

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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.



Contents

Definition of Breakfast Cereals	3
Overview of Crediting Requirements	3
Steps to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the CACFP meal patterns	3
Limit for Added Sugars	4
Methods to Determine Added Sugars	4
Method 1: WIC breakfast cereals list	4
Method 2: USDA's added sugars limit chart	4
Method 3: Calculation of grams of sugars per serving	5
Steps for serving size in ounces	5
Steps for serving size in grams	6
Creditable Grains	7
WGR breakfast cereals	7
Enriched breakfast cereals	8
Fortified breakfast cereals	8
Crediting bran and germ	10
Crediting Documentation for Breakfast Cereals	11
WGR Requirement	12
CACFP WGR criteria for breakfast cereals	12
Steps to determine if RTE breakfast cereals (group I) are WGR	13
Steps to determine if cooked breakfast cereals (group H) are WGR	14

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

Examples of Evaluating Commercial Breakfast Cereals	15
Crediting worksheets for breakfast cereals	15
Product 1: Spiced instant oatmeal (commercial cooked breakfast cereal)	16
Product 2: Farina hot cereal (commercial cooked breakfast cereal)	17
Product 3: Whole-grain oat cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)	18
Product 4: Crispy rice cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)	19
Product 5: Crunchy wheat cereal (commercial RTE breakfast cereal)	20
Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals	21
Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children	21
Resources	21



Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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 two criteria to credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns: 1) a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ) must be the first ingredient or the cereal must be fortified; and 2) sugars cannot exceed 6 grams per dry ounce. Creditable breakfast cereals may be served as the grains component at any meal or afterschool snack.

The CSDE recommends that CACFP facilities check the cereal's sugars content first, before determining if the cereal contains creditable grains. Breakfast cereals that exceed the sugars limit do not credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

Steps to identify creditable breakfast cereals for the CACFP meal patterns

The steps below show how to identify breakfast cereals that credit in the CACFP meal patterns. To credit as a whole grain-rich (WGR) food, breakfast cereals must meet additional requirements (refer to "[WGR Requirement](#)" in this document).

1. Does the breakfast cereal meet the sugars limit (refer to "[Limit for Added Sugars](#)" in this document) or is the breakfast cereal on the list of breakfast cereals for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)?
 - Yes: Go to step 2.
 - No: The cereal is not creditable.
2. Is the first ingredient a creditable grain (whole, enriched, bran, or germ)?
 - Yes: The cereal is creditable.
 - No: Go to step 3.
3. 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 4.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

4. 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 WGR food, RTE and cooked breakfast cereals must meet additional requirements (refer to “[WGR Requirement](#)” in this document).

Limit for Added Sugars

Effective October 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), requires a limit for added sugars in breakfast cereals in the CACFP. RTE and cooked breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. This limit applies to breakfast cereals as purchased.

Methods to Determine Added Sugars

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

Method 1: WIC breakfast cereals list

A breakfast cereal meets the added sugars limit if it is listed on any state WIC Program’s approved breakfast cereals list. 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 [Approved Food Guide](#) webpage.

Method 2: USDA’s added sugars limit chart

Common serving sizes of breakfast cereals and the corresponding limit for grams of added sugars per serving are provided in the USDA’s resource, [Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#). 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.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

Method 3: Calculation of grams of 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 added sugars limit.

CACFP facilities may also use the CSDE's [Worksheet for Crediting Cooked Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) or [Worksheet for Crediting Ready-to-eat \(RTE\) Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) to determine if a breakfast cereal meets the limit for total 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 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 meal patterns for the school nutrition programs, 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 Programs

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 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 meal patterns for the school nutrition programs, 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 Programs

Creditable Grains

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.

Breakfast cereals must meet the following criteria 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; and 2) the cereal cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document).

Menu planners must check the ingredients statement and Nutrition Facts label to determine if breakfast cereals meet these crediting criteria. The CSDE recommends checking the cereal's sugar content first, before determining if the cereal contains creditable grains. Breakfast cereals that exceed the sugars limit do not credit in CACFP meals and snacks.

The three types of creditable RTE and cooked breakfast cereals for the school nutrition programs include whole grain-rich (WGR) breakfast cereals, enriched breakfast cereals, and fortified breakfast cereals. Crediting guidance for each type of breakfast cereal is summarized below.

