

Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

This guidance applies to the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) meal patterns for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. For information on the meal pattern requirements and crediting foods for grades K-12, refer to the CSDE’s Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 and visit the CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs and Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpages. For more information on the ASP meal patterns, visit the CSDE’s ASP webpage.



Noncreditable foods are foods and beverages that do not count toward the USDA’s meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs. They include foods and beverages in amounts too small to credit (i.e., less than the minimum creditable amount) and foods and beverages that do not belong to the meal pattern components. Examples of noncreditable foods include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. The chart on page 2 lists additional examples of noncreditable foods in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. This list is not all-inclusive.

School food authorities (SFAs) may serve noncreditable foods in addition to the meal components to add variety, help improve acceptability in the meal, and satisfy appetites. Examples include maple syrup on pancakes, salad dressing on tossed greens, and condiments such as ketchup or mustard on sandwiches and other entrees.

To ensure that school meals meet children’s nutritional needs, the CSDE encourages SFAs to use discretion when serving noncreditable foods. Noncreditable foods typically contain few nutrients and are higher in added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. Menu planners should read labels, be aware of the ingredients in foods, and limit the frequency and amount of less nutritious choices.



Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

Some noncreditable foods (such as candy, soda, coffee, tea, and sports drinks) cannot be sold in school nutrition programs due to federal or state requirements. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage and [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

Noncreditable foods offered as part of reimbursable meals for grades K-12 must count toward the weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for school meals. They must contain zero trans fat and their inclusion cannot cause the menu to exceed the average weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For information on the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#) and the “Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards for School Meals)” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Examples of noncreditable foods for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns ¹	
For additional guidance, refer to the footnotes on page 4.	
Almond flour	Condiments, e.g., ketchup, mustard, relish, barbecue sauce
Almond milk ²	Cranberry cocktail drink
Bacon (pork)	Cream, half and half
Bacon bits, regular or imitation	Cream cheese
Banana chips	Dehydrated vegetables used for seasoning
Bread products that are not whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched ³	Drinkable or squeezable yogurt and yogurt drinks ⁶
Breakfast cereals (ready-to-eat and cooked) that are not whole grain, whole grain-rich, enriched, or fortified ⁴	Eggnog
Butter	Egg whites without the yolk
Candy	Frozen yogurt
Candy-coated popcorn	Fruit drink, fruit beverage, powdered fruit drink mix
Cashew milk ²	Fruit leathers (100 percent fruit)
Chili sauce	Fruit punch (not 100 percent juice)
Chocolate milk-based drinks, e.g., Yoo-Hoo	Fruit snacks, e.g., fruit roll-ups, wrinkles, and twists
Coconut flour	Gelatin, regular and sugar free
Coconut milk	Grain products that are not whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched ³
Coffee (regular, decaffeinated, and iced)	Home-canned products, e.g., vegetables and fruits
Commercial processed products without a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS), e.g., entrees, smoothies, and breaded vegetables ⁵	Honey
Commercial smoothies that contain dietary or herbal supplements	

Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

Examples of noncreditable foods for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns ¹, *continued*

Hot chocolate	Pudding pops
Ice cream and ice cream novelties	Rice milk ²
Ice milk	Salad dressings
Iced coffee	Salt pork
Iced tea	Scrapple
Imitation cheese	Sherbet
Jam and jelly	Soda, regular and diet
Ketchup	Soups, commercial cream of vegetable, e.g., cream of broccoli, cream of mushroom, and cream of celery
Lemonade	Soups, commercial non-vegetable, e.g., beef barley, beef noodle, turkey or chicken noodle, and turkey or chicken rice
Limeade	Sour cream
Liquid egg substitutes	Soy milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes ²
Maple syrup	Sports drinks, regular and diet
Margarine	Spreadable fruit
Marshmallows	Syrup
Mayonnaise	Tea, regular, herbal, and iced
Milk, reduced fat (2%) and whole	Tofu with less than 5 grams of protein in 2.2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) ⁷
Mustard	Water ⁸
Nectar drinks	Yogurt products, e.g., drinkable or squeezable yogurt, frozen yogurt, yogurt bars, and yogurt-covered fruits and nuts
Nondairy milk substitutes that do not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes ²	
Nutrition supplement beverages, e.g., Abbott's Pediasure	
Oat milk that does not meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes ²	
Pickle relish	
Popsicles (not 100 percent juice)	
Potato chips	
Powdered milk beverages, e.g., Nestle's NIDO	
Probiotic dairy drinks	
Pudding	

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Footnotes

- ¹ Foods sold separately from reimbursable meals (a la carte) must meet the [Connecticut Nutrition Standards](#) (which apply to public school districts that participate in the healthy food option of [Healthy Food Certification \(HFC\)](#)) or the USDA [Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards (which apply to public school districts that do not participate in the healthy food option of HFC, and to private schools and residential child care institutions). Beverages sold as part of and separately from reimbursable meals in public schools must comply with the state beverage requirements of [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) and the USDA [Smart Snacks](#) nutrition standards. Some sales of foods and beverages are prohibited due to federal or state requirements. Review all noncreditable foods to ensure compliance before selling to students. For more information, visit the CSDE's webpages, [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) and [Beverage Requirements](#) webpages.
- ² Milk substitutes for children without a disability must meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#).
- ³ For guidance on identifying creditable grains, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Whole Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), [Crediting Enriched Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).
- ⁴ For guidance on creditable cereals, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).
- ⁵ Commercial products without a CN label or PFS cannot credit in preschool meals and snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#); and the USDA's [Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement](#). Additional guidance is available in the "Crediting Commercial Processed Products" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage. 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](#).
- ⁶ For guidance on crediting yogurt, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Yogurt for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).
- ⁷ For guidance on crediting tofu, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).
- ⁸ SFAs must make drinking water available to children at no charge where meals are served during the meal service, including the ASP. However, SFAs cannot promote or offer water or any other beverage as an alternative selection to fluid milk throughout the food service area. For more information, refer to [USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities](#) and [USDA Memo SP 19-2018: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Programs](#). Training on the water requirement is available in Module 14: Water Availability during Meal Service 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](#).

Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

Resources

Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/SpecDiet/Milk_Substitutes_SNP.pdf

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalent for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Grain_Calculation_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschool and Grades K-12 in the ASP:

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/ASP/ASP_Comparison_Preschool_K12.pdf

Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Competitive-Foods>

Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Connecticut-Nutrition-Standards>

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Commercial_MMA_SNP.pdf

Crediting Enriched Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Enriched_Grains_SNP.pdf

Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Crediting_Summary_Charts_SNP_Grades_K-12.pdf

Crediting Whole Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Whole_Grains_SNP.pdf

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

Healthy Food Certification (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Healthy-Food-Certification>

List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/List-of-Acceptable-Foods-and-Beverages>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/WGR_Requirement_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals 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>

Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/MealPattern/Resources_School_Meal_Patterns_grades_K-12.pdf

USDA Memo SP 19-2018: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Programs.

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2018/SP19-2018s.pdf>

USDA Memo SP 49-2016 and CACFP 18-2016: Resources for Making Potable Water Available in Schools and Child Care Facilities:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/resources-making-potable-water-available-schools-and-child-care-facilities-0>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CN_Labels_SNP.pdf

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 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>

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For more information, refer to the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12* and visit the CSDE's *Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs* and *Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs* 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/Noncreditable_Foods_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf.

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