

Crediting Deli Meats 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 crediting foods, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) webpages. For information on the CACFP adult meal patterns and crediting foods, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages.



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Crediting Deli Meats in the CACFP

Overview of Crediting Requirements

Deli meats (such as turkey, chicken, ham, roast beef, salami, and bologna) credit as the meat/meat alternates (MMA) component in the CACFP meal patterns for children and the CACFP adult meal patterns. The amount that provides 1 ounce of the MMA component depends on the product's ingredients and varies greatly between different brands and types.

- **100 percent meat:** Products that are 100 percent meat without added liquids (e.g., water or broth), binders, and extenders credit on an ounce-per-ounce basis (actual serving weight). For example, 1 ounce of deli meat that is 100 percent meat credits as 1 ounce of the MMA component.
- **Added liquids, binders, and extenders:** Products that contain added liquids, binders, and extenders credit based on the percentage of meat in the product formula. A 1-ounce serving of these products does not credit as 1 ounce of the MMA component. The crediting depends on the amount of meat per serving, excluding added ingredients. For example, to credit as 1 ounce of the MMA component might require 1.6 ounces of one brand of deli meat and 2.3 ounces of another brand of deli meat.

CACFP facilities must ensure that the serving of deli meat provides the required amount of the MMA component for CACFP meals and snacks.

Required Crediting Documentation

CACFP facilities must obtain appropriate crediting documentation for all deli meats that contain added liquids, binders, and extenders. Acceptable documentation for deli meats includes:

- the original Child Nutrition (CN) label from the product carton or a photocopy or photograph of the CN label shown attached to the original product carton; or
- a product formulation statement (PFS) signed by an official of the manufacturer stating the amount of each meal pattern component contained in one serving of the product.

CACFP facilities must obtain a PFS for all commercial processed products that are not CN labeled. Crediting documentation must be maintained on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the CACFP.

Deli meats without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in the CACFP meal patterns.

For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [*Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*](#), [*Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels 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 [*Product Formulation Statement \(Product Analysis\) for Meat/Meat Alternate Products*](#) and [*Tips for Evaluating a*](#)

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Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement. Additional guidance is available in the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Child Care Programs](#)” or “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#)” sections of the CSDE’s CACFP webpages.

Liquids, Binders, and Extenders

Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders cannot credit as the MMA component without a CN label or PFS that states the amount of the MMA component per serving. Menu planners must review product labels and ingredients to determine if commercial products contain added liquids, binders, and extenders. The ingredients statements below show some examples (in *italics*) of turkey breast products that contain added liquid, binders, and extenders.

- Ingredients: Turkey breast, *water*, *modified cornstarch*, contains less than 2% of sodium lactate, salt, sugar, sodium phosphates, *carrageenan*, natural flavor, sodium diacetate, potassium chloride, sodium ascorbate, sodium nitrite, caramel color.
- Ingredients: Turkey breast meat, *turkey broth*, contains 2% or less salt, sugar, *carrageenan*, sodium phosphate, sodium acetate, sodium diacetate, flavoring.

Table 1 lists examples of ingredients that are binders and extenders.

Table 1. Examples of binders and extenders ¹		
Agar-agar	Dried milk	Soy flour (APP) ²
Algin (a mixture of sodium alginate, calcium carbonate and calcium gluconate/lactic acid)	Dry or dried whey	Soy protein concentrate (APP) ²
	Enzyme (rennet) treated calcium-reduced dried skim milk and calcium lactate	Starchy vegetable flour
Bread	Gums, vegetable	Tapioca dextrin
Calcium-reduced dried skim milk	Isolated soy protein (APP) ²	Vegetable starch
Carrageenan	Locust bean gum	Wheat gluten
Carboxymethyl cellulose (cellulose gum)	Methyl cellulose	Whey
Cereal	Modified food starch	Whey protein concentrate (APP) ²
	Reduced lactose whey	Xanthan gum
	Reduced minerals	
	Sodium caseinate	

¹ Binders and extenders are defined by the USDA’s regulations for the Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) (9 CFR 318.7).

