Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for 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.

Contents

Overview of Ounce Equivalents (Oz Eq) Chart 2
Creditable Grain Foods 2
Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement for K-12 Menus 3
WGR Requirement for Preschool Menus 3
Limit for Noncreditable Grains for K-12 Menus 3
Grain-based Desserts 4
    Meeting the weekly dietary specifications for breakfast and lunch for grades K-12 5
Using the Grain Oz Eq Chart 5
When a Product Formulation Statement (PFS) is Required 6
    Storing crediting documentation 6
Grain Oz Eq Chart 6
Resources 11

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs

Overview of Ounce Equivalents (Oz Eq) Chart

The USDA's chart, *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs* (known as Exhibit A), summarizes the required quantities for nine groups (A-I) of grain foods. The "Grain Oz Eq Chart" in this document indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements for the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool.

- Groups A-G include baked goods such as crackers, breads, rolls, taco shells, muffins, waffles, pancakes, and grain-based desserts, e.g., cookies, cake, granola bars, and pastries. Grain-based desserts require certain crediting restrictions (refer to "Grain-based Desserts" in this document).

- Group H includes cereal grains like pasta, cooked breakfast cereals, and other cereal grains, e.g., amaranth, barley, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat.

- Group I includes ready-to eat (RTE) cold breakfast cereals.

The amount of a creditable 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 roll (group B) must weigh 28 grams or 1 ounce and a blueberry muffin (group D) must weigh 55 grams or 2 ounces. The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is ¼ oz eq.

Creditable Grain Foods

To credit as the grains component, commercial grain products and foods made from scratch must be made with creditable grains. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran (such as oat bran, wheat bran, corn bran, rice bran, and rye bran), and germ (such as wheat germ). Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains.

- Creditable foods include commercial grain products and foods made from scratch that are whole-grain rich (WGR) or enriched. For guidance on the grain crediting requirements and how to identify WGR and enriched grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs, Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs*, and *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

- Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals include WGR, enriched, and fortified cereals. Breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Additional resources on the grains component are available in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement for K-12 Menus

At least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack must be WGR, based on the total oz eq of all offered grains in the menu. The weekly percentage of WGR menu items must be calculated separately for breakfast, lunch, and snack menus. For information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12* and *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Grains that are not WGR must be enriched. Enriched grains cannot exceed 20 percent of the grains offered in the weekly breakfast, lunch, or snack menu. Grain products that contain bran or germ as the primary grain ingredient count toward the weekly limit for enriched grains. For guidance on identifying WGR foods, refer to the CSDE's *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

WGR Requirement for Preschool Menus

At least one serving of grains per day must be WGR between all meals and afterschool snacks served to preschoolers. The USDA recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. For guidance on identifying WGR foods 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*.

Limit for Noncreditable Grains for K-12 Menus

The NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 require a limit for noncreditable grains that applies to all WGR and enriched grain foods. Noncreditable grains cannot exceed 3.99 grams per portion for groups A-G or 6.99 grams per portion for group H. Examples of noncreditable grains include oat fiber, corn fiber, wheat starch, corn starch, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For guidance on meeting the limit for noncreditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Noncreditable Grains for the School Nutrition Programs and the Connecticut Nutrition Standards*.

Grain-based Desserts

Grain-based desserts are in groups B-G and are indicated in blue or red. Only certain grain-based desserts are allowed in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. Grain-based desserts do not credit in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 or in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns.

- **Breakfast and lunch for grades K-12:** Grain-based desserts in blue are allowed at lunch and breakfast for grades K-12. Examples include sweet crackers (e.g., animal crackers and graham crackers), coffee cakes, cinnamon rolls, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, breakfast bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, and fruit turnovers. The breakfast meal pattern does not require a weekly limit for grain-based desserts but restricts the types that are allowed. The CSDE recommends limiting grain-based desserts at breakfast.

- **Lunch for grades K-12:** Grain-based desserts in red are allowed only at lunch for grades K-12. Examples include cookies, cakes, cupcakes, plain brownies, and piecrusts in sweet pies (e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan). The lunch meal pattern limits grain-based desserts (WGR and enriched) to no more than 2 oz eq per week. For example, the lunch menu may include a 2-oz eq grain-based dessert once per week or a 1-oz eq grain-based dessert twice per week. **Note:** Graham crackers (or any other grain-based desserts) cannot be offered as the grains component of daily alternate lunch choices because this exceeds the 2 oz eq weekly limit.

- **Snack for grades K-12:** Grain-based desserts in blue and red do not credit as the grains component in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12, except for sweet crackers like graham crackers and animal crackers). Sweet crackers are not included in the restrictions for grain-based desserts. They may be served in afterschool snacks for grades K-12. As a best practice, the USDA encourages school food authorities (SFAs) to limit sweet crackers in ASP menus due to their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week at snack.

