



Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program
School Year 2023-24 (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024)



August 2023

Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504
Hartford, CT 06103-1841

Connecticut State Department of Education

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVS_Guide_SNP.pdf

Project Director: Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator

In accordance with federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, this institution is prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex (including gender identity and sexual orientation), disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity.

Program information may be made available in languages other than English. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication to obtain program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language), should contact the responsible state or local agency that administers the program or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.

To file a program discrimination complaint, a Complainant should complete a Form AD-3027, USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form which can be obtained online at: <https://www.usda.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ad-3027.pdf>, from any USDA office, by calling (866) 632-9992, or by writing a letter addressed to USDA. The letter must contain the complainant's name, address, telephone number, and a written description of the alleged discriminatory action in sufficient detail to inform the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights (ASCR) about the nature and date of an alleged civil rights violation. The completed AD-3027 form or letter must be submitted to USDA by:

1. mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
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

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

The Connecticut State Department of Education is committed to a policy of equal opportunity/affirmative action for all qualified persons. The Connecticut Department of Education does not discriminate in any employment practice, education program, or educational activity on the basis of race; color; religious creed; age; sex; pregnancy; sexual orientation; workplace hazards to reproductive systems, gender identity or expression; marital status; national origin; ancestry; retaliation for previously opposed discrimination or coercion, intellectual disability; genetic information; learning disability; physical disability (including, but not limited to, blindness); mental disability (past/present history thereof); military or veteran status; status as a victim of domestic violence; or criminal record in state employment, unless there is a bona fide occupational qualification excluding persons in any of the aforementioned protected classes. Inquiries regarding the Connecticut State Department of Education's nondiscrimination policies should be directed to: Attorney Louis Todisco, Connecticut State Department of Education, by mail 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103-1841; or by telephone 860-713-6594; or by email louis.todisco@ct.gov.

Contents

| | |
|--|-----------|
| About This Guide | vii |
| CSDE Contact Information..... | viii |
| Abbreviations and Acronyms | ix |
| 1 — Overview of OVS | 1 |
| Table 1-1. Overview of OVS requirements for grades K-12..... | 2 |
| OVS Requirements for the NSLP and SBP | 3 |
| Meeting the meal pattern requirements | 3 |
| Crediting documentation..... | 3 |
| Unit pricing | 4 |
| Point-of-service meal counts | 5 |
| Offering choices within components | 5 |
| Meal identification signage..... | 6 |
| Table 1-2. Examples of language for OVS signage..... | 8 |
| When signage is not required..... | 9 |
| Food service staff training..... | 9 |
| A la carte sales..... | 10 |
| Extra foods..... | 10 |
| Considerations for Meal Service Systems with OVS | 11 |
| Classroom meals..... | 11 |
| Vending machine meals..... | 13 |
| Advance ordering of meals | 13 |
| Pre-plated meals..... | 13 |
| Pre-packaged meals | 14 |
| Family-style meals..... | 14 |
| Salad bars | 15 |
| OVS Resources..... | 18 |
| 2 — OVS at Lunch..... | 21 |
| Same Meal Pattern for OVS | 21 |
| Two OVS Requirements | 21 |
| Table 2-1. Summary of OVS requirements for lunch..... | 22 |
| Overview of OVS Requirements for Lunch | 22 |
| Offering Each Food Component as One Food..... | 24 |
| Table 2-2. Offering each component as one food for grades K-5 and 6-8..... | 25 |
| Table 2-3. Offering each component as one food for grades 9-12..... | 26 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Offering a Component as More than One Food | 27 |
| Menu planning considerations..... | 28 |
| Table 2-4. Offering grains and MMA components as two separate foods for grades 9-12..... | 29 |
| Milk Component with OVS at Lunch..... | 31 |
| Serving Size for Milk..... | 31 |
| Table 2-5. Meal pattern servings for the milk component at lunch..... | 31 |
| Allowable Types of Milk | 31 |
| Milk Variety..... | 31 |
| State Requirement for Milk..... | 32 |
| Crediting Milk for OVS..... | 32 |
| Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component with OVS at Lunch..... | 33 |
| Main Dish Requirement for Lunch | 33 |
| Requirement for recognizable main dish | 33 |
| Serving Size for MMA | 34 |
| Table 2-6. Meal pattern servings for the MMA component at lunch..... | 34 |
| Amount required for 1 oz eq..... | 35 |
| Offering Minimum Daily MMA as Two Separate Foods | 36 |
| OVS examples for grades 9-12..... | 37 |
| Table 2-7. Offering minimum daily MMA for grades 9-12 as two 1-oz eq foods.... | 37 |
| Offering More than Minimum Daily MMA..... | 38 |
| Offering entrees as two separate MMA foods | 38 |
| OVS examples for two MMA with the same oz eq | 39 |
| Table 2-8. Offering two 1-oz eq MMA for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch..... | 39 |
| OVS examples for two MMA with different oz eq..... | 40 |
| Table 2-9. Offering two MMA menu items with different oz eq for grades 9-12 at lunch | 40 |
| Offering Different Oz Eq Entree Choices..... | 41 |
| Table 2-10. Offering different oz eq entree choices for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch.... | 42 |
| Table 2-11. Offering different oz eq entree choices for grades 9-12 at lunch | 44 |
| Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch | 47 |
| Serving Size for Vegetables..... | 47 |
| Table 2-12. Meal pattern servings for the vegetables component at lunch | 48 |
| Serving Size for Fruits..... | 48 |
| Table 2-13. Meal pattern servings for the fruits component at lunch | 49 |
| Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch..... | 49 |
| Planned versus Selected Servings of Fruits and Vegetables..... | 51 |
| Table 2-14. Menu planning and OVS requirements for fruits and vegetables at lunch.. | 51 |
| Examples of student selections for ½ cup of fruits or vegetables..... | 52 |
| Crediting Student Selections of Fruits and Vegetables | 52 |
| Table 2-15. Crediting fruit selections with OVS at lunch..... | 54 |

Table 2-16. Crediting vegetable selections with OVS at lunch.....55

Student Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables56

Table 2-17. Crediting a student’s selection of multiple fruits and
vegetables with OVS at lunch.....56

Offering Minimum Daily Fruits as Two or More Separate Servings.....57

OVS examples for grades K-5 and 6-857

Table 2-18. Offering minimum daily fruits for grades K-5 and 6-8 a
s two separate foods at lunch.....58

OVS examples for grades 9-12.....59

Table 2-19. Offering minimum daily fruits for grades 9-12
as two separate foods at lunch60

Offering Minimum Daily Vegetables as Two or More Separate Servings.....61

OVS examples for grades K-5 and 6-861

Table 2-20. Offering minimum daily vegetables for grades K-5 and 6-8
as two separate foods at lunch62

OVS examples for grades 9-12.....63

Table 2-21. Offering minimum daily vegetables for grades 9-12
as two separate foods at lunch64

Selecting Fruits, Vegetables, and One Other Component.....65

OVS examples for grades K-5 and 6-865

Table 2-22. Selecting fruits, vegetables, and one other component
for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch.....66

OVS examples for grades 9-12.....68

Table 2-23. Selecting fruits, vegetables, and one other component
for grades 9-12 at lunch69

Grains Component with OVS at Lunch.....71

WGR Requirement.....71

Serving Size for Grains.....72

Table 2-24. Meal pattern servings for the grains component at lunch.....72

Methods to Determine Grain Ounce Equivalents73

Method 1: Weight or volume (USDA’s Exhibit A chart)73

Method 2: Creditable grains74

When method 2 is required for commercial products74

Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two or More Separate Servings75

