Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to reimbursable 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 CACFP adult meal patterns, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Meal Patterns for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.



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Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Definition of Breakfast Cereals

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations (21 CFR 170.3(n)(4)) define breakfast cereals as ready-to-eat (RTE) cereals (such as puffed cereals, round or flaked cereals, and granola) and instant and regular hot cereals (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). RTE breakfast cereals can be eaten as sold and are typically fortified with vitamins and minerals.

Overview of Crediting Requirements

Breakfast cereals must meet the two criteria below to credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns.

1. **A creditable grain must be the first ingredient or the cereal must be fortified.** Creditable grains are the ingredients in a grain product or recipe that count toward the grains component. They include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ. Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains.

2. **The serving must meet the limit for added sugars.** Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires that RTE and cooked breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per ounce. This limit applies to breakfast cereals as purchased. For more information refer to "Methods to Determine Added Sugars per Serving" in this document.

> CACFP facilities must maintain documentation on file to verify that all breakfast cereals meet the limit for added sugars (refer to "Storing crediting documentation" in this document").

In addition to the crediting requirements, the serving must provide the minimum required volume or weight for each CACFP meal pattern (refer to "Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals" in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Steps to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the CACFP meal patterns

Menu planners may use the steps below to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the CACFP meal patterns.

1. Does the serving meet the added sugars limit of no more than 6 grams per dry ounce?
    - Yes: Go to step 2.
    - No: The cereal is not creditable.
2. Is the first ingredient a whole grain?
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: Go to step 3.
3. Is the first ingredient an enriched grain, bran, or germ?
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: Go to step 4.
4. Does the breakfast cereal's product formulation statement (PFS) indicate that creditable grains are the primary ingredient by weight? Refer to "Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals" in this document.
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: Go to step 5.
5. Is the breakfast cereal fortified with vitamins and minerals? Refer to "Fortified breakfast cereals" in this document.
    - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
    - No: The cereal is not creditable.

To credit as a whole grain-rich (WGR) food, RTE and cooked breakfast cereals must meet additional requirements. For more information, refer to "WGR criteria for breakfast cereals" in this document.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Whole Grain-Rich (WGR) Requirement

The CACFP meal patterns require at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served to participants. The USDA's CACFP best practices recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For guidance on menu planning considerations for the WGR requirement, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

WGR criteria for breakfast cereals

The CACFP meal patterns require different WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals in group I (such as puffed cereals, flaked or round cereals, and granola) and cooked breakfast cereals in group H (such as oatmeal, cream of wheat, and farina). These groups refer to the grain groups in the USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (known as Exhibit A).

> The Exhibit A grain quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, indicates the Exhibit A ounce equivalents (oz eq) that apply to the CACFP meal patterns.

- **WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals (group I):** 1) The first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified or the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. Fortification is not required for 100 whole grain cereals.

- **WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals (group H):** Cooked breakfast cereals must meet the USDA's Rule of Three criteria for WGR foods: 1) The first ingredient is a whole grain; 2) the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable; and 3) added sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. Noncreditable grains (such as yellow corn flour, wheat flour, and soy flour) cannot be one of the first three grain ingredients. For guidance on the Rule of Three, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Steps to determine if RTE breakfast cereals (group I) are WGR

Menu planners may use the steps below to determine if cooked breakfast cereals meet the WGR criteria of the CACFP meal patterns.

1. Does the serving meet the added sugars limit of no more than 6 grams per dry ounce?
    - Yes: Go to step 2.
    - No: The cereal is not WGR.

2. Is the first ingredient a whole grain or is the cereal 100 percent whole grain (all grains are whole grains)?
    - Yes: The cereal is WGR.
    - No: Go to step 3.

3. Does the breakfast cereal's PFS indicate that whole grains are the primary ingredient by weight? Refer to "Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals" in this document.
    - Yes: The cereal is WGR.
    - No: The cereal is not WGR.



Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Steps to determine if cooked breakfast cereals (group H) are WGR

Menu planners may use the steps below to determine if cooked breakfast cereals meet the WGR criteria of the CACFP meal patterns.