- **Breakfast, lunch, and snack for preschool:** Grain-based desserts blue and red do not credit as the grains component in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns. except for sweet crackers like graham crackers and animal crackers. Sweet crackers are not included in the restrictions for grain-based desserts. They may be served in preschool meals and snacks. As a best practice, the USDA encourages SFAs to limit sweet crackers in preschool menus due to their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week between all meals and afterschool snacks served to preschoolers.

Meeting the weekly dietary specifications for breakfast and lunch for grades K-12

Menu planners must ensure that breakfast and lunch menus with grain-based desserts still meet the required weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for the meal patterns for grades K-12. Menus that frequently include grain-based desserts might not meet these requirements. For additional guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Grain-based Desserts in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the "Dietary Specifications" section of the CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Using the Grain Oz Eq Chart

The "Grain Oz Eq Chart" in this document indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H and I) for each group of grain products to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component in the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12. This chart also indicates the required quantities for ¾ oz eq, ½ oz eq, and ¼ oz eq (the minimum creditable amount).

SFAs must know the grain item's serving weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H and I) to use this chart. Oz eq are calculated by dividing the grain item's serving weight or volume by the required weight or volume for 1 oz eq of the applicable grain group.

- The serving weight or volume for commercial products is listed on the Nutrition Facts label or product formulation statement (PFS).

- The serving weight or volume for foods made from scratch is determined from the SFA's standardized recipe. If the standardized recipe does not provide this information, the menu planner must determine the average serving weight or volume by weighing or measuring several portions (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Yield Study Data Form for the Child Nutrition Programs*) or use the creditable grains method for determining oz eq (refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the School Nutrition Programs*).

The steps for using the oz eq chart are indicated in the CSDE's resource, *How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs*. Training on oz eq is available in Module 15: Grain Ounce Equivalents of the CSDE's training program, *What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*.

When a Product Formulation Statement (PFS) is Required

The oz eq chart can only be used for creditable grain foods. A manufacturer's PFS is required when the ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if a commercial product meets the crediting criteria. For guidance on when a grain PFS is required and what 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*.

The USDA requires that SFAs must verify PFS forms for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the grain product in reimbursable meals. Additional guidance on PFS forms is available in the CSDE's resource, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs*, and the "Product Formulation Statements" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Storing crediting documentation

SFAs must maintain all PFS forms, standardized recipes, and other crediting documentation on file 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*. This documentation must be current and will be reviewed by the CSDE during the Administrative Review of the school nutrition programs.

Grain Oz Eq Chart

The chart below includes the required quantities for nine groups (A-I) of grain foods in the USDA's *Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs*.

- Grain-based desserts in **blue** are allowed only at breakfast and lunch for grades K-12, except sweet crackers. Sweet crackers are allowed at breakfast, lunch, and snack for grades K-12 and preschool.
- Grain-based desserts in **red** are allowed only at lunch for grades K-12 and cannot exceed 2 oz eq per week.

Grain-based desserts do not credit in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 or the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns.

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs

Group A	Group A Oz Eq
Bread-type coating Breadsticks, hard Chow Mein noodles Crackers, savory, e.g., saltines and snack crackers Croutons Pretzels, hard Stuffing, dry (weights apply to bread in stuffing)	**1 oz eq** = 22 grams or 0.8 ounce **¾ oz eq** = 17 grams or 0.6 ounce **½ oz eq** = 11 grams or 0.4 ounce **¼ oz eq** = 6 grams or 0.2 ounce

Group B	Group B Oz Eq
Bagels Batter-type coating Biscuits Breads, e.g., white, wheat, whole wheat, French, Italian Buns, hamburger and hot dog **Crackers, sweet, e.g., graham crackers and animal crackers, all shapes** [1] Egg roll skins English muffins Pita bread Pizza crust Pretzels, soft Rolls Taco shells Tortilla chips Tortillas	**1 oz eq** = 28 grams or 1 ounce **¾ oz eq** = 21 grams or 0.75 ounce **½ oz eq** = 14 grams or 0.5 ounce **¼ oz eq** = 7 grams or 0.25 ounce

[1] Sweet crackers are allowed at breakfast, lunch, and snack for grades K-12 and preschool. Sweet crackers count toward the weekly limit for grain-based desserts at lunch for grades K-12 (no more than 2 oz eq per week) and cannot be offered as the grains component of daily alternate lunch choices. As a best practice, the USDA encourages SFAs to limit sweet crackers because of their higher sugar content. The CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers in snack menus for grades K-12 to no more than twice per week and limiting sweet crackers in preschool menus to no more than twice per week between all meals and afterschool snacks.

