

## Menu Planning for Shorter or Longer Weeks in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) meal patterns for grades K-12 are based on a five-day week. When a school week **regularly** operates on a shorter or longer cycle, menu planners must increase or decrease the weekly requirements by 20 percent for each day that deviates from the standard five-day week. For the vegetables component, adjustments are made only to the “additional vegetables” category. Due to the smaller size of the weekly vegetable subgroup requirements, the 20 percent adjustment is not practical for the five vegetable subgroups.

The charts in this document summarize these requirements. All amounts are rounded to the nearest ½ ounce equivalent (oz eq) and ¼ cup. Meal patterns for a four-day week, five-day week, and seven-day week are available on the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

The NSLP and SBP preschool meal patterns (ages 1-4) do not have weekly requirements. For guidance on the preschool meal patterns, refer to the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for the Preschool Meal Patterns of the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Preschoolers in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Schools with **occasional** decreases in the school week due to holidays, snow days, or other reasons are not required to adjust the weekly requirements. However, school menus must be consistent with the intent of the meal patterns. For example, menu planners must ensure that school menus do not consistently fail to offer certain vegetable subgroups.

### Daily Requirements and Dietary Specifications

The daily meal pattern requirements and weekly dietary specifications are unaffected by a longer or shorter week. Since the dietary specifications are daily averages, either fewer or more days are averaged together to meet the specified targets for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

The dietary specifications are the USDA’s nutrition standards for NSLP and SBP meals. They include weekly calorie ranges and limits for saturated fat and sodium. For more information, visit the “[Dietary Specifications \(Nutrition Standards for School Meals\)](#)” section of the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

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## Weekly Requirements at Lunch

### Three-day school week for lunch

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	1½	1½	3
Vegetables (cups)	2¼	2¼	3
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	½	½	1
Beans, peas, and lentils	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	¼	¼	½
Additional vegetables to reach total	0	0	0
Grains (oz eq)	5-5½	5-6	6-7
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	5-6	5½-6	6-7
Fluid milk (cups)	3	3	3

### Four-day school week for lunch

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	2	2	4
Vegetables (cups)	3	3	4
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans, peas, and lentils	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	¼	¼	½
Grains (oz eq)	6½-7	6½-8	8-9½
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	6½-8	7-8	8-9½
Fluid milk (cups)	4	4	4

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### Six-day school week for lunch

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3	3	6
Vegetables (cups)	4½	4½	6
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans, peas, and lentils	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	1¾	1¾	2½
Grains (oz eq)	9½-11	9½-12	12-14½
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	9½-12	11-12	12-14½
Fluid milk (cups)	6	6	6

### Seven-day school week for lunch

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3½	3½	7
Vegetables (cups)	5¼	5¼	7
Dark green	½	½	½
Red/orange	¾	¾	1¼
Beans, peas, and lentils	½	½	½
Starchy	½	½	½
Other	½	½	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total	2½	2½	3½
Grains (oz eq)	11-12½	11-14	14-17
Meats/meat alternates (oz eq)	11-14	12½-14	14-17
Fluid milk (cups)	7	7	7

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## Weekly Requirements at Breakfast

Effective July 1, 2024, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), establishes a combined grains and MMA component in the SBP meal pattern and removes the requirement to offer 1 oz eq of grains each day at breakfast. The weekly requirements for the grains/MMA component below apply to the total oz eq of grains and MMA in the weekly breakfast menu.

### Three-day school week for breakfast

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	3	3	3
Grains/MMA (oz eq)	4-6	5-6	5½-6
Fluid milk (cups)	3	3	3

### Four-day school week for breakfast

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	4	4	4
Grains/MMA (oz eq)	5½-8	6½-8	7-8
Fluid milk (cups)	4	4	4

### Six-day school week for breakfast

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	6	6	6
Grains/MMA (oz eq)	8½-12	9½-12	11-12
Fluid milk (cups)	6	6	6

### Seven-day school week for breakfast

Meal components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	7	7	7
Grains/MMA (oz eq)	10-14	11-14	12½-14
Fluid milk (cups)	7	7	7

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## Resources

Fruits Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

Grains Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

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

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-school-nutrition-programs>

Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

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 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guide-for-school-meals>

Milk Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs>

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](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/meal_pattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_grades_k-12.pdf)

School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/school-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 38-2019: Meal Requirements under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program: Questions and Answers for Program Operators:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-final-rule-nutrition-standards-national-school-lunch-and-school-breakfast-programs>

Vegetables Component for Grades K-12 (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

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For more information, 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/mealpattern/weekly\\_adjustments\\_nslp\\_sbp.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/weekly_adjustments_nslp_sbp.pdf).

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov)

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