1. Does the serving meet the added sugars limit of no more than 6 grams per dry ounce?
    - Yes: Go to step 2.
    - No: The cereal is not WGR.
2. Is the first ingredient a whole grain?
    - Yes: Go to step 3.
    - No: The cereal is not WGR.
3. Does the cereal have a second grain ingredient?
    - Yes: Go to step 4.
    - No: The cereal is WGR.
4. Is the second grain ingredient creditable?
    - Yes: Go to step 5.
    - No: Go to step 7.
5. Does the cereal have a third grain ingredient?
    - Yes: Go to step 6.
    - No: The cereal is WGR.
6. Is the third grain ingredient creditable?
    - Yes: The cereal is WGR.
    - No: Go to step 7.
7. Is the noncreditable grain listed after the statement, "contains 2% or less"?
    - Yes: The cereal is WGR.
    - No: The cereal is not WGR.

Methods to Determine Added Sugars per Serving

CACFP facilities may use any of the methods below to determine if breakfast cereals meet the limit for added sugars.

Method 1: Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) breakfast cereals list

A breakfast cereal listed on any state WIC Program's approved breakfast cereals list meets the limit for added sugars. WIC-approved whole-grain foods comply with the same WGR criteria as the CACFP meal patterns. The Connecticut WIC food guides are available on the Connecticut State Department of Public Health's Connecticut WIC Program Food Guide webpage. For more information, visit the USDA's Using the WIC Food Lists to Identify Grains for the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Method 2: USDA's added sugars limit chart

Common serving sizes of breakfast cereals and their corresponding limit for grams of added sugars per serving are provided on the USDA's Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage. CACFP facilities may use these charts to compare the added sugars per serving in the Nutrition Facts label with the added sugars limit for the specific serving weight of cereal.

Method 3: CSDE's crediting worksheets for breakfast cereals

The CSDE's crediting worksheets for breakfast cereals help CACFP facilities determine if breakfast cereals meet the CACFP crediting requirements, including the limit for added sugars. Menu planners enter the cereal's added sugars per serving and serving weight (ounces) and the worksheet calculates the grams of added sugars per ounce.

- Worksheet for Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Worksheet for Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

These worksheets are available under "Breakfast Cereals" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage.

Method 4: Calculation of grams of added sugars per serving

The steps below show how to calculate the grams of added sugars per serving based on the ounces or grams of the breakfast cereal's serving size. CACFP facilities may use either calculation method to document that a breakfast cereal meets the limit for added sugars.

Steps for serving size in ounces

A breakfast cereal meets the limit for added sugars if it does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

1. List the grams (g) of added sugars per serving from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 12 grams
2. List the serving size in ounces (oz) from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 2 ounces
3. Divide the grams of added sugars per serving (from step 1) by the ounces of the serving size (from step 2).
    - 12 grams divided by 2 ounces = **6 grams** of added sugars per ounce
4. Does the serving meet the limit of no more than 6 grams of added sugars per ounce?

    ☑ Yes
    ☐ No

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size:	1½ cups (2 ounces)
Servig per Container:	1
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	220
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 3 g	4%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 320mg	14%
Total Carbohydrates 47g	17%
Dietary Fiber 3g	10%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 12g Added Sugars	23%
Protein 3 g	

This cereal meets the limit for added sugars. To credit in the CACFP meal patterns, this cereal must also meet the applicable meal pattern requirements for creditable grains and provide the required weight or volume (refer to "Overview of Crediting Requirements" and "Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals" in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Steps for serving size in grams

A breakfast cereal meets the limit for added sugars if it does not exceed 0.212 gram of added sugars per gram of cereal. This is the gram equivalent of no more than 6 grams of added sugars per ounce (28.35 grams).

1. List the grams (g) of added sugars per serving from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 4 grams
2. List the serving size in grams from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 28 grams
3. Divide the grams of added sugars per serving (from step 1) by the grams of the serving size (from step 2).
    - 4 grams divided by 28 grams = **0.143 gram** of added sugars per gram of cereal
4. Does the serving meet the limit of no more than 0.212 gram of added sugars per gram of cereal?

    ☑ Yes
    ☐ No

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size:	¾ cup (28 g)
Servig per Container:	**about 1**
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	**110**
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0.5 g	1%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 140mg	2%
Potassium 35mg	6%
Total Carbohydrates 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	11%
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 4g Added Sugars	8%
Protein 3 g	

This cereal meets the limit for added sugars. To credit in the CACFP meal patterns, this cereal must also meet the requirements for creditable grains and provide the required weight or volume (refer to "Creditable grains" and "Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals" in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Creditable Breakfast Cereals

The three types of creditable RTE and cooked breakfast cereals for the CACFP include WGR breakfast cereals, enriched breakfast cereals, and fortified breakfast cereals. Crediting guidance and examples for each type of breakfast cereal are indicated below.

