Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs

School Year 2024-25 (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025)

This guidance applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool (ages 1-5) in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. For information on the meal patterns for grades K-12, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage and the "ASP Meal Patterns" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage. For information on the preschool meal patterns, visit the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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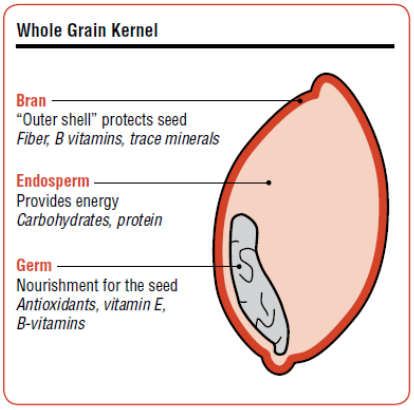
Definition of Whole Grains

Whole grains consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel, after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. The kernel includes the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ.

Usually the grain kernel is cracked, crushed, flaked, or ground during the milling process. A finished grain product is considered whole grain if it contains the same relative amounts of bran, germ, and endosperm as the original grain.



Whole grains contain a wide variety of nutrients that help reduce the risk of chronic diseases. The CSDE encourages school food authorities (SFAs) to serve 100 percent whole-grain products most often. This provides the best nutrition for children.

Whole Grain versus Whole Grain-rich (WGR)

Whole-grain products and standardized recipes made with whole grains credit as the grains component in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns. The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 and the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for preschoolers require certain amounts of WGR foods.

All foods that are 100 percent whole grain are WGR, but not all WGR foods are 100 percent whole grain. A food is 100 percent whole grain if all grain ingredients are whole grains. A food is WGR if it contains at least 50 percent whole grains and does not exceed the limit for noncreditable grains.

The ingredient statements below show some examples of 100 percent whole-grain commercial products.

> **Example 1:** Ingredients: *Whole-wheat flour*, sugar, wheat gluten. Contains 2% or less of each of the following: honey, salt, yeast, molasses, diacetyl tartaric acid esters of mono-diglycerides (datem), ascorbic acid, mono-and diglycerides, l-cysteine, enzymes.
>
> This product is 100 percent whole grain because whole-wheat flour is the first and the only grain ingredient. This product credits as a WGR food in the school nutrition programs.

Example 2: Ingredients: Water, *whole-wheat flour*, *whole oats,* sugar, wheat gluten, yeast, soybean oil, salt, calcium propionate (preservative), monoglycerides, datem and/or sodium stearoyl lactylate, calcium sulfate, citric acid, calcium carbonate, soy lecithin, whey, nonfat milk.

When reviewing the first ingredient on the product's label, water is ignored. This product is 100 percent whole grain because whole-wheat flour is the first ingredient after water and the only other grain is whole oats. This product credits as a WGR food in the school nutrition programs.

Overview of WGR Requirements

The NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschoolers have different WGR requirements. The WGR requirement does not apply to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. These requirements are summarized below. For a comparison of the grain requirements in the school nutrition programs, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Comparison of the Grains Component Requirements in the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs.*

Crediting WGR grains in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12

At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at lunch and breakfast must be WGR. Foods that are not WGR must be enriched.

All grain foods (WGR and enriched) must meet the limit for noncreditable grains. Examples of noncreditable grains include oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). A detailed list is available in section 3 of the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12.*

Noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for groups H-I. Groups A-I are the grain groups in the USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (Exhibit A chart). For more information, refer to "Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes" in this document.

Depending on where the noncreditable grains are listed in the ingredients statement, the SFA may need to obtain a product formulation statement (PFS) to document that the grain product does not exceed the applicable limit. The limit for noncreditable grains does not apply to noncreditable grains listed in any of the following ways: 1) after the statement, "contains 2% or less;" 2) as part of a non-grain ingredient (such as a bagel that contains molasses powder made with wheat starch or a fruit pastry that contain jam filling made with modified food starch); and 3) as part of the non-grain portion of a commercial combination food (such as modified food starch in the chicken portion of breaded chicken or wheat flour in the cheese filling of ravioli).

For guidance on the grains component, refer to the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program* and visit the "Grains Component" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Crediting WGR grains in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns

At least one serving of grains per day must be WGR, between all meals and ASP snacks served to preschoolers. Foods that are not WGR must be enriched. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For information on the WGR requirements for the preschool meal patterns, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program* and USDA Memo CACFP 09-2018: *Grain Requirements in the CACFP: Questions and Answers.*

Whole-grain cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (refer to the CSDE's *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs*). The preschool meal patterns do not require a limit for noncreditable grains.