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs

Group C	Group C Oz Eq
Cookies, plain, including vanilla wafers [3] Cornbread Corn muffins Croissants Pancakes Piecrust (**dessert pies** [3], **cobblers** [3], **fruit turnovers** [2], and meat or meat alternate pies) Waffles	**1 oz eq** = 34 grams or 1.2 ounces **¾ oz eq** = 26 grams or 0.9 ounce **½ oz eq** = 17 grams or 0.6 ounce **¼ oz eq** = 9 grams or 0.3 ounce

Group D	Group D Oz Eq
Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, plain [2] **Doughnuts, cake and yeast raised, unfrosted** [2] Muffins, all except corn **Sweet rolls, unfrosted** [2] **Toaster pastries, unfrosted** [2]	**1 oz eq** = 55 grams or 2 ounces **¾ oz eq** = 42 grams or 1.5 ounces **½ oz eq** = 28 grams or 1.0 ounce **¼ oz eq** = 14 grams or 0.5 ounce

Group E	Group E Oz Eq
Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, with nuts, dried fruit, and/or chocolate pieces [2] **Cookies, with fillings or coverings, nuts, raisins, chocolate pieces, and/or fruit purees** [3] **Doughnuts, cake and yeast raised, frosted or glazed** [2] French toast **Sweet rolls, frosted** [2] **Toaster pastries, frosted** [2]	**1 oz eq** = 69 grams or 2.4 ounces **¾ oz eq** = 52 grams or 1.8 ounces **½ oz eq** = 35 grams or 1.2 ounces **¼ oz eq** = 18 grams or 0.6 ounce

[2] Grain-based desserts in **blue** are allowed only at breakfast and lunch for grades K-12. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.

[3] Grain-based desserts in **red** are allowed only at lunch for grades K-12. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs

Group F	Group F Oz Eq
Cake, plain, unfrosted [3] **Coffee cake** [1]	**1 oz eq** = 82 grams or 2.9 ounce **¾ oz eq** = 62 grams or 2.2 ounce **½ oz eq** = 41 grams or 1.5 ounce **¼ oz eq** = 21 grams or 0.7 ounce

Group G	Group G Oz Eq
Brownies, plain [3] **Cake, all varieties, frosted** [3]	**1 oz eq** = 125 grams or 4.4 ounces **¾ oz eq** = 94 grams or 3.3 ounces **½ oz eq** = 63 grams or 2.2 ounces **¼ oz eq** = 32 grams or 1.1 ounces

Group H	Group H Oz Eq
Barley Breakfast cereals, cooked (cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce) [4] Bulgur or cracked wheat Cereal grains, e.g., amaranth, buckwheat, cornmeal, corn grits, farina, kasha, millet, oats, quinoa, wheat berries, and rolled wheat Macaroni, all shapes Noodles, all varieties Pasta, all shapes Ravioli, noodle only Rice, brown or enriched white	**1 oz eq** = ½ cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 grams) dry **½ oz eq** = ¼ cup cooked or ½ ounce (14 grams) dry

[2] Grain-based desserts in **blue** are allowed only at breakfast and lunch for grades K-12. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.

[3] Grain-based desserts in **red** are allowed only at lunch for grades K-12. The weekly total of all grain-based desserts at lunch cannot exceed 2 oz eq.

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs

Group I	Group I Oz Eq
Ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals (cold dry) (Must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce) [4]	**1 oz eq** = 1 cup or 1 ounce for flakes and rounds 1¼ cups or 1 ounce for puffed cereal ¼ cup or 1 ounce for granola **½ oz eq** = ½ cup or ½ ounce for flakes and rounds ¾ cup or ½ ounce for puffed cereal ⅛ cup or ½ ounce for granola

[4] For information on crediting cooked and RTE breakfast cereals, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs*.

Resources

Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items in the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/calculate_wgr_percentage_snp.pdf

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_calculation_snp.pdf

Child Nutrition Programs: Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA webpage):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/tips-evaluating-pfs

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

Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs

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

Crediting Grain-based Desserts in 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/credit_grain_based_desserts_grades_k-12_nslp_sbp.pdf

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

Exhibit A Grains Tool of the Food Buying Guide (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg/webtool

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
https://www.fna.usda.gov/tn/fbg

Grains Component (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/grains

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs

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 Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/guide_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 School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/how_to_use_ounce_equivalents_chart_snp.pdf

Noncreditable Grains for the School Nutrition Programs and the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/noncreditable_grains_snp.pdf

Product Formulation Statements (CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage):
https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs/product-formulation-statements

Records Retention Requirements for the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/records_retention_snp.pdf

USDA Memo SP 05-2025, CACFP 04-2025, and SFSP 02-2025: Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements:
https://www.fna.usda.gov/cn/labeling/guidance-accepting-processed-product-documentation

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.fna.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

Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs

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

What's in a Meal Module 15: Grains Ounce Equivalents (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#module15

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

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 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/grain_oz_eq_chart_snp.pdf.

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