

How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs

School Year 2025-26 (July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026)

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.

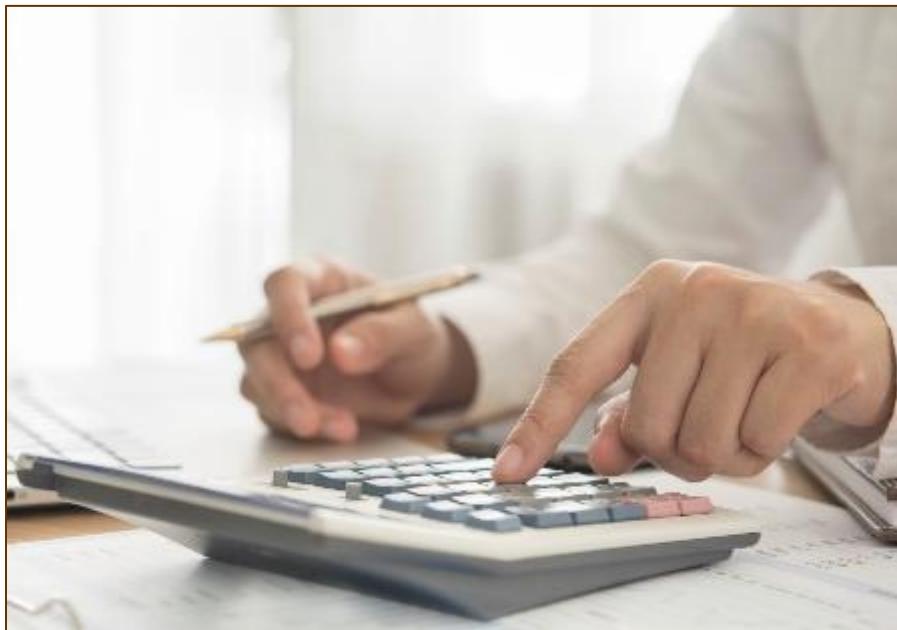


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Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs

The required quantities for the grains component are in ounce equivalents (oz eq). The USDA's chart, [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#), summarizes the required quantities for nine groups (A-I) of grain foods.

- Groups A-F 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.
- Group H includes cereal grains, such as pasta, rice, cooked breakfast cereals, barley, cornmeal, and quinoa.
- Group I includes ready-to-eat cold breakfast cereals.

The CSDE's resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs](#), indicates the applicable Exhibit A quantities and requirements for the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 and preschool.

The Exhibit A quantities are one of the allowable two methods for determining the oz eq of a grain menu item; the other method is the creditable grains per serving. For guidance on both methods for determining oz eq, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Meal Patterns for 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*.

Grain-based desserts at lunch and breakfast for grades K-12

Grain-based desserts are listed in groups B-G. Only certain grain-based desserts are allowed at breakfast and lunch. Grain-based desserts do not credit in the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 or 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. 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.
- **Lunch for grades K-12:** Grain-based desserts in red are allowed only at lunch. Examples include cookies, cakes, cupcakes, plain brownies, and piecrusts in sweet pies

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(e.g., apple, coconut, blueberry, and pecan). The lunch meal pattern requires a weekly limit of no more than 2 oz eq of grain-based desserts.

For additional information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Grain-based Desserts for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Exhibit A Oz Eq Calculation Method

School food authorities (SFAs) must know the applicable weight or volume of the grain menu item to use the Exhibit A oz eq calculation method. The oz eq contribution is calculated by dividing the grain menu item's serving weight or volume by the required weight or volume for 1 oz eq for the applicable Exhibit A grain group.

Commercial products

The serving weight or volume of commercial products is determined from the serving information listed on the Nutrition Facts label or the manufacturer's product formulation statement (PFS). Menu planners cannot use the oz eq chart if the ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if the product meets the meal pattern crediting criteria. These products require a PFS.

For guidance on when a PFS is required and what it must include, refer to the CSDE's resources, [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#). Additional guidance on PFS forms is available in the "[Product Formulation Statements](#)" section of the CSDE's Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs webpage.

