muffins, all except corn</td>
<td>Cake, plain, unfrosted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muffins, all except corn</td>
<td>Sweet rolls, unfrosted</td>
<td>1 oz eq = 82 grams or 2.9 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toaster pastries, unfrosted</td>
<td>Sweet rolls, frosted</td>
<td>¾ oz eq = 62 grams or 2.2 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Toaster pastries, frosted</td>
<td>½ oz eq = 41 grams or 1.5 ounce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>¼ oz eq = 21 grams or 0.7 ounce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group G</th>
<th>Group H</th>
<th>Group I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
<td><strong>Foods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foods</td>
<td>Oz eq</td>
<td>Foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownies, plain</td>
<td>1 oz eq = 125 grams or 4.4 ounces</td>
<td>Barley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cake, all varieties, frosted</td>
<td>¼ oz eq = 94 grams or 3.3 ounces</td>
<td>Breakfast cereals, cooked</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>½ oz eq = 63 grams or 2.2 ounces</td>
<td>Bulgur or cracked wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>¼ oz eq = 32 grams or 1.1 ounces</td>
<td>Cereal grains, e.g., amaranth, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Macaroni, all shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Noodles, all varieties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pasta, all shapes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ravioli, noodle only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rice, brown or enriched white</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1 Allowed at lunch in the NSLP and breakfast in the SBP. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.

2 Allowed only at lunch in the NSLP. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.

3 RTE breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).
Resources

Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

Crediting Enriched Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

Crediting Grain-based Desserts for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

Crediting Whole Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf

Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue (USDA Webinar):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/exhibit-grains-tool-rescue

Food Buying Guide Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA):

Food Buying Guide Section 4: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Grains Component (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section4_Grains.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 4: Yield Table for Grains (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section4_GrainsYieldTable.pdf

Grains Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE webpage):
Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA Webinar):

How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs – Completed Sample (USDA):

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

USDA Memo SP 05-2022: Meal Requirements Under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Questions and Answers for Program Operators Updated to Support the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Effective July 1, 2022:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/sp052022-questions-answers-program-operators

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:

Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

What’s in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE’s Training Program,
What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials
Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

What’s in a Meal Module 11: Grains Component (CSDE’s Training Program, What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials

What’s in a Meal Module 12: Whole Grain-rich Requirement (CSDE’s Training Program, What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials

What’s in a Meal Module 13: Grains Ounce Equivalents (CSDE’s Training Program, What’s in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials

Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (USDA):

When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

For more information, visit the “Grains Component for Grades K-12” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/~/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain_Oz_Eq_SN7P_grades_K-12.pdf.

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   1400 Independence Avenue, SW
   Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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