Table 2-25. Offering minimum daily grains for grades K-5 and 6-8
as two separate foods at lunch.....76

Table 2-26. Offering minimum daily grains for grades 9-12
as two separate foods at lunch.....77

Offering More Than Minimum Daily Grains78

Offering a combination of two or more grain foods78

OVS examples for two grain foods with the same oz eq.....79

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Table 2-27. Offering two 1-oz eq grain foods for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch..... | 79 |
| OVS examples for two grain foods with different oz eq..... | 80 |
| Table 2-28. Offering two grain foods with different oz eq for grades 9-12 at lunch..... | 80 |
| Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch | 81 |
| Sample Lunch Menus | 83 |
| Sample lunch menu 1 for grades K-5 and 6-8..... | 84 |
| Table 2-29. Sample lunch menu 1 for grades K-5 and 6-8..... | 84 |
| Table 2-30. OVS examples for sample lunch menu 1..... | 85 |
| Sample lunch menu 2 for grades K-5 and 6-8..... | 87 |
| Table 2-31. Sample lunch menu 2 for grades K-5 and 6-8..... | 87 |
| Sample lunch menu 3 for grades K-5 and 6-8..... | 88 |
| Table 2-32. Sample lunch menu 3 for grades K-5 and 6-8..... | 88 |
| Sample lunch menu 4 for grades 9-12..... | 89 |
| Table 2-33. Sample lunch menu 4 for grades 9-12 | 89 |
| Table 2-34. OVS examples for sample lunch menu 4..... | 91 |
| 3 — OVS at Breakfast..... | 93 |
| Overview of OVS Requirements for Breakfast..... | 94 |
| Table 3-1. Examples of acceptable menu planning for breakfast | 94 |
| Table 3-2. Summary of OVS requirements for breakfast..... | 97 |
| Table 3-3. Examples of acceptable breakfast menus for OVS..... | 98 |
| Food Items at Breakfast..... | 100 |
| Table 3-4. Examples of crediting menu offerings at breakfast..... | 100 |
| Offering Fruits or Grains as More than 1 Food Item | 101 |
| Milk Component with OVS at Breakfast | 103 |
| Serving Size for Milk..... | 103 |
| Table 3-5. Meal pattern servings for the milk component at breakfast..... | 103 |
| Crediting Milk Items for OVS..... | 104 |
| Milk in Breakfast Smoothies..... | 104 |
| Table 3-6. Offering breakfast smoothies made with fruit and milk..... | 105 |
| Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast | 107 |
| Serving Size for Fruits..... | 107 |
| Table 3-7. Meal pattern servings for the fruits component at breakfast..... | 108 |
| Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast..... | 108 |
| Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast | 109 |
| Table 3-8. Sample language for offering 1 cup of assorted fruit and juice choices | 109 |
| Counting Fruit Items at Breakfast | 110 |
| Table 3-9. Example of counting 1 cup of fruit as 2 food items | 110 |
| Table 3-10. Example of counting 1 cup of fruit as 1 food item..... | 111 |
| Deciding how to count 1 cup of fruits or vegetables..... | 111 |
| Vegetable Substitutions | 112 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Fruits and Vegetables in Breakfast Smoothies | 112 |
| Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast | 113 |
| Table 3-11. Examples of reimbursable breakfast selections with duplicate fruits | 113 |
| Table 3-12. Offering duplicate fruit selections at breakfast | 114 |
| Dried Fruits | 116 |
| Table 3-13. Offering ½ cup of dried fruit as 2 food items | 116 |
| Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast..... | 119 |
| Serving Size for Grains | 119 |
| Table 3-14. Meal pattern servings for the grains component at breakfast..... | 119 |
| Table 3-15. Crediting grains for the SBP meal pattern and OVS..... | 121 |
| Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast..... | 121 |
| Table 3-16. Counting grains and MMA substitutions for OVS at breakfast..... | 122 |
| Counting 2 oz eq of grains as 2 food items | 123 |
| Table 3-17. Example of counting a 2-oz eq grain as 2 food items at breakfast | 123 |
| Counting 2 oz eq of grains as 1 food item..... | 124 |
| Table 3-18. Example of counting a 2-oz eq grain as 1 food item at breakfast..... | 124 |
| Table 3-19. OVS examples with a 2-oz eq grain counted as 2 food items at breakfast..... | 125 |
| Deciding how to count grains with multiple oz eq | 126 |
| Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two Separate Foods | 126 |
| Table 3-20. Offering 1 oz eq of grains as two separate foods at breakfast..... | 127 |
| Table 3-21. OVS examples for offering 1 oz eq of grains as two separate foods at breakfast..... | 128 |
| Offering More Than Minimum Daily Grains | 129 |
| Offering 2 food items that are each at least 1 oz eq..... | 129 |
| Table 3-22. OVS examples for offering two 1-oz eq grain items at breakfast | 130 |
| Offering 2 food items with different oz eq | 131 |
| Table 3-23. Offering more than 1 oz eq of grains as 2 food items with different oz eq at breakfast..... | 131 |
| Duplicate Grain Selections at Breakfast..... | 132 |
| Table 3-24. Examples of reimbursable breakfast selections with duplicate grains | 132 |
| Table 3-25. Offering duplicate grain selections at breakfast | 133 |
| MMA Substitutions | 134 |
| Menu planning options for MMA substitutions | 135 |
| Deciding how to count MMA | 136 |
| Table 3-26. Offering MMA substitution in a breakfast menu with 5 food items .. | 137 |
| Table 3-27. Offering MMA as an extra food in a breakfast menu with 4 food items..... | 139 |
| Combination Breakfast Foods..... | 141 |
| Crediting combination foods containing 2 food items (grain and MMA substitution)..... | 141 |

| | |
|---|------------|
| Table 3-28. Offering a 2-oz eq combination food as 2 grain items in a breakfast menu with 4 food items | 142 |
| Table 3-29. Offering a 2-oz eq combination food as 1 grain item in a breakfast menu with 4 food items | 144 |
| Crediting combination foods containing 3 food items (grains and MMA substitution) | 145 |
| Table 3-30. Offering a 3-oz eq combination food as 3 grain items in a breakfast menu with 6 food items | 146 |
| Table 3-31. Offering a 3-oz eq combination food as 3 grain items in a breakfast menu with 5 food items | 147 |
| Strategies for OVS Implementation at Breakfast | 149 |
| Sample Breakfast Menus | 151 |
| Sample breakfast menu 1 | 152 |
| Table 3-34. Sample breakfast menu 1 | 152 |
| Table 3-35. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 1 | 153 |
| Sample breakfast menu 2 | 155 |
| Table 3-36. Sample breakfast menu 2 | 156 |
| Table 3-37. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 2 | 157 |
| Sample Breakfast Menu 3 | 159 |
| Table 3-38. Sample breakfast menu 3 | 160 |
| Table 3-39. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 3 | 161 |
| 4 — Resources | 163 |
| Comparison Charts | 163 |
| Crediting Requirements and Documentation | 163 |
| CSDE Guides | 165 |
| CSDE Resource Lists | 166 |
| Fruits Component | 167 |
| Grains Component | 168 |
| Meal Patterns and Menu Planning | 170 |
| Meat/Meat Alternates Component | 171 |
| Milk Component | 173 |
| OVS | 174 |
| Vegetables Component | 176 |
| Regulations and Policy | 177 |
| Websites | 179 |
| Glossary | 183 |

About This Guide

This guide contains information and resources for implementing the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) offer versus serve (OVS) provision for school meals in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. The requirements in this guide apply to all public schools, private schools, and residential child care institutions (RCCIs) that participate in the NSLP and SBP.