Foods made from scratch in groups A-G

To use the oz eq chart for foods made from scratch in groups A-G, SFAs must have a standardized recipe on file that indicates the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving. If the standardized recipe does not provide this information, SFAs must use one of the two methods below.

1. Determine the average serving weight by weighing several portions (refer to the CSDE's [Yield Study Data Form for the Child Nutrition Programs](#)), then use the oz eq chart.

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2. Use the creditable grains method for determining oz eq (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents in the School Nutrition Programs](#)).

SFAs cannot use the oz eq chart if the grain menu item's serving weight is not known.

Rounding rules

SFAs must follow the rounding rules below when calculating the oz eq of a commercial grain product or standardized recipe.

- **Oz eq contribution:** When determining the oz eq of a grain food, always round down to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq. For example, if the calculation indicates that a bagel contains 1.49 oz eq, round down to 1.25 oz eq.
- **Number of pieces per serving:** When determining the number of pieces needed to credit as 1 oz eq, always round up to the next whole number. For example, if the calculation indicates that 6.7 pretzels credit as 1 oz eq, round up to 7 pretzels.

Menu planners must use the appropriate rounding rule to correctly calculate the grain item's oz eq contribution.

Overview of Crediting Examples

The examples on pages 6-8 show the steps for using the Exhibit A quantities in the CSDE's oz eq chart to determine the oz eq contribution of grain menu items in groups A-G. These steps are used for commercial grain products and may also be used for standardized recipes if the menu planner knows the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving (refer to "[Foods made from scratch in groups A-G](#)" in this document).

The examples include three different categories of commercial products and standardized recipes: 1) grain items that contain multiple small pieces per serving, such as crackers, hard pretzels, and animal crackers; 2) grain items that contain multiple large pieces per serving, such as pancakes, slices of bread, and waffles; and 3) grain items that contain one piece per serving, such as muffins, bagels, and rolls. The calculation steps are different for each category.

Before determining a menu item's oz eq, menu planners should check that the commercial grain product or standardized recipe is creditable, i.e., whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched.

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Guidance on identifying WGR and enriched grains for the meal patterns for grades K-12

Guidance on identifying WGR and enriched grains for the NSLP, SBP, and ASP meal patterns for grades K-12 is available in 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](#), [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Training is available in modules 13-15 of the CSDE's training program, [What's in a Meal: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Guidance on identifying WGR and enriched grains for the preschool meal patterns

Guidance on identifying WGR and enriched grains for the NSLP, SBP, and ASP preschool meal patterns is available in the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [How to Identify Creditable Grains for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#).

Training is available in [Module 8: Grains Component](#) of the CSDE's training program, [Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs](#).



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Example for Category 1: Multiple Small Pieces Per Serving

For grain items that contain multiple small pieces per serving (such as crackers, hard pretzels, and animal crackers), calculate the number of pieces per oz eq by dividing the required weight (grams) for 1 oz eq of the applicable grain group listed in Exhibit A by the grams per piece. The steps below show an example of this calculation for whole grain-rich crackers in group A.

Whole Grain-rich Crackers (Group A)

- Serving size: 6 crackers (28 g)



Exhibit A Oz Eq for Group A

- 1 oz eq = 22 grams or 0.8 ounce

Steps for Determining Oz Eq for Category 1

- Grams per manufacturer's serving:** List the manufacturer's serving size in grams (g) from the Nutrition Facts label or PFS: 28 grams
- Pieces per manufacturer's serving:** List the number of pieces per manufacturer's serving from the Nutrition Facts label or PFS: 6 pieces
- Calculate grams per piece:** Divide grams per serving (step 1) by pieces per serving (step 2): 28 grams divided by 6 pieces = 4.67 grams per piece
- Required weight for 1 oz eq:** List the required weight for 1 oz eq for the product's group (A-G) in Exhibit A. 22 grams
- Calculate number of pieces per oz eq:** Divide the required weight for 1 oz eq (step 4) by the grams per piece (step 3): 22 grams divided by 4.67 grams per piece = 4.7 pieces per oz eq
- Round up to next whole number:** 5 pieces (crackers) = 1 oz eq