For guidance on the grains component, refer to the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and visit the "Grains Component" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Crediting WGR grains in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12

The ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 does not have a WGR requirement and does not require a limit for noncreditable grains. The CSDE encourages SFAs to include WGR foods (including 100 percent whole grains) in ASP menus.

> Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires that at least 80 percent of the grains offered weekly in ASP snacks for grades K-12 must be WGR.

For guidance on the grains/breads component, refer to the CSDE's *Afterschool Snack Program Handbook* and visit the "Grains/Breads Component" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage.

Identifying Whole Grains in Commercial Products

A grain is 100 percent whole grain if any of the following apply:

- the word "whole" is listed before the type of grain ingredient;
- the grain ingredient is another name for whole grains;
- the grain product has a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standard of identity;
- the grain product is listed on any state's Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)-approved whole grain foods list;
- the grain ingredient is nixtamalized corn; or
- the grain ingredient is a reconstituted whole grain.

A summary of each method to identify whole grains is below. To meet the WGR criteria of the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12, a commercial grain food that meets one of these criteria must also meet the limit for noncreditable grains (refer to "Crediting WGR grains in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12" in this document). Table 1 lists examples of whole-grain products and ingredients.

Grain name states "whole"

A grain is whole grain if the grain name contains the word "whole." For example, "whole wheat flour" and "whole-grain corn" are whole grains, but "wheat flour" and "yellow corn" are not.

Other names for whole grains

Some whole grains do not contain the word "whole" in the grain name. Examples include berries (the whole kernels of grain) such as wheat berries and rye berries, groats (the hulled whole kernels of grain) such as oat groats, rolled oats and oatmeal (including old-fashioned, quick-cooking, and instant oatmeal), brown rice and wild rice, graham flour (a coarsely ground whole-wheat flour), and many other grains such as quinoa, millet, triticale, teff, amaranth, buckwheat, and sorghum.

Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standard of identity

Some whole-wheat products have an FDA standard of identity that indicates they are whole grain. These products are listed below. A standard of identity is a set of rules for what a certain product, such as whole-wheat bread, must contain or may contain to be legally labeled with that product name.

Breads, rolls, buns

Whole-wheat bread, rolls, buns
Entire wheat bread, rolls, buns
Graham bread, rolls, buns

Pasta

Whole-wheat spaghetti
Whole-wheat vermicelli
Whole-wheat macaroni
Whole-wheat macaroni products

The FDA provides standards of identity only for certain whole-wheat products, including whole-wheat bread, rolls, and buns (21 CFR 136.180) and whole-wheat macaroni products (21 CFR 139.138). Other grain products that are labeled as "whole wheat" but do not have an FDA standard of identity (such as crackers, tortillas, bagels, and biscuits) may or may not be 100 percent whole grain.

WIC-approved whole grain foods list

Grain products like bread, tortillas, pasta, and rice are whole grain if they are listed on any state's WIC-approved whole grain food list. WIC-listed breakfast cereals must be specifically marked as whole grain because not all breakfast cereals on a WIC-list are whole grain. The Connecticut WIC food guides are available on the Connecticut State Department of Public Health's Approved Food Guide webpage.

Nixtamalized corn ingredients

Commercial corn products such as tortilla chips, taco shells, and tamales credit as whole grains if the product is labeled "whole grain," or the corn ingredient is nixtamalized (treated with lime). Nixtamalization is the process of soaking and cooked dried corn in an alkaline (slaked lime) solution. This process results in a product with similar nutrition to whole-grain corn.

Nixtamalized corn is used to make hominy, masa harina (corn flour), corn masa (dough from masa harina), and certain types of cornmeal. Masa is used for making tortilla chips, taco shells, tamales, pupusas, and other popular corn products. Hominy, corn masa, and masa harina credit as whole grains.

Menu planners may use either method below to determine if commercial grain products are made with nixtamalized corn.

> To meet the WGR criteria of the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12, a commercial corn product that meets one of the criteria below must also meet the limit for noncreditable grains.

1. **The corn is treated with lime:** A corn ingredient is nixtamalized if the ingredients statement indicates that the corn is treated with lime, e.g., "ground corn with trace of lime" and "ground corn treated with lime." The ingredients statements below show some examples of commercial nixtamalized corn products that credit as 100 percent whole grains.