This guide is based on the OVS regulations for the NSLP ([7 CFR 210.10 \(e\)](#)) and SBP ([7 CFR 220.8 \(e\)](#)) and the USDA’s resource, *Offer versus Serve Guidance for the National School Lunch Program and the School Breakfast Program*.

OVS applies only to NSLP and SBP meals for grades K-12. The USDA does not allow OVS for the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) or preschoolers (ages 1-4) in the NSLP and SBP.

Each section of this guide contains links to other sections when appropriate, and to websites with relevant information and resources. These can be accessed by clicking on the blue text throughout the guide.

The mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations does not imply approval or endorsement by the CSDE or the USDA.

The contents of this guide are based on the current USDA regulations and policy as of the date of this publication. This information is subject to change. The CSDE will update this guide as the USDA issues additional policies and guidance regarding OVS. Please check the CSDE’s [Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage for the most current version. For more information, contact Susan S. Fiore, M.S., R.D., Nutrition Education Coordinator, at susan.fiore@ct.gov or 860-807-2075.

CSDE Contact Information

For questions regarding the NSLP, SBP, and SSO, please contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE’s Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs.

| School Nutrition Programs Staff | |
|---|---|
| County | Consultant |
| Fairfield County (includes Region 9) Litchfield County (includes Regions 1, 6, 7, 12, and 14) | Fionnuala Brown 860-807-2129 fionnuala.brown@ct.gov |
| Hartford County (includes Region 10) Middlesex County (includes Regions 4, 13, and 17) | Teri Dandeneau 860-807-2079 teri.dandeneau@ct.gov |
| New Haven County (includes Regions 5, 15, and 16) | Greg King 860-713-6804 greg.king@ct.gov |
| New London County Tolland County (includes Regions 8 and 19) Windham County (includes Region 11) | Susan Alston 860-807-2081 susan.alston@ct.gov |
| Connecticut State Department of Education Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504 Hartford, CT 06103-1841 | |

For information on the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP), Special Milk Program (SMP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), visit the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--|
| CFR | Code of Federal Regulations |
| CN | Child Nutrition |
| CNP | Child Nutrition Programs |
| CSDE | Connecticut State Department of Education |
| FBG | Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA) |
| FDA | Food and Drug Administration |
| FNS | Food and Nutrition Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture |
| HHFKA | Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296) |
| MMA | meat/meat alternates |
| NSLP | National School Lunch Program |
| OVS | offer versus serve |
| oz eq | ounce equivalent |
| PFS | product formulation statement |
| RCCI | residential child care institution |
| SBP | School Breakfast Program |
| SFA | school food authority |
| SSO | Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP |
| USDA | United States Department of Agriculture |
| WGR | whole grain-rich |



1 — Overview of OVS

OVS is a concept that applies to menu planning and the determination of reimbursable meals for grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP. The SSO follows the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

OVS must be implemented at lunch in senior high schools but is optional for all other grades. OVS is optional for the SBP and SSO. The USDA does not allow OVS for the ASP or preschoolers (ages 1-4).

OVS allows students to decline a certain number of food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the meal and select the foods they prefer to eat. OVS is designed to reduce food cost and waste. It also allows school food authorities (SFAs) the flexibility to address student participation and selection trends to determine what and how much food to prepare.

Table 1-1 provides an overview of the OVS requirements for lunch and breakfast.



Table 1-1. Overview of OVS requirements for grades K-12

| Criteria | Lunch | Breakfast |
|--|---|---|
| Implementation | Mandatory in senior high schools and optional for all other grade levels. Optional for the SSO. Not allowed for preschoolers. | Optional for all grade levels. Optional for the SSO. Not allowed for preschoolers. |
| Reimbursable meals | Must offer five components (meat/meat alternates (MMA), grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk). ¹ | Must offer at least 4 food items from three components (grains, fruits, and milk) ² |
| Required number of student selections | Students must select at least three components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food components. ¹ | Students must select at least 3 food items, including at least ½ cup of fruits (or vegetable substitutions, if offered) and the full serving of at least two other food items. ² |
| Pricing | Priced as a unit (same price regardless of number of food components chosen). | Priced as a unit (same price regardless of number of food items chosen). |
| Extra foods | Not credited for OVS. | Not credited for OVS. |
| Meal counts | Point of service | Point of service |
| <p>¹ A food component is one of the five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals. i.e., milk, MMA, vegetables, fruits, and grains.</p> <p>² A food item is a specific food offered within the three food components for the breakfast meal pattern. For OVS at breakfast, 1 food item equals 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component, ½ cup of the fruits component, and 1 cup of the milk component. For more information, refer to “Food Items at Breakfast” in section 3.</p> | | |

OVS Requirements for the NSLP and SBP

OVS is implemented differently for lunch and breakfast. Some OVS requirements for lunch and breakfast are the same, including the procedures for:

- meeting the meal pattern requirements;
- unit pricing;
- point-of-service meal counts;
- offering choices within components;
- meal identification signage;
- food service staff training;
- a la carte sales; and
- extra foods.



This section includes guidance on meeting these requirements.

Meeting the meal pattern requirements

SFAs must plan school menus to meet the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for each grade group. The NSLP meal pattern requires daily and weekly amounts of five components (MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk). The SBP meal pattern requires daily and weekly amounts of three components (grains, fruits, and milk). OVS applies only to the daily meal pattern requirements.

For detailed guidance on the meal pattern requirements, 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](#) webpage. For information on crediting foods, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Summary Charts for the Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs](#) and visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Crediting documentation

SFAs must maintain crediting documentation for commercial products and foods made from scratch to indicate how they contribute toward the meal pattern requirements. Menu planners should follow the guidance below to ensure that school menus comply with the crediting requirements of the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

- **Use the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (FBG):** The USDA's [FBG](#) determines food yields and crediting information, and the specific contribution of foods toward the meal pattern requirements. The FBG indicates how many servings a specific quantity of food will provide, what quantity of raw product will provide the amount of ready-to-cook food in a recipe, and how much food to buy to provide a specific meal pattern contribution.

- **Obtain a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) for all commercial processed products:** SFAs must have a CN label or PFS to document the meal pattern contribution of all commercial processed products, such as entrees like pizza, chicken nuggets, and deli meats; soups; french fries; any many commercial grain products like breads, crackers, and grain-based desserts. Commercial processed foods without this documentation cannot credit. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), [Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#). Additional resources are available in the “[Crediting Commercial Processed Products for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs Programs](#) webpage.
- **Maintain standardized recipes for foods made from scratch:** SFAs must have standardized recipes that document the crediting information for all foods made from scratch. Determine the recipe’s meal pattern contribution per serving by following these steps: 1) use the FBG to determine the weight or volume of each creditable ingredient in the recipe; and 2) divide the weight or volume of each creditable ingredient by the number of servings. The FBG’s [Recipe Analysis Workbook \(RAW\)](#) allows menu planners to search for creditable ingredients and calculate a recipe’s meal pattern contribution. For more information, visit the “[Crediting Foods Made from Scratch](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs Programs](#) webpage.

Unit pricing

Meals must be priced as a unit. This means that students pay the same price regardless of whether they take three, four, or five food components for lunch or three or more food items for breakfast. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable meal in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable meal in the reduced-price meal category.

