

Transitional Sodium Limits for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP)

July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) final rule, *Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains and Sodium* (87 FR 6984), establishes transitional standards for school meals to support the continued provision of nutritious school meals as schools respond to and recover from the pandemic and allows the USDA to engage in notice-and-comment rulemaking to update the meal pattern standards to more comprehensively reflect the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025*. The transitional sodium standards are intended to encourage the reintroduction of lower sodium foods and meals to students and provide additional time for the food industry to develop and test lower sodium products that are palatable to students. The NSLP and SBP have different transitional sodium standards.

The table below summarizes the transitional sodium limits for school meals through school year 2023-24. Meals offered on average over the week must meet the sodium target for each grade group. These sodium limits do not apply per day, per meal, or per menu item. This allows menu planners to occasionally offer higher sodium meals or menu items if they are balanced with lower sodium meals and menu items throughout the week.



Table 1. Transitional weekly sodium limits for school meals (milligrams)

Grade group	SBP	NSLP	
	School Years 2022-23 and 2023-24 <i>Effective July 1, 2022</i>	Target 1: School Year 2022-23 <i>Effective July 1, 2022</i>	Target 1A: School Year 2023-24 <i>Effective July 1, 2023</i>
K-5	≤ 540	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,110
6-8	≤ 600	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,225
9-12	≤ 640	≤ 1,420	≤ 1,280
K-8 option ¹	≤ 540	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,110
6-12 option ^{1,2}	≤ 600	Not applicable	Not applicable
K-12 option ^{1,2}	≤ 540	Not applicable	Not applicable

¹ School food authorities may use the optional meal patterns when students from different grades eat together during the same meal period. These meal patterns require a lower sodium limit because the weekly amounts cannot exceed the highest level for each grade group or go below the lowest level for each grade group.

² The optional meal patterns for grades 6-12 and grades K-12 apply only to the SBP.

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NSLP

For school year 2022-23 (effective July 1, 2022), school lunches must meet the weekly sodium limit for Target 1. For school year 2023-24 (effective July 1, 2023), school lunches must meet Target 1A. This limit is a 10 percent decrease for achievable long-term sodium reduction, which the USDA will address in future rulemaking.

SBP

Effective July 1, 2022, school breakfasts must meet one sodium target for school years 2022-23 and 2023-24. Breakfast has only one target because there is a greater need for sodium reduction at lunch.

Resources

Be Salt Smart (USDA Choose MyPlate):

<https://www.myplate.gov/tip-sheet/be-salt-smart>

Fact Sheet: Reducing Sodium in the Diets of American Children (American Heart Association):

<https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/About-Us/Policy-Research/Fact-Sheets/Access-to-Healthy-Food/Reducing-Sodium-in-the-Diet-of-US-Children-Fact-Sheet.pdf>

Lowering Sodium in School Lunches (American Heart Association):

<https://www.heart.org/-/media/Files/About-Us/Policy-Research/Fact-Sheets/Access-to-Healthy-Food/INFOGRAPHIC-Lowering-Sodium-in-School-Foods.pdf>

Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Menu-Planning-Guide-for-School-Meals>

Reducing Sodium in Children's Diets infographic (CDC):

<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/children-sodium/infographic.html>

Resources for the School Meal Patterns (CSDE):

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

Shaking it Up initiative (Institute of Child Nutrition):

<https://theicn.org/shaking-it-up/>

Sodium (Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards for School Meals) section of CSDE's Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

Tools for Schools: Reducing Sodium (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools-sodium>

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Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium – Final Rule (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-020722>

USDA Final Rule: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains and Sodium (87 FR 6984)

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/02/07/2022-02327/child-nutrition-programs-transitional-standards-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium>

USDA Regulations 7 CFR Part 210: National School Lunch Program:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-210>

USDA Regulations 7 CFR Part 220: School Breakfast Program:

<https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-220>

What's in a Meal Module 5: Dietary Specifications (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>

For more resources, visit the “Sodium” section of the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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For more information, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [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](#) 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/MealPattern/Transitional_Sodium_Limits_NSLP_SBP.pdf.

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