> Menu planners must check the ingredients statement and Nutrition Facts label to determine if breakfast cereals meet these crediting criteria. The CSDE recommends checking added sugars first, before looking at the cereal's creditable grains. Breakfast cereals that exceed the limit for added sugars do not credit in the CACFP.

WGR breakfast cereals

WGR breakfast cereals include 100 percent whole grain cereals and cereals that contain a blend of at least 50 whole grains with enriched grains. Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel (starchy endosperm, fiber-rich bran, and nutrient-rich germ) after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. For information on identifying whole grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Breakfast cereals that are 100 percent whole grain will list a whole grain as the first ingredient and contain only whole grains. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a 100 percent whole grain cereal.

- Ingredients: Whole grain rolled oats, sugar, natural flavors, salt.

  This cooked cereal is 100 percent whole grain because the first and only grain ingredient (whole grain rolled oats) is a whole grain.

Enriched breakfast cereals

Enriched breakfast cereals contain five vitamins and minerals added in amounts required by the FDA to replace some of the nutrients lost during processing. The enrichment nutrients include thiamin (vitamin B_1, thiamin mononitrate, or thiamin hydrochloride), riboflavin (vitamin B_2); niacin (vitamin B_3 or niacinamide), folic acid (folate), and iron (reduced iron, ferrous sulfate, or ferric orthophosphate).

A breakfast cereal is enriched if the food is labeled as "enriched" or an enriched grain is the first ingredient. The ingredients statement below shows an example of an enriched breakfast cereal.

- Ingredients: Puffed rice, ferrous sulfate (a source of iron), niacinamide, citric acid, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid.

  This cereal is enriched because the ingredients statement lists the five enrichment nutrients (ferrous sulfate, niacinamide, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, and folic acid).

For information on identifying enriched grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Enriched Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Fortified Breakfast Cereals

Fortified breakfast cereals contain nutrients added by the manufacturer that were not originally present, or that are at higher levels than originally present. Manufacturers may choose which additional nutrients to use for fortification. Fortified breakfast cereals typically contain the five enrichment nutrients plus other vitamins and minerals that do not exist naturally in grains.

Different cereal brands may list different fortification nutrients. The USDA does not specify a minimum number of nutrients or a minimum percentage for the level of fortification for breakfast cereals in the Child Nutrition Programs. A fortified breakfast cereal is not required to be enriched.

A breakfast cereal is fortified if the food is labeled as "fortified" or the ingredients statement lists the vitamins and minerals added to the product. These nutrients are typically listed after "Vitamins and Minerals."

The ingredients statements below show some examples of fortified breakfast cereals.

- Ingredients: Milled corn, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Iron, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate, ascorbic acid), niacinamide, vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B12.

  This cereal is fortified because it contains added nutrients (listed after "Vitamins and Minerals") but it is not WGR because milled corn is not a whole grain.

- Ingredients: Whole-grain wheat, raisins, wheat bran, sugar, brown sugar syrup, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Potassium chloride, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin B_6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), zinc oxide, vitamin B_2 (riboflavin), vitamin B_1 (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, folic acid, vitamin D, vitamin B_{12}.

  This cereal is fortified because it contains added nutrients (listed after "Vitamins and Minerals"). It is WGR because whole-grain wheat is the first ingredient.

If the ingredients statement does not list any vitamins and minerals, the breakfast cereal is not fortified. Breakfast cereals that are not fortified must contain a creditable grain as the first ingredient (or the greatest ingredient by weight).

If a creditable grain is not the first ingredient, but the cereal contains more than one creditable grain, the CACFP facility must obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) from the manufacturer. The PFS must indicate that the combined weight of all creditable grains is the greatest ingredient by weight. For more information, refer to "Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals" in this document.

Bran and Germ

Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains. Bran is the seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Some examples include oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran. Germ (such as wheat germ) is the vitamin-rich embryo of the grain kernel. The ingredients statement below shows an example of a bran breakfast cereal.

