

How to Use the Grains/Breads Servings Chart for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12

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

This guidance applies to the meal pattern for grades K-12 in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) through June 30, 2025. For additional guidance on the ASP meal pattern and crediting requirements for the grains/breads component, visit the “Meal Patterns for the ASP” and “Grains/Breads Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP” sections of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) Afterschool Snack Program webpage.



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Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs

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 Exhibit A quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The CSDE's ASP grains/breads servings chart, [Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#), indicates the Exhibit A servings that apply to the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12.

The Exhibit A quantities are one of the two methods for determining the grains/breads servings of a grain menu item in the ASP meal patterns for grades K-12; the other method is the creditable grains per serving. For guidance on the creditable grains method for determining grains/breads servings, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#).

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 grains component of the ASP meal pattern for grades K-12 with the CACFP snack meal pattern requirements and implements the following changes: 1) the grains/breads component changes to the grains component and the required quantities change from servings to ounce equivalents (oz eq); 2) the NSLP and SBP weekly whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement applies, i.e., at least 80 percent of the weekly grains offered at snack must be WGR, based on oz eq of offered grains; 3) breakfast cereals cannot exceed 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce; and 4) consistent with the CACFP meal patterns for children, grain-based deserts cannot credit in ASP snacks.

Grain-based desserts

Grain-based desserts are in groups C-G. They are indicated in red in the CSDE's ASP grains/breads servings chart. The CSDE recommends limiting grain-based desserts to no more than twice per week. For additional information, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Grain-based Desserts for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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Exhibit A Calculation Method

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

Commercial products

For commercial products, the serving weight or volume is determined from the serving information listed on the Nutrition Facts label or product formulation statement (PFS). The grains/breads servings chart cannot be used if the product's ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if it meets the ASP 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](#).

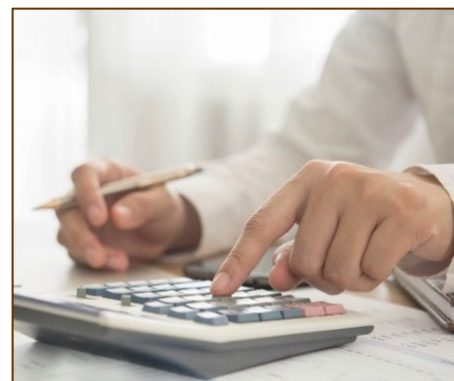
Foods made from scratch in groups A-G

To use the grains/breads servings 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 either 1) determine the average serving weight by weighing several portions (refer to the CSDE's [Yield Study Data Form for Child Nutrition Programs](#)), then use the grains/breads servings chart; or 2) use the creditable grains method for determining grains/breads servings (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grains/Breads Servings for the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12](#)). The grains/breads servings chart cannot be used if the grain menu item's serving weight is not known.

Rounding rules

SFAs must follow the rounding rules below when calculating the grains/breads servings of a commercial grain product or recipes for foods made from scratch.

- **Grains/breads servings contribution:** When determining the grains/breads servings of a grain food, always round down to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ grains/breads serving. For example, if the calculation indicates that a bagel contains 1.49 grains/breads servings, round down to 1.25 grains/breads servings.



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- **Number of pieces per serving:** When determining the number of pieces needed to credit as 1 grains/breads serving., always round up to the next whole number. For example, if the calculation indicates that 6.7 pretzels credit as 1 grains/breads serving, round up to 7 pretzels.

Make sure to use the appropriate rounding rule to correctly calculate the grain item's grains/breads servings contribution.

Crediting Examples

The examples below show the steps for using the Exhibit A quantities in the CSDE's grains/breads servings chart to determine the grains/breads servings for grain menu items in groups A-G. These steps are used for commercial grain products and may also be used for 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 ([example 1](#)); 2) grain items that contain multiple large pieces per serving, such as pancakes, slices of bread, and waffles ([example 2](#)); and 3) grain items that contain one piece per serving, such as muffins, bagels, and rolls ([example 3](#)). The calculation steps are different for each category.

Before determining grains/breads servings, make sure the commercial grain product or standardized recipe is creditable. The grain food must be whole grain, enriched, or contain a blend of whole and enriched grains. For information on how to identify creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Enriched Grains in the School Nutrition Programs](#).

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Example 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 in 1 grains/breads serving by dividing the required weight (grams) for 1 grains/breads serving of the applicable grain group listed in Exhibit A by the grams per piece. The steps below show this calculation for an example of whole grain-rich crackers in group A.