- Ingredients: *Corn masa flour*, water, contains 2% or less of: cellulose gum, guar gum, amylase, propionic acid, benzoic acid, and phosphoric acid (to maintain freshness).
- Ingredients: *Whole-white corn*, vegetable oil (contains soybean, corn, cottonseed, and/or sunflower oil), salt, *lime/calcium hydroxide* (processing aid).
- Ingredients: *Limed whole-grain white corn*, palm oil, salt, TBHQ (preservative).
- Ingredients: *Whole-grain yellow corn*, canola oil, water, *corn flour*, salt, *hydrated lime*.

If the ingredients statement does not provide sufficient information to determine if the corn ingredient is a creditable grain (such as "cornmeal" and "yellow corn flour"), a product formulation statement (PFS) is required. The PFS must indicate that the corn ingredient is whole grain, enriched, or nixtamalized. For information on PFS forms, refer to "Crediting Documentation for Commercial Products" in this document.

2. **The product includes the FDA-approved whole grain health claim:** A commercial product made with corn is at least 50 percent whole grain if it includes one of the two FDA-approved whole grain health claims on its packaging. These claims are not commonly found on most grain products.

   - **Low-fat claim:** "Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol, may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers."

   - **Moderate-fat claim:** "Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease."

Crediting information for corn masa, masa harina, corn flour, and cornmeal is summarized in USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: *Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs.*

Reconstituted grains

Reconstituted grains (such as "reconstituted whole-wheat flour") are made by blending the crushed and separated products of milling (bran, germ, and endosperm) from the same type of grain in the same proportions originally present in the intact grain kernel. A reconstituted grain is considered whole grain when the reconstitution is done by the original milling facility to ensure the same batch of whole grain is returned to its natural proportions. To credit a reconstituted grain as the grains component, SFAs must request documentation stating that the milling company recombined the grain components to the natural proportions of bran, germ, and endosperm.

Table 1. Common whole-grain products and ingredients [1]

Barley
Dehulled barley
Dehulled-barley flour
Whole barley
Whole-barley flakes
Whole-barley flour
Whole-grain barley
Whole-grain barley flour

Brown rice
Brown rice
Brown rice flour
Sprouted brown rice

Corn
Nixtamalized corn, e.g., hominy, corn masa (dough from masa harina), and masa harina (corn flour) [2]
Popcorn
Whole corn
Whole cornmeal
Whole-corn flour
Whole-grain corn
Whole-grain corn flour
Whole-grain cornmeal
Whole-grain grits

Oats
Instant oatmeal
Oat groats [3]
Oatmeal
Old-fashioned oats
Quick-cooking oats
Rolled oats
Steel cut oats
Whole oats
Whole-grain oat flour
Whole-oat flour

Rye
Flaked rye
Rye berries [3]
Rye groats [3]
Sprouted whole rye
Whole rye
Whole-rye flakes
Whole-rye flour

Wheat
Bromated whole-wheat flour
Bulgur (cracked wheat)
Cracked wheat or crushed wheat
Entire wheat flour
Flaked wheat
Graham flour
Sprouted wheat
Sprouted wheat berries [3]
Sprouted whole wheat
Stone-ground whole-wheat flour [4]
Toasted crushed whole wheat
Wheat berries [3]
Wheat groats [3]
White whole-wheat flour [5]
Whole bulgur
Whole-durum flour
Whole-durum wheat flour
Whole-grain bulgur
Whole-grain wheat
Whole-grain wheat flakes
Whole-grain wheat flour
Whole-wheat flakes
Whole-wheat flour
Whole-wheat pastry flour
Whole-white wheat [5]

Wild rice
Wild rice
Wild rice flour

Other grains
Amaranth
Amaranth flour
Buckwheat
Buckwheat flour
Buckwheat groats
Millet
Millet flour
Quinoa
Sorghum (milo)
Sorghum flour
Spelt berries [3]
Sprouted buckwheat
Sprouted einkorn
Sprouted spelt
Teff
Teff flour
Triticale
Triticale flour
Whole einkorn
Whole einkorn berries [3]
Whole emmer (farro)
Whole kamut (khorasan wheat)
Whole spelt
Whole-grain einkorn flour
Whole-grain spelt flour

[1] This list is not all-inclusive.
[2] Refer to "Nixtamalized corn ingredients" in this document).
[3] Groats and berries are the hulled kernels of cereal grains such as oat, wheat, rye, and barley.
[4] "Stone-ground" describes the process used for making the flour or meal and does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. Check the ingredients statement to be sure it includes the term "whole" in combination with "stone-ground."
[5] Read labels carefully to be sure products are "white whole wheat" and not "white wheat," which is not a whole grain.