- Ingredients: Wheat bran, sugar, malt flavor, contains 2% or less of salt. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Calcium carbonate, vitamin C (sodium ascorbate and ascorbic acid), reduced iron, niacinamide, vitamin B_6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B_2 (riboflavin), folic acid, vitamin B_1 (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B_{12}, vitamin D.

  This cereal is fortified because it contains added nutrients (listed after "Vitamins and Minerals") but it is not WGR because wheat bran credits the same as enriched grains.

Examples of Evaluating Commercial Breakfast Cereals

This section contains five examples of how to evaluate commercial RTE and cooked breakfast cereals for compliance with the CACFP crediting and WGR criteria.

- Whole grains are indicated in **bold** text in the cereal's ingredients statement (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*).

- Noncreditable grains (such as wheat flour and yellow corn flour) are indicated in *italicized* text in the cereal's ingredients statement. Depending on the type of breakfast cereal, noncreditable grains may be included or ignored when determining WGR compliance.

    - **Cooked breakfast cereals (group H), e.g., oatmeal:** Menu planners must include noncreditable grains when reviewing cooked breakfast cereals for compliance with the Rule of Three WGR criteria, unless they are listed after the statement "contains 2% or less."

    - **RTE breakfast cereals (group I):** Menu planners can ignore all noncreditable grains if a whole grain is the first ingredient and the cereal is fortified.

Summary of crediting criteria

- Cooked breakfast cereals are creditable if: 1) the first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

- Cooked breakfast cereals are WGR if: 1) the first ingredient is a whole grain and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

- RTE breakfast cereals are creditable if: 1) the first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

- RTE breakfast cereals are WGR if: 1) the first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, **or** the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

The serving of a creditable or WGR breakfast cereal must provide the required weight or volume (refer to "Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals" in this document).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Product 1: Spiced instant oatmeal (commercial cooked breakfast cereal)

Ingredients: **Whole-grain rolled oats**, sugar, salt, cinnamon and other spices, calcium carbonate, guar gum, caramel color, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin A palmitate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, thiamin mononitrate, folic acid.

Part 1: Grain ingredients

A. **First ingredient:** Whole-grain rolled oats
B. **Second grain ingredient:** None
C. **Third grain ingredient:** None
D. **Fortification nutrients:** Calcium carbonate, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin A palmitate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, thiamin mononitrate, folic acid.

Part 2: CACFP crediting criteria for group H (cooked breakfast cereals)

Crediting requirements: 1) The first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Read the ingredients statement and check all that apply.

☑ The first ingredient is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1A above).
☑ The cereal is fortified (refer to Part 1D above).

This cooked breakfast cereal is creditable if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Part 3: CACFP Rule of Three WGR criteria for group H (cooked breakfast cereals)

WGR requirements: The first ingredient is a whole grain and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable.

1. The first ingredient is a whole grain (refer to Part 1A above).
   ☑ Yes ☐ No
2. The second grain ingredient (if any) is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1B above).
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☑ Not applicable (no second grain ingredient or can be ignored)
3. The third grain ingredient (if any) is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1C above).
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☑ Not applicable (no third grain ingredient or can be ignored)

This cooked breakfast cereal is 100 percent whole grain and credits as a WGR food if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Product 2: Farina hot cereal (commercial cooked breakfast cereal

Ingredients: *Wheat farina*, calcium carbonate, ferric orthophosphate (source of iron), niacinamide (vitamin B3), pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), folic acid, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1) riboflavin (vitamin B2).

Part 1: Grain ingredients

A. **First ingredient:** Wheat farina (noncreditable grain)
B. **Second grain ingredient:** None
C. **Third grain ingredient:** None
D. **Fortification nutrients:** Calcium carbonate, ferric orthophosphate (source of iron), niacinamide (vitamin B3), pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamin B6), folic acid, thiamin mononitrate (vitamin B1) riboflavin (vitamin B2)

Part 2: CACFP crediting criteria for group H (cooked breakfast cereals)

Crediting requirements: 1) The first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Read the ingredients statement and check all that apply.

☐ The first ingredient is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1A above).
☑ The cereal is fortified (refer to Part 1D above).

This cooked breakfast cereal is creditable if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Part 3: CACFP Rule of Three WGR criteria for group H (cooked breakfast cereals)

WGR requirements: The first ingredient is a whole grain and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable.