SFAs may set different unit prices (tiered pricing) for various combinations of foods offered as a reimbursable lunch or breakfast, such as one price for a meal with a larger entree and another price for a meal with different combinations of foods. For example, SFAs could offer a variety of different lunch entree choices (such as hamburger, chef’s salad, lasagna, and turkey sandwich), and set different unit prices for each type of lunch.

All students, including those eligible for free and reduced-price meals, must be allowed to select any reimbursable meal. Meals with a higher unit price must be available at no cost for all free-eligible students. For reduced-eligible students, the unit price cannot exceed 40 cents for lunch or 30 cents for breakfast.

Point-of-service meal counts

The point of service is the point in the food service operation where staff can make an accurate determination that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to an eligible child. This is typically at the end of the serving line after the child has had the chance to receive all components of the reimbursable meal.

SFAs should ensure that school food service staff know how to identify reimbursable meals with OVS and provide training on recognizing reimbursable meals at the point of service. Training must also ensure that all staff implement correct meal counting and claiming procedures with OVS. For more information, refer the CSDE’s [Meal Counting and Claiming for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage and “[Food service staff training](#)” in this section.

Offering choices within components

The USDA encourages SFAs to give students various options of entrees and other menu items, such as fruits and vegetables, and requires a variety (at least two different kinds) of milk choices (refer to “[Milk Variety](#)” in section 2). Offering choices increases the likelihood that students will select the foods and beverages they prefer, which increases consumption and reduces waste.

Offering a variety of choices within the food components (lunch) and food items (breakfast) is different from implementing OVS. For example, if students are required to select a choice from every component, the school is not implementing OVS. OVS allows students to decline some food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) entirely.



SFAs determine if the lunch and breakfast menus will offer variety and how much a student may select. SFAs may offer more than the minimum requirements if the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium. For example, the breakfast meal pattern requires 1 cup of fruit for grades K-12. A breakfast menu could offer four ½-cup servings of fruit and allow students to select three or four servings.

SFAs must indicate what choices or combination of choices students may select for a reimbursable meal. Signage must be near or at the beginning of the serving line, prior to the point of service, and located on the serving line near each food component, as applicable. This prevents unintentional purchases of a la carte items and helps students choose a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.

Example of food choices with OVS: A lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers the required 1 cup of the fruits component as a variety of ½-cup fruit selections and allows students to choose two servings. The cafeteria signage near the fruits component must indicate that students may select one or two ½-cup servings of fruit with each meal. This provides a variety of food choices and shows students how to select a reimbursable lunch. It also constitutes OVS because students may choose to decline the fruits component entirely or take one or two ½-cup servings from the fruits offered. **Note:** Students who decline the fruits component must select at least ½ cup of vegetables for a reimbursable meal.

Meal identification signage

The USDA requires SFAs to post cafeteria signage that provides clear information about the daily planned reimbursable meals and all allowable choices. SFAs must post two different types of signage that clearly communicate the food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for each daily menu choice and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal. The purpose of this signage is to prevent unintentional purchases of a la carte items and help students choose a reimbursable meal.

1. **Identify foods and amounts offered for all planned reimbursable meals:** Section 7 CFR 210.10(a)(2) of the NSLP regulations and section 7 CFR 220.8(a)(2) of the SBP regulations require that SFAs must post signage to identify the planned reimbursable meals (i.e., all offered full meals), including the components and portions and any choices or combination of choices available within each component. This signage must be located near or at the beginning of each serving line. **Note:** This requirement applies to all schools and institutions, including those that do not implement OVS and those that implement family-style meal service. For information on family-style meal service, refer to “[Family-style Meals](#)” in this section and section 5 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
2. **Identify required student for reimbursable meals with OVS:** Schools that implement OVS must indicate the minimum amount of each food component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) that students must select for a reimbursable meal, based on the planned daily menu for each grade group. This signage must be posted at all applicable points in the serving line where the food components or food items are available. For example, if the high school lunch menu offers fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings and allows students to select two servings of fruits and two servings of vegetables to meet the required 1-cup serving for grades 9-12, the cafeteria signage must clearly communicate that students may select up to two servings of fruit and two servings of vegetables with each meal. This signage

must be located on the serving line where the fruit and vegetable options are available. Table 1-2 shows some examples of language for OVS signage.

SFAs may choose how to identify the foods that are part of reimbursable meals, based on their facilities, layout, and other considerations. Some examples of acceptable signage include menu boards, posters, signs, labels, and table tents.

SFAs are not required to provide detailed information about the food components, such as identifying the vegetable subgroups. However, the CSDE strongly encourages SFAs to provide detailed information whenever possible, within the constraints of the menu and serving line. This helps promote the school nutrition programs and makes it easier for students to understand what reimbursable meals include.

For more information on signage, visit the [“Signage for OVS”](#) section of the CSDE’s OVS webpage.



Table 1-2. Examples of language for OVS signage

The examples below provide some ideas for OVS signage that SFAs may modify as applicable. The actual signage used by the SFA must be based on the specific choices offered in the SFA’s daily lunch and breakfast menus, and the number of components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) that students must select for a reimbursable meal. Depending on the specific menu offerings, the examples below might not be applicable to all SFAs.

Lunch

- The 5 lunch components include meat/meat alternates, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least 3 components including ½ cup of fruit/vegetable. For a nutritious meal choose all 5!
- Choose any 2 fruits
- Choose any 2 vegetables
- Choose 1 fruit
- Choose 1 or 2 vegetables
- Try some veggies! Take 1 or 2, it’s up to you!
- Choose 2 fruits (limit of 1 juice)
- Choose 2 fruits or 1 fruit and 1 juice
- Choose 1 milk: low-fat, fat-free, or low-fat chocolate
- Choose 1 or 2 grains
- Choose 1 entree

Breakfast

- Breakfast includes 2 grains, 2 fruits, and 1 milk. Choose at least 3 food items including at least 1 fruit. For a nutritious meal, choose all 5!
- Breakfast includes 1 grain, 2 fruits, and 1 milk. Choose at least 3 food items including at least 1 fruit. For a nutritious meal, choose all 4!
- Breakfast includes any 2 grains or meat/meat alternates, any 2 fruits or vegetables, and 1 milk. Choose at least 3 food items including at least 1 fruit or vegetable. For a nutritious meal, choose all 5!
- Choose at least 1 fruit or vegetable
- Choose 1 grain
- Choose up to 2 grains
- Choose 2 fruits (limit of 1 juice)
- Choose 2 fruits or 1 fruit and 1 juice
- Choose 1 milk
- Choose one of the following:
2 servings of cereal, 2 servings of granola bars, or 1 serving of cereal and 1 serving of granola bar

When signage is not required

Signage is not required for field trips, meals in the classroom, and other venues where signage may be problematic. SFAs that offer meal choices in these situations should use other methods to inform students about what to select and whether OVS is implemented. For more information and resources on signage, visit the [“Signage and Posters”](#) section of the CSDE’s OVS webpage. For examples of menu signage for OVS at lunch, refer to [“Sample Lunch Menus”](#) in section 2. For examples of menu signage for OVS at breakfast, refer to [“Sample Breakfast Menus”](#) in section 3.

Food service staff training

OVS training is critical for SFAs to ensure that staff implement correct meal counting and claiming with OVS. School food service staff must:

- understand the OVS requirements;
- be able to help students select the required quantities of the food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for reimbursable meals; and
- be able to accurately identify reimbursable meals at the point of service.

SFAs should conduct OVS training at least annually for cashiers, serving line staff, and other applicable staff. Training is also important whenever changes occur to the school nutrition programs, such as new staff, new grade configurations, and new menu items. OVS training is most effective when SFAs use actual examples from their own school lunch and breakfast menus.