WGR breakfast cereals

WGR breakfast cereals include cereals that are 100 percent whole grain and cereals that contain a blend of whole grains (at least 50 percent) and 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.

The ingredients statement below shows an example of a whole-grain breakfast cereal.

- **Example of 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. To credit as the grains component, this breakfast cereal must also comply with the added sugars limit.

For information on identifying whole grains, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Whole Grains in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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 B₁, thiamin mononitrate, or thiamin hydrochloride);
- riboflavin (vitamin B₂); niacin (vitamin B₃ 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.

- **Example of 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). To credit as the grains component, this breakfast cereal must also comply with the added sugars limit.

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 have 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.”

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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

- **Example 1: Fortified breakfast cereal**

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 the statement, “Vitamins and Minerals.” It is not WGR because milled corn is not a whole grain. To credit as the grains component, this breakfast cereal must also comply with the added sugars limit.

- **Example 2: Fortified breakfast cereal**

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 B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), zinc oxide, 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.” It is WGR because whole-grain wheat is the first ingredient, and the cereal is fortified. To credit as the grains component, this breakfast cereal must also comply with the added sugars limit.

If the ingredients statement does not list any vitamins and minerals, the breakfast cereal is not fortified. To credit as the grains component, 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 breakfast 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.

Fortified RTE breakfast cereals that contain a whole grain as the first ingredient credit as WGR foods in the CACFP meal patterns.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

Crediting bran and germ

Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains in all school nutrition programs. Bran (such as oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran) is the seed husk or outer coating of cereal grains such as wheat, rye, and oats. Germ (such as wheat germ) is the vitamin-rich embryo of the grain kernel.

The ingredients statement below shows an example of a breakfast cereal that contains wheat bran as the first ingredient.

- **Example of bran 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 B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B₂ (riboflavin), folic acid, vitamin B₁ (thiamin hydrochloride), vitamin A palmitate, vitamin B₁₂, vitamin D.

This cereal is fortified because it contains added nutrients listed after the statement, “Vitamins and Minerals.” However, it is not WGR because wheat bran is not a whole grain; it credits the same as enriched grains. To credit as the grains component, this cereal must comply with the added sugars limit.



Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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.

When a PFS is required, the CACFP facility must obtain and verify the PFS for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the breakfast cereal in reimbursable meals and snacks. 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*](#).

CACFP facilities must maintain all crediting documentation on file in accordance with the records retention requirements for the CACFP (refer to the CSDE's [*Records Retention Requirements for the Child and Adult Care Food Program*](#)). This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

For more information on 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 the USDA's resources, [*USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements*](#) and [*Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement*](#).

Additional guidance is available on the CSDE's [*Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs*](#) webpage. Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms is available in Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products of the CSDE's training program, [*What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*](#).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

WGR Requirement

The CACFP meal patterns require at least one serving of WGR grains per day. 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](#).

CACFP 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). Groups H and I refer to the USDA's chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#).

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. Groups F and G (grain-based desserts) are not included because grain-based desserts do not credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns.

To be WGR, breakfast cereals must meet the sugars limit (refer to "[Limit for Added Sugars](#)" in this document) and comply with the requirements below.

- **WGR criteria for RTE breakfast cereals (group I):** The first ingredient must be a whole grain and the cereal must be fortified, or the cereal must be 100 percent whole grain. Fortification is not required for RTE breakfast cereals that are 100 percent whole grain.
- **WGR criteria for cooked breakfast cereals (group H):** Cooked breakfast cereals must CACFP meal patterns the USDA's Rule of Three criteria for WGR foods. The Rule of Three requires that the first ingredient must be a whole grain and the next two grain ingredients (if any) must be whole grain, enriched, bran, or germ. 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](#).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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

The steps below show how to determine if cooked breakfast cereals meet the WGR criteria in the CACFP meal patterns.

1. Does the breakfast cereal meet the sugars limit (refer to "[Limit for Added Sugars](#)" in this document) or is the breakfast cereal on the list of breakfast cereals for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)?
 - 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)? Refer to "[Whole-grain breakfast cereals](#)" in this document.
 - 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 Programs

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

The steps below show how to determine if cooked breakfast cereals meet the WGR criteria in the CACFP meal patterns.