Label Information That Does Not Indicate Whole Grain Content

Some types of label information for commercial grain products do not indicate if a food is whole grain Menu planners cannot use any of the following to determine if a commercial grain product contains whole grains: certain statements about grain content on the product's package; the Whole Grain Stamp; the product's color; or the product's fiber content. This information does not indicate if a grain product contains whole grains. A summary of each type of label information is below.

Label statements about grain content

Careful label reading is important because the packaging for grain products can be misleading. Manufacturers often use terms in their product names or labels that make a product appear to contain a significant amount of whole grain when it does not.

Table 2 includes some common misleading terms found on product packages. Products with these terms are usually not 100 percent whole grain. They often contain refined flour (or other ingredients that are not whole grain) as the first or second ingredient.

Table 2. Common misleading terms for grains

Term	Description
"Made with whole grains"	These products must have some whole grains but may contain mostly refined flour. The amount of whole grains can vary greatly among different products.
"Made with whole wheat"	These products must have some whole wheat but may contain mostly refined flour. The amount of whole wheat can vary greatly among different products.
"Contains whole grain"	These products may contain a small amount of whole grain but usually are mostly refined grains. The amount of whole grains can vary greatly among different products.
"100% wheat"	All breads made from any part of the wheat kernel are 100 percent wheat, which is not the same as 100 percent whole wheat. "100% wheat" products may contain some whole-wheat flour or may contain only refined flour. Look for the terms "100% whole wheat" or "100% whole grain" to indicate that the product is made from only whole grains.

Term	Description
"Multigrain" or specifies number of grains, e.g., "seven-grain bread"	These products must contain more than one type of grain, which can include refined grains, whole grains, or both. Some multigrain breads may have enriched flour as the primary ingredient with multiple grains in smaller amounts, while others contain mostly whole grains.
"Cracked wheat bread"	While cracked wheat is a whole grain, cracked wheat bread may contain refined flour as the primary ingredient with small amounts of cracked wheat.
"Stone-ground" flour or meal	"Stone-ground" describes the process used for making the flour or meal. It does not necessarily mean that the product is whole grain. Check the ingredients statement to be sure it includes the term "whole" in combination with "stone-ground."

Whole grain stamp

The Whole Grains Council provides three stamps that manufacturers may use on product packaging to identify foods that contain whole grains. The USDA does not allow these stamps to determine if grain products meet the WGR criteria for the grains component. While these stamps indicate that a product is made with or contains 100 percent whole grains, they are not sufficient to determine if a food meets the WGR criteria because they do not indicate if all other grains in the product are enriched or if noncreditable grains meet the USDA's limit for noncreditable grains.

To determine if a product complies with the NSLP and SBP WGR criteria, SFAs must refer to the product's ingredients statement and packaging and, if necessary, obtain a PFS from the manufacturer. For information on PFS forms, refer to "Crediting Documentation for Commercial Products" in this document.

Color

A product's color does not indicate if it contains whole grains. While whole-grain products are usually browner than products made with refined white flour, sometimes the brown color comes from caramel coloring or molasses, not from whole-grain ingredients. Read the ingredients statement or recipe to determine if the food contains any whole grains.

Fiber content

Whole grains and fiber both provide health benefits, but they are not the same. The fiber content on the Nutrition Facts label is not a good indicator of whether a commercial product contains whole grains. Grain-based foods that are good sources of fiber, such as bran cereal, may contain added fibers but few or no whole grains. The Nutrition Facts label lists total fiber, which includes naturally occurring fiber and sources added by the manufacturer, such as cellulose, inulin, and chicory root.

Crediting Documentation for Commercial Grain Products

SFAs must be able to document that commercial grain products meet the meal pattern crediting requirements. Acceptable documentation includes a Child Nutrition (CN) label or a manufacturer's PFS. Grain items are not eligible for a CN label unless they are part of main dish entrees that contain at least ½ ounce equivalent (oz eq) of the meats/meat alternates 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 criteria for school meals and ASP 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 School Nutrition Programs.*

SFAs must verify the accuracy of the PFS before including the commercial grain product in reimbursable meals and ASP snacks, and maintain this crediting documentation on file. The CSDE will review this information during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

> If the manufacturer will not supply a PFS or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation, the product cannot credit as the grains component in school meals and ASP snacks.