1. The first ingredient is a whole grain (refer to Part 1A above).
   ☐ Yes ☑ No
2. The second grain ingredient (if any) is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1B above).
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☑ Not applicable (no second grain ingredient or can be ignored)
3. The third grain ingredient (if any) is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1C above).
   ☐ Yes ☐ No ☑ Not applicable (no third grain ingredient or can be ignored)

This cooked breakfast cereal does not contain any whole grains. It is not WGR but may credit as an enriched grain if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Product 3: Whole-grain oat cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)

Ingredients: **Whole-grain oat flour**, sugar, *corn flour,* **whole-wheat flour**, *rice flour*, salt, calcium carbonate, disodium phosphate, reduced iron, niacinamide, zinc oxide, BHT (a preservative), yellow 5, yellow 6, thiamin mononitrate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, folic acid.

Part 1: Grain ingredients

A. **First ingredient:** Whole-grain oat flour
B. **Fortification nutrients:** Calcium carbonate, niacinamide, reduced iron, vitamin A palmitate, pyridoxine hydrochloride, riboflavin, thiamin mononitrate, folic acid.

Part 2: CACFP crediting criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)

Crediting requirements: 1) The first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Read the ingredients statement and check all that apply.

- ☑ The first ingredient is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1A above).
- ☑ The cereal is fortified (refer to Part 1B above).

This RTE breakfast cereal is creditable if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Part 3: CACFP WGR criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)

WGR requirements: 1) The first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, **or** the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) the cereal meets the limit for added sugars. Read the ingredients statement and check all that apply.

- ☑ A whole grain is the first ingredient (refer to Part 1A above) and the cereal is fortified (refer to Part 1B above).
- ☐ The cereal is 100 percent whole grain (all grains are whole grains).

This RTE breakfast cereal credits as a WGR food if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Product 4: Crispy rice cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)

Ingredients: *Rice*, sugar, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. BHT added to packaging for freshness. Vitamins and Minerals: Iron, vitamin C (ascorbic acid), vitamin E (alpha tocopherol acetate), niacinamide, vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride), folic acid, vitamin B12, vitamin D.

Part 1: Grain ingredients

A. **First ingredient:** Rice (noncreditable grain)
B. **Fortification nutrients:** Iron, vitamin C (ascorbic acid), vitamin E (alpha tocopherol acetate), niacinamide, vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B2 (riboflavin), vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride), folic acid, vitamin B12, vitamin D

Part 2: CACFP crediting criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)

Crediting requirements: 1) The first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Read the ingredients statement and check all that apply.

- ☐ The first ingredient is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1A above).
- ☑ The cereal is fortified (refer to Part 1B above).

This RTE breakfast cereal is creditable if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Part 3: CACFP WGR criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)

WGR requirements: 1) The first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, **or** the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) the cereal meets the limit for added sugars. Read the ingredients statement and check all that apply.

- ☐ A whole grain is the first ingredient (refer to Part 1A above) and the cereal is fortified (refer to Part 1B above).
- ☐ The cereal is 100 percent whole grain (all grains are whole grains).

This RTE breakfast cereal does not contain any whole grains and is not WGR.

Product 5: Crunchy wheat cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)

Ingredients: **Whole-grain wheat**, sugar, *rice flour, oat fiber*, sunflower oil, dextrose, molasses, baking soda, sea salt.

Part 1: Grain ingredients

A. **First ingredient:** Whole-grain wheat
B. **Fortification nutrients:** None

Part 2: CACFP crediting criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)

Crediting requirements: 1) The first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. Read the ingredients statement and check all that apply.

- ☑ The first ingredient is a creditable grain (refer to Part 1A above).
- ☐ The cereal is fortified (refer to Part 1B above).

This RTE breakfast cereal is creditable if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Part 3: CACFP WGR criteria for group I (RTE breakfast cereals)

WGR requirements: 1) The first ingredient is a whole grain and the cereal is fortified, **or** the cereal is 100 percent whole grain; and 2) the cereal meets the limit for added sugars. Read the ingredients statement and check all that apply.

- ☐ A whole grain is the first ingredient (refer to Part 1A above) and the cereal is fortified (refer to Part 1B above).
- ☑ The cereal is 100 percent whole grain (all grains are whole grains).

