Crediting Yogurt in the School Nutrition Programs

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), and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP. The Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP follows the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns.

For information on the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage, Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs webpage, and the "Meal Patterns and Crediting" section of the ASP webpage. For information on the crediting requirements, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage and Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

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Overview of Crediting Requirements

Commercial yogurts and soy yogurts that meet the USDA's limit for added sugars credit toward the meats/meat alternates (MMA) component of the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs. Yogurt includes plain yogurt, flavored yogurt, and yogurt with added fruit, either blended or on the bottom. Yogurt must meet the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standard of identity for yogurt (21 CFR 131.200).

Serving size

The required serving for yogurt is based on volume (cups) or weight (ounces) and is the same for all types, flavors, and fat contents. A ½-cup serving (volume) or 4 ounces (weight) credits as 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of the MMA component.

Table 1. Meal pattern contribution of yogurt

Serving size (volume or weight)	MMA contribution
⅛ cup or 1 ounce	¼ oz eq (minimum creditable amount)
¼ cup or 2 ounces	½ oz eq
½ cup or 4 ounces	1 oz eq
¾ cup or 6 ounces	1½ oz eq
1 cup or 8 ounces	2 oz eq

Limit for Added Sugars



Effective July 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, *Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, requires a limit for added sugars in yogurt and soy yogurt in the school nutrition programs. Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot exceed 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

This limit also applies to yogurt used as an ingredient in other foods, such as a yogurt-fruit parfait and a smoothie made with yogurt and fruit (refer to "Yogurt in Smoothies" in this document).

The CSDE also encourages SFAs to choose yogurt without nonnutritive sweeteners (such as aspartame, acesulfame potassium, sucralose, and stevia) or sugar alcohols. These products are often labeled as "light" or "lite."

Storing crediting documentation for yogurt

SFAs must maintain documentation on file to verify that yogurt served in meals and afterschool snacks meets the limit for added sugars. This documentation must be current and must be maintained in accordance with the records retention requirements for the school nutrition programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Records Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs*. The CSDE will review the crediting documentation for yogurt during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

Methods to Determine Added Sugars

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

Method 1: USDA's added sugars limit chart

Serving sizes for yogurt (in ounces and grams) and the corresponding limit for grams of added sugars per serving are provided in the Institute of Child Nutrition's resource for the meal patterns for grades K-12, *Nutrition Standards for Added Sugars: Yogurt Fact Sheet*, and the USDA's resource for the preschool meal patterns, *Choose Yogurt That Is Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program*. SFAs 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 size of yogurt.

Method 2: Calculation of grams of sugars per serving

The steps below show how to use the use the Nutrition Facts panel to calculate the grams of added sugars per serving based on the ounces or grams of the yogurt's serving size. SFAs may use either calculation method to document that yogurt meets the added sugars limit.

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Steps for serving size in ounces

Yogurt and soy yogurt served in reimbursable meals and snacks cannot exceed 2 grams of added sugars per ounce. Menu planners can use the Nutrition Facts panel to determine if yogurt meets this limit.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 5.3 oz. container (150 g)	
Servings per container: 1	
Amount per serving	
Calories	**120**
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2 g	3%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Cholesterol 10mg	3%
Sodium 90mg	4%
Total Carbohydrates 20g	7%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 15g	
Added Sugars 12 g	24%
Protein 5 g	10%

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.
    - 5.3 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 5.3 ounces = **2.25 grams** of added sugars per ounce
4. Does serving contain 2 grams or less of added sugars per ounce?

    ☐ Yes: This yogurt meets the limit for added sugars.
    ☑ No: This yogurt does not meet the limit for added sugars.

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Steps for serving size in grams

Yogurt meets the limit for added sugars if it does not exceed 0.0702 grams of added sugars per gram of yogurt. This is the gram equivalent of no more than 2 grams of added sugars per ounce (28.35 grams).