Whole grain-rich crackers (group A)

Nutrition Facts	
About 9 Servings per container	
Serving Size	6 crackers (28g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	120

Group A

Bread sticks, hard
 Bread-type coating
 Chow Mein noodles
Crackers, savory, e.g., saltines and snack crackers
 Croutons
 Pretzels, hard
 Stuffing, dry **Note:** weights apply to bread in stuffing

Servings for Group A

1 serving= 20 grams or 0.7 ounce
 $\frac{3}{4}$ serving= 15 grams or 0.5 ounce
 $\frac{1}{2}$ serving= 10 grams or 0.4 ounce
 $\frac{1}{4}$ serving= 5 grams or 0.2 ounce

Steps for determining grains/breads servings: multiple small pieces per serving

- 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 grains/breads serving:** List the required weight for 1 grains/breads serving for the product's group (A-G) in Exhibit A. 20 grams
- Calculate number of pieces in 1 grains/breads serving:** Divide the required weight for 1 grains/breads serving (step 4) by the grams per piece (step 3): 20 grams divided by 4.67 grams per piece = 4.28 pieces per 1 grains/breads serving
- Round up to next whole number:** 5 pieces (crackers) = 1 grains/breads serving

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Example 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 grains/breads serving contribution per piece by dividing the required weight (grams) for 1 grains/breads serving of the applicable grain group listed in Exhibit A by the grams per piece. The steps below show this calculation for an example of enriched pancakes in group C.



Enriched pancakes (group C)	
Nutrition Facts	
4 Servings per container	
Serving Size	3 pancakes (116g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	280

Group C

Cookies, plain, including vanilla wafers ²

Cornbread

Corn muffins

Croissants

Pancakes

Piecrust (dessert pies ², cobblers ², fruit turnovers ¹, and meat or meat alternate pies)

Waffles

Servings for Group C

1 serving = 31 grams or 1.1 ounces

$\frac{3}{4}$ serving = 23 grams or 0.8 ounce

$\frac{1}{2}$ serving = 16 grams or 0.6 ounce

$\frac{1}{4}$ serving = 8 grams or 0.3 ounce

² Allowed only at snack. The CSDE recommends not serving grain-based desserts more than twice per week.

³ Allowed at breakfast and snack. The CSDE recommends not serving grain-based desserts more than twice per week.

Steps for determining grains/breads servings: multiple large pieces per serving

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 grains/breads serving:** List the required weight for 1 grains/breads serving for the product's group (A-G) in Exhibit A. 31 grams
5. **Calculate grains/breads servings per piece:** Divide grams per piece (step 3) by required weight for 1 grains/breads serving (step 4): 38.67 grams divided by 31 grams = 1.24 grains/breads servings per piece.

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6. **Round down to nearest ¼ serving:** 1 grains/breads serving per piece (1 pancake)

Example 3: One piece per serving

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



Whole grain-rich blueberry muffin (group D)

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size	1 muffin (57g)
Servings per container 6	
Amount per serving	
Calories	210

<p>Group D Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, plain ¹ Doughnuts, cake and yeast raised, unfrosted ¹ Muffins, all except corn Sweet rolls, unfrosted Toaster pastries, unfrosted ¹</p>	<p>Servings for Group D 1 serving = 50 grams or 1.8 ounces ¾ serving = 38 grams or 1.3 ounces ½ serving = 25 grams or 0.9 ounce ¼ serving = 13 grams or 0.5 ounce</p>
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¹ Allowed at breakfast and snack. The CSDE recommends not serving grain-based desserts more than twice per week.

Steps for determining grains/breads servings: one piece per serving

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 grains/breads serving:** List the required weight for 1 grains/breads serving for the product’s group (A-G) in Exhibit A: 50 grams
3. **Calculate grains/breads servings per manufacturer’s serving:** Divide the grams per serving (step 1) by the required weight for 1 grains/breads serving (step 2): 57 grams ÷ 50 grams= 1.14 grains/breads servings
4. **Round down to the nearest ¼ serving:** 1 grains/breads serving per muffin

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Grain Crediting Tools

The tools below help menu planners determine the meal pattern contribution (including grain oz eq) of creditable products and standardized 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 grains/breads servings 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.

For more information on grains/breads servings, visit the “[Serving Size for Grains/Breads](#)” section of the CSDE’s ASP webpage.

Resources

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/grains_breads_calculation_asp_grades_k-12.pdf

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 for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/crediting/credit_grain_based_desserts_grades-k-12_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>

Food Buying Guide Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool>

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Grains/Breads Component (“Documents/Forms” section of the CSDE’s Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/afterschool-snack-program/documents#GrainsBreadsK12>

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Grains_Oz_Eq_Fillable_508.pdf

Product Formulation Statement for Documenting Grains in Child Nutrition Programs – Completed Sample (USDA):

https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Example_Grains_Oz_Eq.pdf

Servings for Grains/Breads in the Afterschool Snack Program Meal Pattern for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/asp/grains_breads_servings_asp_grades_k-12.pdf

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/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>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

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

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For more information, visit the “[Grains/Breads Component for Grades K-12 in the ASP](#)” section of the CSDE’s [ASP](#) 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_grains_breads_servings_chart_asp_k-12.pdf.

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1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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