OVS training meets the USDA’s professional standards requirements for annual training. OVS is listed under the subcategory of “Serving Food (2200)” for the key area of “Operations (2000)” in the USDA’s list of training topics for professional standards: 2220 Offer versus Serve and 2240 Serving Lines. For more information, refer to the USDA’s resources, [Professional Standards Training Topics](#) and [Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals](#) webpage.

Job-specific training is also required for non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of school nutrition programs, such as teachers, teachers’ aides, and other applicable staff who conduct in-classroom meal counting and claiming. For more information, refer to [“Meals in the classroom”](#) in this section.

Training on the OVS requirements is available in “Module 15: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the NSLP” and “Module 16: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the SBP” 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](#). Guidance on how to count the OVS training modules toward the annual training hours required by the USDA’s professional standards is available in CSDE’s resource, [Professional Standards Topics and Training Hours for the What’s in a Meal Training Modules](#).

In addition to regular OVS training, a recommended best practice for cafeteria managers is to conduct a daily pre-service meeting with all applicable staff to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. This helps ensure that all staff (including substitutes) can identify reimbursable meals.

A la carte sales

A la carte sales include foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals, such as cookies, chips, ice cream, water, and other snack foods. Foods offered as part of reimbursable meals may also be sold a la carte. For example, SFAs could allow students to purchase pizza, fruit, salad, and milk as a la carte items.



Students and cashiers need to know which foods are considered food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for reimbursable meals with OVS, and which foods are a la carte items. SFAs must communicate this information by providing adequate training for staff and appropriate signage for students. For more information, refer to “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.

Meals are not reimbursable if students do not select the minimum number and amount of food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast). If this occurs, SFAs may charge a la carte prices for each item selected by the student. To avoid problems at the point of service, the cafeteria signage must provide clear information regarding the required foods for a reimbursable meal.

Extra foods

Extra foods are foods served in addition to the required meal pattern components. They include creditable foods from the food components, such as additional servings of grains, fruits, vegetables, MMA, and milk. They also include noncreditable foods that do not credit toward the meal patterns, such as potato chips, pudding, ice cream, maple syrup, cream cheese, bacon, and condiments (e.g., salad dressing, ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise).

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, refer to the CSDE’s guides, [Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools](#), [Guide to Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools](#), and [Guide to Competitive Foods in Private Schools and RCCIs](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Competitive Foods in Schools](#) webpage and [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

Schools may offer allowable noncreditable foods as a complement to reimbursable meals. Students may select noncreditable foods in addition to the meal but noncreditable foods do not count toward the required food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) for a reimbursable meal under OVS.

For information on noncreditable foods, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

All extra foods (creditable and noncreditable) offered to students with reimbursable meals count toward the USDA’s weekly dietary specifications for school meals. Extra foods must contain zero trans fat and their inclusion cannot cause the lunch or breakfast menu to exceed the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For information on planning menus to meet the USDA’s dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Considerations for Meal Service Systems with OVS

Schools and institutions may use several different meal service systems to offer reimbursable meals to students. Examples include cafeteria-style service, kiosks, classroom meals, and vending machines. At the senior high school level, OVS is required at lunch unless the SFA demonstrates to the CSDE that their meal service system does not accommodate OVS. This is most common in residential child care institutions (RCCIs).

This section addresses some of the meal service systems that might not readily accommodate OVS, and the requirements for ensuring compliance. The USDA strongly encourages SFAs to modify meal service systems to incorporate OVS to the extent possible.

Classroom meals

To implement OVS with meals served in the classroom, SFAs must offer choices that include the required amounts of each component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) and students must select the required amounts for a reimbursable meal. SFAs must provide appropriate job-specific training for non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of school nutrition programs. For example, teachers, teacher aides, and other applicable staff who conduct in-classroom meal counting and claiming must receive appropriate training to ensure they perform their jobs effectively and in compliance with the USDA’s regulations. SFAs should have a written procedure in place for meal counting in the classroom and provide regular staff training on these procedures.

Non-food service employees whose responsibilities include duties related to the operation of school nutrition programs must be included in the SFA's annual professional standards tracking log. For more information, refer to the USDA's *Guide to Professional Standards for School Nutrition Programs*, and visit the CSDE's [Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professionals](#) webpage.

The USDA requires that NSLP and SBP meal counts must be determined at the point of service. Classroom staff must understand how to identify reimbursable meals with OVS and how to implement point-of-service meal counts.

For classroom meals, the point of service is the point in the meal service where classroom staff can accurately determine that all the required components for a reimbursable meal have been served to the child. The USDA does not allow any other methods to determine classroom meal counts, such as student attendance, student orders for meals in advance of the meal service, or the number of meals sent to the classroom.

SFAs should have clear written meal count instructions for classroom staff that indicate how to identify reimbursable meals (including reimbursable meals with OVS, if applicable), how to take point-of-service meal counts, how to handle leftover meals or foods (including milk). As a best practice, SFAs should include these instructions with the delivery of the field trip meals. This helps prevent situations where staffing variations (such as teacher absences, substitutes, and parent volunteers) result in staff who do not understand the required procedures.

Classroom meals must also comply with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). The SFA's standard operating procedures (SOP) for classroom meals must include appropriate food safety procedures (such as ice packs and coolers) to ensure that classroom meals stay at proper temperatures during transportation and service. For examples of SOPs, refer to the Iowa State University's handout, *Standard Operating Procedure: Breakfast in the Classroom*, the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) sample SOPs, *Transporting Food to Remote Sites (Satellite Kitchens)* and *Hot and Cold Holding for Time Temperature Control for Safe Foods*, and the ICN's [Standard Operating Procedures](#) webpage.

As a reminder, the USDA does not allow OVS for preschoolers in the NSLP and SBP, including classroom meals for preschoolers. For additional guidance on classroom meals, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Requirements for Classroom Meals in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Vending machine meals

Vending machines that provide reimbursable meals are part of the school food service program and are governed by the NSLP and SBP regulations. School meal vending machines must comply with the same procedures, menu planning requirements, and OVS requirements that apply to meals offered on the cafeteria serving lines. For additional guidance, refer to [USDA Memo SP 03-2007: *Vending Machines in the School Meal Programs*](#) and [USDA Memo SP 13-2008: *Use of Vending Machines in the School Meal Programs*](#).

Advance ordering of meals

SFAs may implement OVS when students order meals in advance of the meal service. To implement OVS with advance ordering of meals, SFAs must offer choices that include the required amounts of each component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) and students must select the required amounts for a reimbursable meal. SFAs must carefully structure this type of meal system and must check the resulting meals to ensure they are reimbursable. SFAs must also provide clear information to students and families regarding the choices and requirements for reimbursable meals.



Pre-plated meals

Pre-plated meals offer all food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the minimum required quantities for each grade group in an entirely or partially pre-served manner. Pre-plated meals must include at least the minimum daily serving of each component required by the NSLP and SBP meal patterns.

This type of meal service is often used by schools and institutions with logistical limitations for their meal service. Examples may include facility or space restrictions, or situations where children are unable to select the offered foods. Senior high schools that offer only pre-plated lunches must implement OVS for all or some components, unless the SFA has received prior approval from the CSDE not to implement OVS.

SFAs that use pre-plated meals are not required to change their meal service systems to accommodate OVS. However, pre-plated meals must:

- offer all required food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) in the required quantities for each grade group, including a variety of milk choices; and
- meet the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements.

The USDA encourages SFAs to modify their meal service systems to include OVS opportunities whenever possible, such as allowing students a choice of different fruits and vegetables.