² Products may contain these ingredients if they meet the USDA’s requirements for alternate protein products (APPs). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

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USDA's CACFP Best Practices for MMA

The USDA's CACFP best practices for the MMA component recommend serving only lean meats, nuts, and legumes; limiting processed meats to no more than one serving per week; and serving only natural cheeses and choosing low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses. For more information, refer to [USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: *Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP*](#).

Developing Recipes for Deli Meats

Different brands and types of deli meat credit differently. To ensure proper crediting, CACFP sponsors should develop recipes for menu items that contain deli meats, such as sandwiches and other entrees. These recipes should indicate the deli meat's contribution to the MMA component based on a specific weight of a specific brand. For ease of portioning, the weight of the deli meat in the recipe should be rounded up to the nearest measure. For example, the recipe should list 1.2 ounces as 1.25 ounces and 1.6 ounces as 1.75 ounces.



If a CACFP facility makes the same food item using different brands of deli meats that credit differently, the recipe should include the required weight of each brand. For example, if a center makes a turkey sandwich using either ABC brand turkey breast or XYZ brand turkey breast, the recipe should include the required weight of ABC brand and the required weight of XYZ brand. Alternatively, the CACFP facility could develop a separate turkey sandwich recipe for each brand of deli meat.

The CSDE encourages CACFP facilities to use standardized recipes to ensure accurate crediting information. For information on standardized recipes, refer to section 2 of the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Child Care Programs](#) or [Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#). Additional guidance is available in the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's webpages, [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#).

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Comparing Cost

Determining the cost per ounce of MMA helps CACFP facilities decide if the required meal pattern serving for a specific brand of deli meat is reasonable and cost effective. The deli product with the lowest cost per pound might not be the least expensive. Considering the cost per ounce of the MMA component instead of the cost per ounce of meat provides a more accurate reflection of the product's cost in CACFP meals and snacks. Table 2 shows a sample cost comparison of two deli meat products.

Table 2. Cost comparison of sample deli meats				
Food item	Price per pound	Price per ounce	Amount to provide 1 ounce of MMA ¹	Cost of 1 ounce of MMA
Sample product A: Deli meat with liquids, binders, and extenders	\$4.99	\$.31	1.7 ounces ²	\$.53
Sample product B: Deli meat without liquids, binders, and extenders	\$6.99	\$.44	1 ounce	\$.44
<p>¹ Products with added liquids, binders, and extenders require a CN label or PFS to document the amount of the MMA component per serving (refer to the CSDE's resources, Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program).</p> <p>² This information would be obtained from the product's PFS.</p>				

Sample product A (deli meat with liquids, binders, and extenders) costs \$2 less per pound than sample product B (deli meat without liquids, binders, and extenders). However, when the menu planner compares the cost based on 1 ounce of the MMA component, a serving of sample product A costs 53 cents and a serving of sample product B costs 44 cents. Sample product A requires almost twice the weight of sample product B to provide 1 ounce of the MMA component, due to the added liquids, binders, and extenders.



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Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Large chunks or cubes of deli meats are choking hazards. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding how to offer deli meats and modify foods and CACFP 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 2: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Related-Resources#BiteSize>

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Credit_Commercial_MMA_CACFP.pdf

Crediting Commercial Processed Products in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (Documents/Forms section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#CommercialProducts>

Crediting Commercial Processed Products in Child Care Programs (Documents/Forms section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#CommercialProducts>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

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

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Meats/Meat Alternates (M/MA) in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Meats-Meat_Alternates_Fillable_508.pdf

Standardized Recipe Form for the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Standardized_Recipe_Form_CACFP.docx

Standardized Recipes in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

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Standardized Recipes in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs/Documents#StandardizedRecipes>

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

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturePFStipsheet.pdf>

USDA Memo CACFP 15-2016: Optional Best Practices to Further Improve Nutrition in the CACFP:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/optional-best-practices-further-improve-nutrition-cacfp>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Using_CN_labels_CACFP.pdf

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

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages or contact the [CACFP staff](#) 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_Deli_CACFP.pdf.

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