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Example for Category 2: Multiple Large Pieces Per Serving

For grain items that contain multiple large pieces per serving (such as pancakes, slices of bread, and waffles), calculate the oz eq contribution per piece by dividing the required weight (grams) for 1 oz eq of the applicable grain group listed in Exhibit A by the grams per piece. The steps below show an example of this calculation for enriched pancakes in group C.

Enriched Pancakes (Group C)

- Serving size: 3 pancakes (116 g)



Exhibit A Oz Eq for Group C

- 1 oz eq = 34 grams or 1.2 ounces

Steps for Determining Oz Eq for Category 2

1. **Grams per manufacturer's serving:** List the manufacturer's serving size in grams (g) from the Nutrition Facts label or PFS: 116 grams
2. **Pieces per manufacturer's serving:** List the number of pieces per manufacturer's serving from the Nutrition Facts label or PFS: 3 pieces
3. **Calculate grams per piece:** Divide grams per manufacturer's serving (step 1) by pieces per manufacturer's serving (step 2): 116 grams divided by 3 pieces = 38.67 grams per piece
4. **Required weight for 1 oz eq:** List the required weight for 1 oz eq for the product's group (A-G) in Exhibit A. 34 grams
5. **Calculate oz eq per piece:** Divide grams per piece (step 3) by required weight for 1 oz eq (step 4): 38.67 grams divided by 34 grams= 1.14 oz eq per piece
6. **Round down to nearest 1/4 oz eq:** 1 oz eq per piece (1 pancake)

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Example for Category 3: One Piece Per Serving

For grain items that contain one piece per serving (such as muffins, bagels, and rolls), calculate the oz eq contribution per serving by dividing the grams per serving by the required weight (grams) for 1 oz eq of the applicable grain group listed in Exhibit A. The steps below show an example of this calculation for whole grain-rich blueberry muffin in group D.

Whole Grain-rich Blueberry Muffin (Group D)

- Serving size: 1 muffin (57 g)



Exhibit A Oz Eq for Group D

- 1 oz eq = 55 grams or 2 ounces

Steps for Determining Oz Eq for Category 3

1. **Grams per manufacturer's serving:** List the serving size in grams (g) from the Nutrition Facts label or PFS: 57 grams
2. **Required weight for 1 oz eq:** List the required weight for 1 oz eq for the product's group (A-G) in Exhibit A: 55 grams
3. **Calculate oz eq per serving:** Divide the grams per manufacturer's serving (step 1) by the required weight for 1 oz eq (step 2): 57 grams divided by 55 grams= 1.04 oz eq per muffin
4. **Round down to the nearest 1/4 oz eq:** 1 oz eq per muffin

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Grain Crediting Tools

The USDA's online [Food Buying Guide Interactive Web-based Tool](#) provides several resources to help menu planners determine crediting information. The Exhibit A Grains Tool determines the oz eq of commercial grain products. The Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW) allows menu planners to search for ingredients, develop a standardized recipe, and determine the meal pattern contribution per serving. To access this tool, users must create a free account on the USDA's FBG website.

For more information on oz eq, refer to "[Serving Requirements](#)" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

Resources

[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

[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 Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_whole_grains_snp.pdf

[Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (USDA):

<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/ExhibitA.pdf>

[Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the School Nutrition Programs](#) (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/grain_oz_eq_snp.pdf

[Grains Component](#) (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-foods-in-school-nutrition-programs/grains>

[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

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Module 8: Grains Component (CSDE's Preschool Meal Pattern Training for the School Nutrition Programs):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-preschoolers-in-school-nutrition-programs/preschool-meal-pattern-training#module8>

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 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 13: Grains Component (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#module13>

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/how_to_use_ounce_equivalents_chart_snp.pdf.



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