Pre-packaged meals

Pre-packaged meals such as grab-and-go or bagged meals are similar to pre-plated meals. For senior high schools, pre-packaged meals are allowed only if the meal service system also has cafeteria lines that allow OVS. Senior high schools that offer only pre-packaged lunches must implement OVS for all or some components, unless the SFA has received approval from the CSDE not to implement OVS. Pre-packaged meals are allowed at all other grade levels.

Like pre-plated meals, SFAs using pre-packaged meals are encouraged to offer some choices, and the option to decline some food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) such as grains or milk. OVS is not required (even in senior high schools) if pre-packaged meals are offered as part of breakfast in the classroom, field trips, or for students leaving the campus for work-study.

Family-style meals

Family-style meal service allows students to serve themselves from common dishes of food with assistance from supervising adults. While family-style meal service allows students to make choices in selecting foods, the supervising adult should initially offer the minimum daily serving of each food component (lunch) or food item (breakfast) to each student.

Over the week, offered meals must meet the daily and weekly food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) and the weekly dietary specifications. However, since replenishment is immediately available at each table, the initial serving of a food component or food item may be less than the full serving. The supervising adult should encourage additional portions and selections to meet the full serving as appropriate, provided the weekly menu does not exceed the USDA's dietary specifications.

Since OVS requires that students must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or vegetable, the supervising adult must ensure that each student selects at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit, vegetable, or both, during the family-style meal service.

For additional guidance on family-style meal service, refer to section 4 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12* and *USDA Memo SP 35-2011 and CACFP 23-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer versus Serve and Family Style Meal Service*.

Salad bars

One of the challenges of salad bars is ensuring that students take the minimum required portions for a reimbursable meal. SFAs must ensure that students and staff understand the required selections for a reimbursable meal. **Note:** The requirements and guidance in this section also apply to other types of food bars, such as pasta bars and baked potato bars.

The USDA encourages SFAs to use salad bars in the meal service to offer a wider variety of vegetables and fruits, and lower plate waste. The USDA permits salad bars with OVS because they enhance the choices available, which may assist students with selecting the foods they will consume. While salad bars offer many benefits, they are not a viable option for OVS with some school food service operations.

SFAs must consider whether they can successfully implement the requirements for salad bars and ensure that students take the minimum required portions for a reimbursable meal.

There are many ways that schools can incorporate salad bars to facilitate service of reimbursable meals. Salad bars may include food options for the complete reimbursable meal (except for milk) or they may include a food or menu item that is part of a reimbursable meal, depending on the available foods and how they are structured. For example, SFAs could offer the MMA and grains components on the serving line, offer the vegetables and fruits components on a salad bar that is available to all students, and offer a variety of low-fat and fat-free milk choices in the milk cooler.

SFAs can set up salad bars in a variety of ways. One option is providing pre-portioned and pre-packaged food components (lunch) or food items (breakfast) that are grab-and-go to accommodate a high volume of students in a short period. Pre-portioning is an acceptable method to ensure that students select an appropriate amount from salad bars.



To allow students and cashiers to easily identify and select reimbursable meals from salad bars, SFAs must follow the requirements below.

- **Meet the meal patterns:** When planning a salad bar as part of a reimbursable meal, the servings must be consistent with the meal pattern for the grade group. The planned serving should be an amount that is reasonable for that menu item. For example, 1 cup of lettuce is reasonable, but 1 cup of radishes is more than a child would normally consume. To meet the OVS requirements:
 - the planned serving of fruits or vegetables must be at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup to credit toward the meal patterns;
 - the combined amount of the offered fruits and vegetables must provide the minimum daily serving of the vegetables component and the fruits component for each grade group; and
 - students must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables for a reimbursable meal.

For information on the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, visit the CSDE’s [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage. For information on planning menus for the fruits component and vegetables component, refer to section 3 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#). For guidance on crediting fruits and vegetables, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

- **Pre-portion foods:** Pre-portioning foods allows staff to quickly identify if students have a reimbursable meal. If foods are not pre-portioned, SFAs must provide appropriately size serving utensils and instruct students on how to select the required meal components and portions. SFAs must also train cashiers to accurately judge the quantities of self-serve foods on student trays to determine if the selected foods are a reimbursable meal.
- **Post salad bar signage:** Cafeteria signage must indicate which foods and combinations of foods students may select for a reimbursable salad bar meal with OVS. Make sure that salad bar signage clearly identifies the food components provided on the salad bar and the minimum serving size for each component. For self-service items, place signs at the location of the food on the salad bar as a visual aid to help students determine the minimum serving. For more information, refer to “[Meal Identification Signage](#)” in this section.
- **Provide guidance on minimum portions for fruits and vegetables:** Salad bar signs should indicate the number or amount (using a specific serving utensil) that equals $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables, such as eight baby carrots or two scoops of canned fruit. For guidance on the amounts of fruits and vegetables that provide $\frac{1}{2}$ cup, refer to the USDA’s [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) and the Start with Half a Cup [Portioning Guide for Fresh Fruits](#) and [Portioning Guide for Fresh Vegetables](#). For more resources, visit the “[Salad Bars](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

- **Locate salad bar before the point of service:** Salad bars should be located before the point of service to ensure that each student’s selections from the salad bar meet the required servings for a reimbursable meal. If a school cannot position the salad bar in a location prior to the point of service, the SFA may request approval from the CSDE for an alternative system. The alternative system must ensure that all students who use the salad bar select the required food components to meet the meal pattern and OVS requirements. If the salad bar is located after the point of service, the SFA should:
 - pre-portion items;
 - instruct students on how to select the required meal components and quantities;
 - provide appropriately sized serving utensils to help students select the required quantities;
 - post visual reminders (such as signs and posters) to help students determine how to select foods; and
 - provide staff to monitor meal selections and ensure that students take the food components in the required serving sizes that were credited at the point of service. For younger students, schools could assign student “salad bar ambassadors” to assist in selecting the appropriate size portions from the salad bar.
- **Staff training:** Train cashiers on what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the point of service. In addition to regular OVS training, the cafeteria manager should conduct a daily pre-service meeting with all servers and cashiers to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to “[Food service staff training](#)” in this section.

In addition to the requirements above, SFAs must ensure that salad bars and other food bars comply with Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP). The SFA’s SOPs for salad bars must include appropriate food safety procedures to ensure that foods stay at proper temperatures and are safe from contamination. For examples of SOPs, refer to the Institute of Child Nutrition’s (ICN) sample SOPs, [Preventing Contamination at Food Bars](#), and the ICN’s [Standard Operating Procedures](#) webpage.

For additional guidance on salad bars, refer to [USDA Memo SP 41-2019: Salad Bars in the National School Lunch Program](#), and visit the “[Salad Bars](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

OVS Resources

The resources below assist SFAs with implementing OVS. For more information, visit the CSDE's [Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

- Offering Meats and Meat Alternates at School Breakfast (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offering-meats-and-meat-alternates-school-breakfast>
- Overview of OVS in the NSLP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/Overview_OVS_NSLP.pdf
- Overview of OVS in the SBP (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/Overview_OVS_SBP.pdf
- OVS Guidance for the NSLP and SBP (USDA):
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cn/SP41-2015av2.pdf>
- OVS Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: National School Lunch Program (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-lunch-program-tip-sheet>
- OVS Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: National School Lunch Program (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-lunch-program-tip-sheet>
- OVS Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: School Breakfast Program (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-breakfast-program-tip-sheet>
- OVS Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: School Breakfast Program (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-breakfast-program-tip-sheet>
- Signage and Posters (CSDE's OVS webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Offer-versus-Serve-for-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Signage>
- Signage Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/Signage_Requirements_NSLP_SBP.pdf
- USDA Memo SP 41-2015: Updated Offer vs Serve Guidance for the NSLP and SBP Beginning SY 2015-16:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/updated-offer-vs-serve-guidance-nslp-and-sbp-beginning-sy2015-16>

- What's in a Meal Module 15: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the NSLP (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>
- What's in a Meal Module 16: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the SBP (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>



2 — OVS at Lunch

The requirements for implementing OVS at lunch are defined by [7 CFR 210.10\(e\)](#) of the USDA regulations for the NSLP. OVS must be implemented at lunch in senior high schools but is optional for all other grades. OVS is also optional for the SSO. OVS cannot be implemented for the ASP or preschoolers.