For more information on CN labels and PFS forms, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs,* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs*, and the USDA's handouts, *Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs* and *Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement.*

The steps for how to evaluate a grain product's PFS are summarized in Section 6 of the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*. Training on the requirements for CN labels and PFS forms is available in "Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation" of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

Crediting Documentation for Whole-grain Foods Made from Scratch

SFAs must have standardized recipes on file that document the crediting information for all grain foods made from scratch, including foods made on site by the SFA and foods prepared by vendors. Menu planners should use the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine food yields and crediting information for school recipes.

Standardized recipes that contain whole grains credit as the grains component based on the amount of whole grains per serving. SFAs must determine the recipe's oz eq contribution per serving using one of the following methods: 1) the grams of creditable grains per serving; or 2) if the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving is known, the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the appropriate Exhibit A grain group (refer to "Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes" in this document).

For more information on standardized recipes, refer to section 2 of the CSDE's guides, *Menu Planning Guide for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program* and *Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs,* and visit the "Crediting Foods Made from Scratch" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Required Servings for Grain Products and Recipes

The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 and the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns. The required quantities for the grains/breads component are in servings for the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12. The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is ¼ oz eq or ¼ serving.

> Effective with school year 2025-26 (beginning July 1, 2025), the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, aligns the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern. The grains/bread component will change to the grains component and grains/bread servings will change to grain oz eq.

The amount of a whole-grain grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For example, to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, a whole-grain roll (group B) must weigh 28 grams (1 ounce), a whole-grain corn muffin (group C) must weigh 34 grams (1.2 ounces), and a whole-grain blueberry muffin (group D) must weigh 55 grams (2 ounces).

The USDA allows two methods for determining the oz eq of creditable grain products and standardized recipes. SFAs may use either method but must document how the crediting information was obtained. These methods are summarized below.

Method 1: USDA's Exhibit A chart

Method 1 uses the USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* chart to determine the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the food belongs. This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for standardized recipes if the menu planner knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving. Some commercial grain products require method 2 and the SFA must obtain a PFS (refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*).

The Exhibit A grain quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The required quantities for each program are summarized below.

- **Oz eq for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP:** The CSDE's *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* indicates the Exhibit A oz eq that apply to the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. For detailed guidance on determining the oz eq of a grain menu item, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program,* and "Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents" of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12.* For more information, visit the "Ounce Equivalents" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs.

- **Oz eq for preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:** The CSDE's *Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* indicates the Exhibit A oz eq that apply to the preschool meal patterns. Groups F and G (grain-based desserts) are not included because grain-based desserts do not credit in the preschool meal patterns. For detailed guidance on determining the oz eq of a grain menu item, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs* and *How*

to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, and "Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents" of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12.* For more information, visit the "Ounce Equivalents" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus webpage.

- **Grain servings for grades K-12 in the ASP:** The CSDE's *Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12* indicates the required Exhibit A grains/breads servings that apply to grades K-12 in the ASP. For detailed guidance on determining the grains/breads servings of a grain menu item, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12* and *How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12*. For more information, visit the "Serving Size for Grains/Breads" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage.

Method 2: creditable grains

Method 2 determines the oz eq from the weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. This method is used for standardized recipes and may also be used for commercial grain products that have a PFS stating the weight of creditable grains per serving.

> There are some situations when SFAs must use method 2 and a PFS is required. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs.*

- **Oz eq for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP:** To credit as 1 oz eq of whole grains, foods in groups A-G must contain 16 grams of whole grains and foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of whole grains. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12,* and "Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents" of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12.* For more information, visit the "Ounce Equivalents" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs.

- **Oz eq for preschoolers in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP:** To credit as 1 oz eq of whole grains, foods in groups A-E must contain 16 grams of whole grains and foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of whole grains. (Groups F and G are grain-based desserts and do not credit in the preschool meal patterns.) For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs,* and "Module 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents" of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12.* For more information, visit the "Ounce Equivalents" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus webpage.

- **Grains/breads servings for grades K-12 in the ASP:** To credit as 1 serving of whole grains, foods in groups A-G must contain 14.75 grams of whole grains and foods in groups H-I must contain 25 grams of whole grains. For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12*. For more information, visit the "Serving Size for Grains/Breads" section of the CSDE's ASP webpage.

The grams of creditable grains are listed in the commercial product's PFS or calculated from the grain quantities in the SFA's standardized recipe.

Grain crediting tools

The tools below help menu planners determine the meal pattern contribution of creditable grain products and recipes.

