

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

Offer versus serve (OVS) is an optional approach to menu planning and meal service that allows adult participants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) to decline some of the foods offered in a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, or supper. OVS is not allowed at snack.

CACFP adult day care centers that choose to implement OVS must notify the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [CACFP staff](#) and receive approval prior to implementing OVS. CACFP menus and meal service must follow the CACFP OVS requirements.

## Food Components and Food Items

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

- A **food component** is one of the food groups that comprise a reimbursable meal. The breakfast meal pattern requires three components (milk, vegetables/fruits, and grains). The lunch meal pattern requires five components (milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains). The supper meal pattern is the same as lunch, except milk is optional.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five food components. For example, a hamburger on a whole-grain bun is one food item that contains two components (grains and meat/meat alternates). A ½-cup serving of applesauce and a ½-cup serving of blueberries are two food items from the fruits component. A 1-cup serving of brown rice and a 2-ounce whole-grain bagel are two food items from the grains component.
- The **full serving** is the minimum required amount in the CACFP adult meal patterns.

CACFP menus may provide the required food components as single food items (such as chicken, pasta, fruit, and vegetables) or combination foods. Combination foods contain more than one food component, such as sandwiches, pizza, and smoothies made with yogurt and pureed fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains component) and cheese (meat/meat alternates component). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as burritos and pizza) or are not intended to be separated (such as a hamburger on a bun or a turkey sandwich).



# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

## OVS Requirements

For a reimbursable breakfast with OVS, the adult day care center must offer the full serving of at least four different food items and participants must select the full serving of at least three food items. For a reimbursable lunch with OVS, adult day care centers must offer the full serving of at least one food item from each of the five food components (milk, vegetables, fruits, grains, and meat/meat alternates) and participants must select the full serving of at least three components.

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

## Signage

If the CACFP menu offers combination foods, or two or more food items from one food component (such as bread and rice), the adult day care center must provide instructions or signs about the OVS requirements. This signage must indicate what choices make up a reimbursable meal and let participants know that they cannot select two of the same food items (breakfast) or components (lunch/supper).

For example, a participant cannot select milk and two pieces of toast for a reimbursable breakfast because this choice provides only two food items (milk and grains). A participant cannot select two servings of chicken and one serving of rice for a reimbursable lunch because this choice provides only two components (meat/meat alternates and grains).



# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

## OVS at Breakfast

The CACFP adult day care center must offer the full serving of at least four food items from the three food components. Participants must select the full serving of at least three food items for a reimbursable meal. Participants can decline any one food item. Table 1 summarizes the requirements for OVS at breakfast.



Table 1. OVS breakfast requirements for CACFP adult day care centers	
Adult day care center must offer at least four food items <sup>1</sup>	Participants must select
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Milk, 1 cup (unflavored low-fat (1%), unflavored fat-free, or flavored fat-free) <sup>2</sup></li> <li>2. Vegetables/fruits, ½ cup</li> <li>3. Grains, 2 ounce equivalents (oz eq) <sup>3</sup></li> <li>4. Meat/meat alternates (1 ounce) <b>or</b> additional serving of vegetables/fruits (½ cup) <b>or</b> additional serving of grains (1 oz eq) <sup>3,4</sup></li> </ol>	At least three different food items (can decline any one food item)
<p><sup>1</sup> Each food item must provide the full serving required by the CACFP adult breakfast meal pattern.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> The USDA's <a href="#">CACFP Best Practices</a> recommends only unflavored milk.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Grains must meet the required weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in <a href="#">Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</a> or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE's <a href="#">Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</a>.</p> <p><sup>4</sup> The fourth food item may be a meat/meat alternate item, a different vegetable or fruit item, or a different grain item.</p>	

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

- Breakfast menus must include the full serving (the required amount in the CACFP breakfast meal pattern) of at least four different food items. Breakfast menus cannot include two servings of the same food item. For example, a breakfast menu that offers a serving of milk, a serving of banana, and two servings of toast (such as one slice of enriched cinnamon-raisin bread and one slice of whole-wheat bread) is not reimbursable because the two servings of toast are the same food item (grains).
- Larger servings of the same component count as only one food item for OVS. For example, 1 cup of strawberries counts as one food item (vegetables/fruits). A 3-ounce whole-wheat bagel or two servings of whole-grain toast each count as one food item (grains).

## OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

- If the breakfast menu offers the full serving of a component as two separate food items, participants must take both food items to count as one food item for OVS. The examples below illustrate this requirement.
  - The CACFP breakfast meal pattern requires  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables/fruits component. If the breakfast menu offers  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of sliced peaches and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of pineapple tidbits, participants must select both food items to count as one food item (vegetables/fruits).
  - The CACFP breakfast meal pattern requires 2 oz eq of the grains component. If the breakfast menu offers 1 oz eq of whole-grain cereal and 1 oz eq of a whole-grain muffin, participants must select both food items to count as one food item (grains).
- Amounts less than a full serving do not count as a food item for OVS. For example, a selection of  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of cantaloupe does not count as a food item because the full serving for the vegetables/fruits component at breakfast is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.
- Participants may decline any one of the four food items, including milk.
- If the breakfast menu includes four food items, two of which are in a combination food, participants cannot decline the combination food. For example, a breakfast menu includes a whole-grain muffin, milk, and a yogurt-fruit smoothie (combination food that contains meat/meat alternates and vegetables/fruits). Children must select the smoothie (two food items) and one other food item for a reimbursable breakfast.



# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

## Examples of OVS at breakfast

Tables 2 and 3 show examples of OVS at breakfast in CACFP adult day care centers.

Table 2. Sample breakfast menu with four food items		
CACFP adult meal pattern for OVS	Planned menu	Food items
Grains (G), 2 oz eq	Whole-grain bagel, 2 ounces	1 G <sup>1</sup>
Vegetables and Fruits (VF), ½ cup	Strawberries, ½ cup	1 VF
Milk (M), 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk, 1 cup	1 M
Meat/Meat Alternate (MMA) (1 ounce) or additional VF (½ cup) or G (1 oz eq)	Orange slices, ½ cup	1 VF
Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food items		
Participant selects	Full food items	Reimbursable meal?
Strawberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	2	<b>No.</b> The selected meal contains only two food items (1 VF and 1 M).
Bagel (1 G) Strawberries (1 VF)	2	<b>No.</b> The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 VF).
Bagel (1 G) Milk (1 M)	2	<b>No.</b> The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 M).
Strawberries (1 VF) Orange slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (2 VF and 1 M).
Bagel (1 G) Orange slices (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).
Bagel (1 G) Strawberries (1 VF) Orange slices (1 VF)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (2 VF and 1 G).
<sup>1</sup> Larger servings of the same food count as only one food item for OVS.		

# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

**Table 3. Sample breakfast menu with five food items**

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CACFP adult meal pattern for OVS	Planned menu	Food items
G, 2 oz eq	Whole-wheat toast, 1-ounce slice Whole-grain cereal, 1 ounce	2 G
VF, ½ cup	Blueberries, ½ cup	1 VF
M, 1 cup <sup>1</sup>	Unflavored low-fat milk, 1 cup	1 M
MMA (1 ounce) or additional VF (½ cup) or G (1 oz eq)	Peanut butter, 2 tablespoons	1 MMA
<b>Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food items</b>		
Participant selects	Full food items	Reimbursable meal?
Toast (1 G) Cereal (1 G) Milk (1 M)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (2 G and 1 M).
Toast (1 G) Peanut butter (1 MMA) Blueberries (1 VF)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 MMA, and 1 VF).
Toast (1 G) Cereal (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (2 G and 1 VF).
Toast (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).
Toast (1 G) Peanut butter (1 MMA) Milk (1 M)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 MMA, and 1 M).
Peanut butter (1 MMA) Blueberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (1 MMA, 1 VF, and 1 M).
Cereal (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF) Milk (1 M)	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three different food items (1 G, 1 VF, and 1 M).
Toast, 2 slices (1 G) Blueberries (1 VF)	2	<b>No.</b> The selected meal contains only two food items (1 G and 1 VF). Two servings of the same food count as only one food item.

# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

## OVS at Lunch and Supper

CACFP adult day care centers must offer the full serving of all five food components. Participants must select the full serving of at least three components for a reimbursable meal. Participants may decline any two food items.



The OVS requirements for supper are the same as lunch except milk is optional. If supper does not include milk, the adult day care center must offer the four required food components (meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains). For a reimbursable meal, participants must select the full serving of at least three of the four components.

Table 4 summarizes the OVS requirements for lunch and supper.

Table 4. OVS lunch and supper requirements for CACFP adult day care centers	
Adult day care center must offer all five components <sup>1</sup>	Participants must select
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Milk, 1 cup (unflavored low-fat (1%), unflavored fat-free, or flavored fat-free) <sup>2</sup></li><li>2. Fruits, ½ cup</li><li>3. Vegetables, ½ cup</li><li>4. Grains, 2 oz eq <sup>3</sup></li><li>5. Meat/meat alternates, 2 ounces</li></ol>	At least <b>three</b> food components (can decline any two food components)
<p><sup>1</sup> Each food component must provide the full serving required by the CACFP adult meal pattern.</p> <p><sup>2</sup> Milk is optional in the CACFP adult supper meal pattern. If milk is not offered, participants must still select the full serving of at least three components.</p> <p><sup>3</sup> Grains must meet the required weights (groups A-E) or volumes (groups H-I) in <a href="#">Grain Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</a> or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving. For more information, refer to the CSDE's <a href="#">Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP</a>.</p>	

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

- Each lunch must include the **full serving** (the required amount in the CACFP adult lunch meal pattern) of the five lunch components. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Care Centers](#) webpage.
- Larger servings of the **same** food count as only one food component. For example, 1 cup of broccoli counts as only one food component (vegetables). Two 1-ounce slices of whole-grain bread (2 oz eq) count as only one food component (grains).



## OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

- If the menu offers the full serving of a component as two separate food items, participants must take both food items to credit as one component for OVS. The examples below illustrate this requirement.
  - The CACFP adult lunch meal pattern requires  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of the vegetables component. If the lunch menu offers  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of broccoli and  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of corn, participants must select both food items to count as the full vegetables component.
  - The CACFP adult lunch meal pattern requires 2 oz eq of the grains component. If the menu offers 1 oz eq of brown rice and 1 oz eq of whole-wheat roll, participants must select both food items to count as the full grains component.
- Amounts less than the full serving do not count as a food component for OVS. For example, a selection of  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of broccoli does not count as the vegetables component because the full serving is  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup.
- Participants may decline any one or two food components, including milk.
- If a combination food contains three or more food components, a participant cannot decline the combination food. For example, a lunch menu offers spinach lasagna made with cheese (meat/meat alternates component), lasagna noodles (grains component), and spinach and tomato sauce (vegetables component) served with apple slices (fruits component) and milk. Participants must select at least the lasagna (three components) for a reimbursable meal.

### Examples of OVS at Lunch

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





# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

**Table 5. Sample lunch menu 1**

Table 5. Sample lunch menu 1			
CACFP adult meal pattern	Planned menu		Meal pattern contribution
MMA, 2 ounces	Turkey, 2 ounces		2 ounces MMA
G, 2 oz eq	Whole-wheat bread, two 1-ounce slices		2 oz eq G
V, ½ cup	Broccoli florets, ¾ cup		¾ cup V <sup>1</sup>
F, ½ cup	Cantaloupe slices, ½ cup		½ cup F
M, 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk, 1 cup		1 cup M
Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food components			
Participant selects	Food items	Full food components	Reimbursable meal?
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G)	1	2	<b>No.</b> The selected meal contains only two components (MMA and G).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Milk (M)	2	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and M).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe slices (F)	2	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and F).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli florets (V)	2	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three components (MMA, G, and V).
Broccoli florets (V) Cantaloupe slices (F) Milk (M)	3	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three components (V, F, and M).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli florets (V) Milk (M)	3	4	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains four components (MMA, G, V, and M).
Turkey sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe slices (F) Milk (M)	3	4	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains four components (MMA, G, F, and M).
<sup>1</sup> Larger servings of the same food count as only one food component for OVS.			

# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

**Table 6. Sample lunch menu 2**

Table 6. Sample lunch menu 2			
CACFP adult meal pattern	Planned menu		Meal pattern contribution
MMA, 2 ounces	Meat sauce, 2 ounces of cooked hamburger		2 ounces MMA
G, 2 oz eq	Spaghetti, 1 cup <sup>1</sup>		2 oz eq G
V, ½ cup	Tossed garden salad, 1 cup		½ cup V <sup>1</sup>
F, ½ cup	Fruit salad, ½ cup		½ cup F
M, 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk, 1 cup		1 cup M
Participants must select the full serving of at least three different food components			
Participant selects	Food items	Full food components	Reimbursable meal?
Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA)	2	2	<b>No.</b> The selected meal contains only two components (G and MMA).
Spaghetti (G) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M)	3	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three components (G, F, and M).
Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) Tossed salad (V) Milk (M)	4		<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains four components (G, MMA, V, and M).
Salad (V) Fruit salad (F) Milk (M)	3	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains two components (V, F, and M).
Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) Milk (M)	3	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains three components (G, MMA, and M).
Spaghetti (G) Meat sauce (MMA) Fruit salad (F)	3	3	<b>Yes.</b> The selected meal contains two components (G, MMA, and F).
<sup>1</sup> Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served.			

# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers

## Resources

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

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/adult-day-care-child-and-adult-care-food-program-handbook>

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

[https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP\\_factBP.pdf](https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_factBP.pdf)

CACFP Meal Patterns for Adults (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Adult\\_Meal\\_Pattern\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Adult_Meal_Pattern_CACFP.pdf)

Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

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

Crediting Summary Charts for the CACFP Adult Meal Patterns (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Crediting\\_Summary\\_Charts\\_CACFP\\_Adults.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/Crediting_Summary_Charts_CACFP_Adults.pdf)

Guide to Meeting the Meal Pattern Requirements for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE):

[https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Guide\\_CACFP\\_Meal\\_Patterns\\_Adults.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/Guide_CACFP_Meal_Patterns_Adults.pdf)

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

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

Offer Versus Serve in the CACFP (USDA):

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

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

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



# OVS in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers



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

This handout is available at [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/OVS\\_Adult\\_CACFP.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/MealPattern/OVS_Adult_CACFP.pdf).

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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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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