1. Does the breakfast cereal meet the sugars limit (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document) or is the breakfast cereal on the list of breakfast cereals for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)?
 - Yes: Go to step 2.
 - No: The cereal is not WGR.
2. Is the first ingredient a whole grain? Refer to “[Whole-grain breakfast cereals](#)” in this document.
 - 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 "contains 2% or less"? Refer to “[Noncreditable grains](#)” in this document).
 - Yes: The cereal is WGR.
 - No: The cereal is not WGR.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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 for breakfast cereals. Whole grains are indicated in **bold** text (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. Depending on the type of breakfast cereal, noncreditable grains are included or ignored when determining WGR compliance.

- **Cooked breakfast cereals (group H), e.g., oatmeal:** Menu planners must include noncreditable grains when reviewing a cooked breakfast cereal for compliance with the CACFP Rule of Three WGR criteria, unless they are listed after the statement “contains 2% or less” or in the sublisting for a non-grain ingredient such as a dough conditioner.
- **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.

Cooked breakfast cereals are creditable if: 1) the first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the cereal meets the added sugars limit (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document). Cooked breakfast cereals are WGR if the first ingredient is a whole grain and the next two grain ingredients (if any) are creditable.

RTE breakfast cereals are creditable if: 1) the first ingredient is a creditable grain or the cereal is fortified; and 2) the cereal meets the added sugars limit (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document). 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 cereal meets the added sugars limit.

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 worksheets for breakfast cereals

The CSDE's crediting worksheets for breakfast cereals help CACFP facilities determine if a breakfast cereal meets the CACFP crediting requirements.

- 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.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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 cereal meets the added sugars limit (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document). 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 meets the added sugars limit. The menu planner must use the Nutrition Facts label to determine if this cereal meets the added sugars limit.

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 meets the added sugars limit. The menu planner must use the Nutrition Facts label to determine if this cereal meets the added sugars limit.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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 cereal meets the added sugars limit (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document). 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 meets the added sugars limit. The menu planner must use the Nutrition Facts label to determine if this cereal meets the added sugars limit.

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 meets the added sugars limit (refer to Part 2 above).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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 cereal meets the added sugars limit (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document). 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 meets the added sugars limit. The menu planner must use the Nutrition Facts label to determine if this cereal meets the added sugars limit.

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 added sugars limit. 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 meets the added sugars limit. The menu planner must use the Nutrition Facts label to determine if this cereal meets the added sugars limit.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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 cereal meets the added sugars limit (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document). 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 meets the added sugars limit. The menu planner must use the Nutrition Facts label to determine if this cereal meets the added sugars limit.

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 added sugars limit. 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. It is not WGR but may credit as an enriched grain if meets the added sugars limit (refer to Part 2 above).

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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 cereal meets the added sugars limit (refer to “[Limit for Added Sugars](#)” in this document). 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 meets the added sugars limit. The menu planner must use the Nutrition Facts label to determine if this cereal meets the added sugars limit.

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 added sugars limit. 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 meets the added sugars limit. The menu planner must use the Nutrition Facts label to determine if this cereal meets the added sugars limit.

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals

The required quantities for RTE and cooked breakfast cereals are in oz eq. The minimum amount that toward the grains component is $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq. The chart below shows the required CACFP meal pattern servings for $\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq and 1 oz eq.

Exhibit A group	Type of cereal	$\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq	1 oz eq
H	Cooked hot	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 14 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked or 28 grams (1 ounce) dry
I	RTE flakes or rounds	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	1 cup
I	RTE puffed	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups
I	RTE granola	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup

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 Meal Pattern Training (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-child-care-programs/related-resources#BiteSize>

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

Breakfast Cereals (“Grains” section of 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#BreakfastCereals>

Calculating the Added Sugars Limit for Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/calculating-sugar-limits-breakfast-cereals>

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp_CACFP.pdf

Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/breakfast-cereals-lower-sugar>

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: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.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/guide_wgr_requirement_cacfp.pdf

How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/identify_creditable_grains_cacfp.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Programs

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.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

http://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/using_product_formulation_statements_cacfp.pdf

What's in a Meal Module 8: Meal Pattern Documentation for Crediting Commercial Processed Products (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs:

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

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 Programs

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.

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.