- **USDA's Exhibit A Grains Tool for commercial grain products:** This online tool of the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) determines the oz eq of commercial grain products. For more information, watch the USDA's webinars, *Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue* and *How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool.*

- **USDA's Recipe Analysis Workbook:** The FBG's online Recipe Analysis Workbook allows menu planners to search for ingredients, develop a standardized recipe, and determine the recipe's meal pattern contribution per serving. To access this tool, users must create a free account on the USDA's FBG website.

- **CSDE's Resources on How to Use the Exhibit A Grain Charts:** The CSDE's resources, *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program* and *How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12*, review the steps for using the Exhibit A quantities to determine the meal pattern contribution of three types of commercial products and standardized recipes. These include grain menu items in groups A-G that contain multiple small pieces per serving (e.g., crackers, hard

pretzels, and animal crackers), multiple large pieces per serving (e.g., pancakes, slices of bread, and waffles), and one piece per serving (e.g., muffins, bagels, and rolls).

- **CSDE's CACFP crediting worksheets** (for preschool meal patterns only): These Excel worksheets determine if grain products and recipes meet the CACFP crediting requirements and WGR criteria (which are the same as the preschool meal patterns) and calculate the oz eq contribution of the serving.
    - Child Care Worksheet 1: Crediting Commercial Grains in the CACFP
    - Child Care Worksheet 4: Crediting Family-size Recipes for Grains in the CACFP
    - Child Care Worksheet 5: Crediting Quantity Recipes for Grains in the CACFP

  The CACFP grain crediting worksheets are available in the "Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage. These worksheets apply only to the preschool meal patterns. They cannot be used to determine compliance with the NSLP and SBP WGR requirements for grades K-12.

Considerations for Reducing Choking Risks for Young Children

Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. Examples of grain foods that may cause choking include hard pretzels; pretzel chips; corn chips; breakfast cereals that contain nuts, whole-grain kernels (such as wheat berries), and hard chunks (such as granola); and crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole-grain kernels. Consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding what types of grain foods to offer in preschool 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

Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/calculate_wgr_percentage_snp.pdf

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp_grades_k-12.pdf

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_preschool.pdf.

Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grain_calculation_asp_grades_k-12.pdf

Comparison of the Grains Component Requirements in the Meal Patterns for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/comparison_grain_crediting_snp.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_cereals_snp_grades_k-12.pdf

Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Preschool Meal Patterns for the School Nutrition Programs(CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_cereals_snp_preschool.pdf

Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_enriched_grains_snp.pdf

Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/ExhibitATool/Index

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

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

Grain Crediting Worksheets for CACFP Child Care Programs ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-cacfp-child-care-programs/documents#CreditingWorksheets

Grain Ounce Equivalents for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_snp_grades_k-12.pdf

Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/grain_oz_eq_snp_preschool.pdf

Grains Component for Grades K-12 ("Documents/Forms" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/documents#Grains

Grains Component for Preschoolers ("Related Resources" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/related-resources#Grains

Grains/Breads Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#GrainsBreadsK12

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

Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/wgr_requirement_snp_grades_k-12.pdf

How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/identify_creditable_grains_snp_preschool.pdf

How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how_to_use_ounce_equivalents_chart.pdf

How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how_to_use_grains_breads_servings_chart_asp_k-12.pdf

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs/documents

Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs

Menu Planning Guide for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program(CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guide-for-school-meals

Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/preschool/menu_planning_guide_preschool.pdf

Recipe Analysis Workbook (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool

Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grain_servings_asp_grades_k-12.pdf

Standardized Recipes ("Documents/Forms" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs#StandardizedRecipes

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf

Upcoming Meal Pattern Changes (CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs#Upcoming_Meal_Pattern_Changes

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

USDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019, and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:
https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs: https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs

Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/product_formulation_statements.pdf

What's in a Meal Module 11: Grains Component (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials

What's in a Meal Module 12: Whole Grain-rich Requirement (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials

What's in a Meal Module 13: Grains Ounce Equivalents (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials

What's in a Meal Module 6: Meal Pattern Documentation (CSDE's Training Program, What's in a Meal: National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12): https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials

When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/when_commercial_grain_products_require_pfs_snp.pdf

Whole Grain Resource for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs (USDA): https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/whole-grain-resource-national-school-lunch-and-breakfast-programs

Worksheet to Calculate the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in School Lunch and Breakfast Menus for Grades K-12 (CSDE): https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/worksheet_calculate_wgr_percentage_snp_grades_k-12.xlsx

For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs or Crediting Foods in Preschool Menus webpages or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_whole_grains_snp.pdf.

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