Same Meal Pattern for OVS

The lunch meal pattern requirements do not change with OVS. SFAs must plan all lunch menus to meet the daily and weekly NSLP meal pattern requirements, but OVS applies only to the daily meal pattern requirements. The daily meal pattern requires specific amounts of the five components (MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk). The weekly meal pattern requires additional amounts of MMA and grains, specific amounts of the five vegetable subgroups, a limit for juice (no more than half of the offered fruits and vegetables), a minimum amount of whole grain-rich (WGR) grains (at least 80 percent), and weekly dietary specifications (nutrition standard for school meals).

Two OVS Requirements


There are two requirements for reimbursable lunches with OVS. One requirement applies to menu planning and the meals offered by the SFA and the other applies to the foods selected by the student.

1. SFAs must offer the minimum daily serving of the five food components.
2. For a reimbursable lunch, students must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food components.

A **food component** is one of the five food groups that comprise the reimbursable lunch, including milk, MMA, vegetables, fruits, and grains.

A **food item** is a specific food offered within the five food components. It may contain one or more food components, or more than one serving of the same component. For example, a hamburger patty (MMA component) on a whole-grain bun (grains component) is one food item that contains two food components. A variety of three different $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings of fruit (such as peaches, applesauce, and pears) includes three food items from one food component (fruits). **Note:** This definition applies only to lunch. Food items credit differently for OVS at breakfast (refer to [section 3](#)).

Table 2-1 summarizes the OVS requirements for lunch.

| Table 2-1. Summary of OVS requirements for lunch | |
|--|--|
| SFA must offer minimum daily serving of five components | Student must select |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat/meat alternates (MMA) • Grains • Vegetables • Fruits • Milk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables • Full serving of at least 2 other food components  |

Overview of OVS Requirements for Lunch

For a lunch to be reimbursable under OVS, SFAs must meet the criteria below.

- **Menu planning:** Lunch menus must include the minimum daily serving of the five food components for each grade group. The grains, fruits, and vegetables components may be offered in more than one food item. The MMA component must be offered as a main dish, or a main dish and one other food item. Milk must be offered as a full 1-cup serving.
- **Offering a component as two different servings:** If the lunch menu offers the component’s minimum daily serving as two separate foods, students must take both foods to count as one component for OVS. For example, if the lunch menu for grades 9-12 provides the required 2 ounce equivalents (oz eq) of MMA from ½ cup of low-fat yogurt (1 oz eq) and 1 ounce of low-fat cheese (1 oz eq), students must select both foods to count as the MMA component for OVS. The yogurt or cheese stick alone does not credit because each serving is less than 2 oz eq. For more information, refer to “[Offering a Component as More than One Food](#)” in this section.
- **Larger amounts:** SFAs may serve larger amounts of any component if the weekly lunch menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, trans fat, and sodium (refer to the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#)).

SFAs must serve additional grains and MMA on some days to meet the NSLP meal pattern’s minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8. For more information, refer to section 4 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

- **Unit pricing:** Meals must be priced as a unit, i.e., students pay the same price regardless of whether they select three, four, or five food components. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable lunch in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable lunch in the reduced-price meal category. SFAs may set different unit prices (tiered pricing) for various combinations of foods offered as a reimbursable lunch. However, all students, including those eligible for free and reduced-price meals, must be allowed to select any reimbursable lunch. Lunches with a higher unit price must be available at no cost for all free-eligible students, and at no more than 40 cents for all reduced-eligible students.
- **Required signage:** SFAs must post two different types of cafeteria signage that clearly communicates the food items for each daily menu choice and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal. The first type of signage must identify all planned reimbursable lunches (i.e., all offered full meals), including the food items and portions and any choices or combination of choices available within each component. This signage must be near or at the beginning of each serving line. The second type of signage must indicate what food components and amounts students may select for a reimbursable lunch with OVS, based on the planned daily menu for each grade group. This signage must be posted at all applicable points in the serving line where the food items are available. For more information, refer to [“Meal identification signage”](#) in section 1.
- **Required student selections:** Students must select at least three of the five food components including at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the minimum daily serving of at least two other food components. A student’s selection of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables does not count as a food item for OVS. A best practice to encourage students’ selections of reimbursable meals is offering all fruits and vegetables in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings.
- **Declining foods:** Students may decline any one or two of the required food components, except for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. Students may take smaller portions of the declined food components. However, selections of less than the full serving do not count toward the OVS requirements.
- **Selecting more than the full serving:** SFAs may allow students to select more than the full serving of any component. However, selections of additional servings from the same component count as only one component for OVS. For more information, refer to [“Offering a Component as More than One Food”](#) in this section.

Offering Each Food Component as One Food

SFAs may choose to offer the minimum daily serving of each food component as one food. With this menu planning approach, each selection chosen by the student counts as one of the required components for OVS. Some OVS examples with this menu planning approach are provided in table 2-2 for grades K-5 and 6-8, and table 2-3 for grades 9-12.



| Table 2-2. Offering each component as one food for grades K-5 and 6-8 | | | | |
|---|------------|---|--|---|
| Planned lunch menu | | Meal pattern components | | |
| Turkey (1 ounce) and low-fat cheese (1 ounce) | | MMA, 2 oz eq | | |
| Whole-wheat bread, 2 slices (1 ounce each) | | Grains (G), 2 oz eq | | |
| Broccoli florets, ¾ cup | | Vegetables (V), ¾ cup | | |
| Cantaloupe wedges, ½ cup | | Fruits (F), ½ cup | | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | Milk (M), 1 cup | | |
| <p>Students must select at least 3 of the 5 food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 2 other components.</p> | | | | |
| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Milk (M) | 2 | 3 | No | No. The meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V. |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe (F) | 2 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, F). |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli (V) | 2 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, V). |
| Broccoli (V) Cantaloupe (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The meal contains 3 full components (V, F, M). |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli (V) Milk (M) | 3 | 4 | Yes | Yes. The meal contains 4 full components (MMA, G, V, M). |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 4 | Yes | Yes. The meal contains 4 full components (MMA, G, F, M). |

Table 2-3. Offering each component as one food for grades 9-12

| Planned lunch menu | | Meal pattern components | | |
|---|------------|---|--|--|
| Turkey (1 ounce) and low-fat cheese (1 ounce) | | MMA, 2 oz eq | | |
| Whole-wheat bread, 2 slices (1 ounce each) | | G, 2 oz eq | | |
| Broccoli florets, 1 cup | | V, 1 cup | | |
| Cantaloupe wedges, 1 cup | | F, 1 cup | | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | | |
| <p>Students must select at least 3 of the 5 food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 2 other components.</p> | | | | |
| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Milk (M) | 2 | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V. |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe (F) | 2 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, F). |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli (V) | 2 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, V). |
| Broccoli florets (V) Cantaloupe (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (V, F, M). |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Broccoli (V) Milk (M) | 3 | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 full components (MMA, G, V, M). |
| Turkey and cheese sandwich (MMA, G) Cantaloupe (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 full components (MMA, G, F, M). |

Offering a Component as More than One Food

SFAs may choose to offer the minimum daily serving of the MMA, grains, vegetables, and fruits components as more than one food. For example, the lunch menu for grades 9-12 could offer the required 1 cup of vegetables from ½ cup of broccoli and ½ cup of corn. SFAs may offer components as more than one food only when:

- each food provides the minimum creditable serving (¼ oz eq for grains and MMA and ⅛ cup for fruits and vegetables); and
- the combined amount of the offered foods provides the minimum daily serving for each grade group.