1. List the grams (g) of added sugars per serving from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 12 grams
2. List the serving size in grams from the Nutrition Facts label.
    - 150 grams
3. Divide the grams of added sugars per serving (from step 1) by the grams of the serving size (from step 2).
    - 12 grams divided by 150 grams = **0.08 grams** of added sugars per gram of yogurt
4. Does serving meet the limit of no more than 0.0702 gram of added sugars per gram of yogurt?

    ☐ Yes
    ☑ No: This yogurt does not meet the limit for added sugars.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1 container (150 g)	
Servings per container: 1	
Amount per serving	
Calories	**120**
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2 g	3%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Cholesterol 10mg	3%
Sodium 90mg	4%
Total Carbohydrates 20g	7%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 15g	
Added Sugars 12 g	24%
Protein 5 g	10%

This yogurt does not meet the limit for added sugars.

Fruits in Yogurt

Fruits in commercially prepared yogurt or soy yogurt (either blended or on the bottom or top) do not credit toward the fruits component. Menu planners may credit fruits offered as a separate meal component, such as yogurt topped with fresh blueberries or sliced strawberries in a yogurt-fruit parfait.

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Yogurt in Smoothies

Yogurt and soy yogurt that meets the limit for added sugars may credit toward the MMA component when used as an ingredient in smoothies (refer to "Limit for Added Sugars" in this document). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Yogurt Does Not Substitute for Milk

The addition of yogurt to a smoothie is not a substitution for fluid milk in the meal patterns for the school nutrition programs. Fluid milk must be offered in all meals to meet the milk component requirement.

- **Breakfast and lunch meal patterns for grades K-12:** SFAs must offer a variety (at least two different choices) of low-fat or fat-free milk and at least one choice must be unflavored.
- **Preschool breakfast and lunch meal patterns**: SFAs must offer unflavored whole milk for age 1. The allowable types of milk for ages 2-5 include unflavored whole milk, reduced-fat milk, low-fat milk, and fat-free milk.

> Milk is not required at snack but may be offered as one of the two required meal components. A variety of milk is not required for the ASP. When the afterschool snack menu includes milk, SFAs may offer one choice of unflavored or flavored whole milk, reduced-fat milk, low-fat milk, or fat-free milk.

For more information, visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

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Noncreditable Yogurt

Drinkable or squeezable yogurt and frozen yogurt do not credit in reimbursable meals and afterschool snacks. The FDA's definition and standard of identity requires that yogurt must be "coagulated," not liquid. The FDA does not have a standard of identity for frozen yogurt.

Homemade yogurt does not credit for food safety reasons. Yogurt-flavored products (such as yogurt bars and yogurt-covered fruit or nuts) do not credit because they do not meet the FDA's definition and standard of identity for yogurt.

Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/accepting_processed_product_documentation_snp.pdf

Calculating the Added Sugars Limit for Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/calculating-sugar-limits-yogurt

Choose Yogurt That Is Lower in Added Sugars in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (USDA):
https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp/choose-yogurts-lower-sugar

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

Nutrition Standards for Added Sugars: Yogurt Fact Sheet (Institute of Child Nutrition):
https://theicn.org/resources/2582/sugar-reduction-for-schools-fact-sheets/127720/nutrition-standards-for-added-sugars-overview-fact-sheet.pdf

USDA Final Rule: CACFP Meal Pattern Revisions Related to the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (81 FR 24347):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cacfp/fr-042516

USDA Memo SP 02-2024, CACFP 02-2024, and SFSP 02-2024: Revised: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meals Programs, Child and Adult Care Food Program, and Summer Food Service Program:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tofu-soy-yogurt-products-school-meals-cacfp

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USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered

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#module8

Yogurt and Soy Yogurt ("Meats and Meat Alternates" section of CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/meats-and-meat-alternates#Yogurt



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For more information, visit the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff at the Connecticut State 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_yogurt_snp.pdf.

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