This RTE breakfast cereal is 100 percent whole grain and credits as a WGR food if the serving does not exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals

CACFP facilities must be able to document that all breakfast cereals served in reimbursable meals and snacks meet the crediting requirements for the grains component. A PFS from the manufacturer is required if the product's ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if the product meets the crediting or WGR criteria. For guidance on when a PFS is required and the information it must include, refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

> The USDA requires that CACFP facilities must verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the breakfast cereal in reimbursable meals and snacks.

CACFP facilities must also maintain documentation on file to verify that all breakfast cereals meet the limit for added sugars.

Guidance for PFS forms

For information on the requirements for PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*, and USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: *Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*. Additional information and resources are available on the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

For guidance on reviewing PFS forms, visit the USDA's Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement webpage. Guidance on how to review a grain PFS is available in the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Training on the documentation requirements and PFS forms is available in Bite Size Module 7: Introduction to Crediting Documentation and Bite Size Module 9: Product Formulation Statements of the CSDE's training program, *Bite Size: Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns.*

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Storing crediting documentation

CACFP facilities must maintain all PFS forms and other crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the CACFP. This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the Administrative Review of the CACFP. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Records Retention Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*.

Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals

Cooked breakfast cereals (regular and instant) are in group H and cold RTE breakfast cereals are in group I of the USDA's Exhibit A chart. The required quantities for RTE and cooked breakfast cereals are in oz eq. The minimum amount that toward the grains component is ¼ oz eq.

Cereal grains in group H (e.g., oatmeal) typically credit based on the cooked serving, but menu planners may choose to use the dry uncooked weight. The serving for RTE cereals in group I is based on weight or volume, whichever is less. If the appropriate volume of cereal weighs less than 1 ounce (28 grams), it still credits as 1 oz eq. For example, 1 cup of flaked cereal that weighs 26 grams credits as 1 oz eq.

The chart below shows the required CACFP meal pattern servings for ½ oz eq and 1 oz eq.

Exhibit A group	Type of cereal	½ oz eq =	1 oz eq =
H	Cooked hot	¼ cup cooked or 14 grams (½ ounce) dry	½ cup cooked or 28 grams (1 ounce) dry
I	RTE flakes or rounds	½ cup	1 cup
I	RTE puffed	¾ cup	1¼ cups
I	RTE granola	⅛ cup	¼ cup

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels such as wheat berries, and hard chunks (such as granola) may be choking hazards for young children. Consider children's ages and developmental readiness when deciding what types of breakfast cereals to offer in CACFP menus and modify foods and menus as appropriate. 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 Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/accepting_processed_product_documentation_cacfp.pdf

Bite Size Module 7: Introduction to Crediting Documentation (CSDE's Training Program, Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module7

Bite Size Module 9: Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's Training Program, Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module9

Bite Size Module 14: Grains Component (CSDE's Training Program, Meeting the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Patterns):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-for-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/bite-size-meal-pattern-training#module14

CACFP Best Practices (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/grain_calculation_cacfp_oz_eq.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/tips-evaluating-pfs

Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/breakfast-cereals-lower-sugar

Connecticut WIC Program Food Guide (Connecticut State Department of Public Health webpage):
https://connecticut.wicresources.org/food-guide.html

Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs

Crediting Enriched Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_enriched_grains_cacfp.pdf

Crediting Whole Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/credit_whole_grains_cacfp.pdf

Exhibit A Grains Tool of the Food Buying Guide (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg/webtool

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

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_cacfp.pdf

Grains Component (CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-the-child-and-adult-care-food-program/grains

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/wgr_requirement_cacfp.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/product-formulation-statements

Records Retention Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/forms/records_retention_cacfp.pdf

USDA Final Rule: Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (89 FR 31962):
https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/child-nutrition-programs-meal-patterns-consistent-with-the-2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-for

USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation

Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_product_formulation_statements_cacfp.pdf

Using the WIC Food Lists to Identify Grains for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/meal-pattern-training-worksheets/wic-lists-grains

When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_cacfp.pdf

Worksheet for Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/.sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/worksheet_credit_cooked_breakfast_cereals_cacfp.pdf

Worksheet for Crediting Ready-to-eat (RTE) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/worksheet_credit_rte_ breakfast_cereals_cacfp.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in the Child and Adult Care Food Program webpage or contact the CACFP 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/cacfp/crediting/credit_cereals_cacfp.pdf.

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Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

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