SFAs must offer the MMA component as one food (main dish) or two foods (main dish and one other food item). SFAs must offer the milk component as the full 1-cup serving of fluid milk.

To count as a food component under OVS, students must select at least the full serving required by the NSLP meal pattern, except for fruits and vegetables. The OVS requirement for fruits and vegetables is at least ½ cup. Selections of less than the full serving of any other components cannot credit for OVS, unless they are combined with additional servings from the same component to meet the required amount. For example, students in grades 9-12 could meet the required 2 oz eq of grains by selecting ½ cup of brown rice (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll (1 oz eq).

If the menu offers the minimum daily serving of a meal component as two or more separate foods, students must select all foods to count as one component. SFAs should consider the serving size of menu items and plan lunch menus to make it easy for students to select (and food service staff to identify) reimbursable meals. SFAs must ensure clear communication with students and staff about the NSLP meal pattern requirements and OVS by:

- posting cafeteria signage in all schools that clearly communicates the meal components for all lunch menu choices and indicates what students may select (refer to “[meal identification signage](#)” in section 1); and
- providing adequate training for school food service staff on the NSLP meal pattern components, including the required servings for each grade group, how to credit foods, and how to recognize reimbursable meals with OVS (refer to “[Food service staff training](#)” in section 1).

For information on offering the components as more than one food, refer to “[Offering Minimum Daily Fruits as Two Separate Foods](#),” “[Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two Separate Foods](#),” and “[Offering Minimum Daily MMA as Two Separate Foods](#)” in this section.

Table 2-4 shows some OVS examples for grades 9-12 with a lunch menu that offers the minimum daily serving of the MMA component and grains component as two different servings.

- **MMA component:** This menu provides the required 2 oz eq of the MMA component from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt (1 oz eq) and 1 ounce of low-fat Swiss cheese cubes (1 oz eq). Since each food is less than the full serving, students must take both foods to count as the MMA component for OVS.
- **Grains component:** This menu provides the required 2 oz eq of the grains component from two 1-oz eq packages of whole-grain crackers. Since each package is less than the full serving, students must take both packages to count as the grains component for OVS.

Menu planning considerations

Offering the full serving of the grains component or MMA component as two different foods might make it more difficult for students to select the amount required to count as a component for reimbursable meals. SFAs may want to consider other menu planning approaches that encourage selections of reimbursable meals, such as:

- offering combination entrees that provide the full serving of the grains and MMA components, i.e., 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8 and 2 oz eq for grades 9-12;
- offering all foods from the grains and MMA components in at least the full serving; and
- packaging foods with less than the full serving together, so that students must take both. For example, wrap a 1-oz eq yogurt and a 1-oz eq cheese stick together to provide 2 oz eq for grades 9-12, or wrap two $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz eq packages of crackers together to provide 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8.

For more information, refer to [“Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch”](#) at the end of this section.

Table 2-4. Offering grains and MMA components as two separate foods for grades 9-12

| Planned lunch menu | | Meal pattern components | | |
|--|------------|---|--|---|
| Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup | | MMA, 1 oz eq (2 oz eq total) | | |
| Low-fat Swiss cheese cubes, 1 ounce | | MMA, 1 oz eq | | |
| Whole-grain crackers, two packages (1 oz eq each) | | G, 2 oz eq | | |
| Spinach salad, 2 cups ¹ | | V, 1 cup | | |
| Orange wedges, 1 cup | | F, 1 cup | | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | | |
| Students must select at least 3 of the 5 food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 2 other components. | | | | |
| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Crackers, 2 packages (G) Orange wedges (F) Milk (M) | 4 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (G, F, M). ³ |
| Spinach salad (V) Orange wedges (F) Crackers, 2 packages (G) | 4 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (V, F, G). ³ |
| Yogurt (1 oz eq MMA) ² Cheese (1 oz eq MMA) ² Crackers, 1 package (1 oz eq G) ² Orange wedges (F) Milk (M) | 5 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, F, M). ³ |
| Yogurt (1 oz eq MMA) ² Crackers, 2 packages (G) Milk (M) | 4 | 2 | No | No. The selected meal contains 2 full components (G, M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V. |

| Table 2-4, <i>continued</i> | | | | |
|---|------------|---|--|--|
| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Yogurt (1 oz eq MMA) ² Cheese (1 oz eq MMA) ² Crackers, 1 package (1 oz eq G) ² Orange wedges (F) | 4 | 2 | Yes, but the orange wedges cannot credit as ½ cup of F for OVS because they already credit as the full serving of the fruits component. ³ | No. The selected meal contains only 2 full components (MMA, F). It is missing at least ½ cup of V or another full component. ³ |
| Yogurt (1 oz eq MMA) ² Spinach salad (V) Orange wedges (F) | 3 | 2 | Yes, but the orange wedges cannot credit as ½ cup of F for OVS because they already credit as the full serving of the fruits component. ³ | No. The selected meal contains only 2 full components (V, F). It is missing another full component. ³ |
| <p>¹ Raw leafy greens such as lettuce and spinach credit as half the volume served.</p> <p>² Selections of less than the full serving do not count as a component for OVS.</p> <p>³ Selections of the full serving of fruits and vegetables count as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both in the same meal.</p> | | | | |

Milk Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the milk component at lunch. For more information on the NSLP meal pattern requirements for milk, refer to section 3 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the “Milk Component for Grades K-12” section of the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

Serving Size for Milk

Milk credits based on volume (fluid ounces). Table 2-5 summarizes the required NSLP meal pattern servings for the milk component. The minimum daily serving (1 cup) is the amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch and the amount that students must select to count as the milk component for OVS.

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving | Minimum weekly serving | |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | | Five-day week | Seven-day week |
| K-5 | 1 cup (8 fluid ounces) | 5 cups | 7 cups |
| 6-8 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |
| 9-12 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |

Allowable Types of Milk

The NSLP meal patterns for grades K-12 allow low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free milk, either unflavored or flavored. Other allowable types of milk include pasteurized lactose-reduced and lactose-free milk, acidified milk, cultured milk, cultured buttermilk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk. SFAs may serve any of these types of milk that meet the fat content restrictions.

Milk Variety

SFAs must offer a variety of at least two different choices of low-fat or fat-free milk, either unflavored or flavored. At least one choice must be unflavored milk.

State Requirement for Milk

In addition to meeting the USDA meal pattern requirements for the milk component, all milk sold to students in public schools must meet the beverage requirements for milk under [Section 10-221q](#) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.). The state beverage statute requires that milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce or any artificial sweeteners. These requirements apply to all milk sold to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals (i.e., a la carte sales). The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs.

Products that meet the federal and state requirements are included on [list 16](#) of the CSDE's [List of Acceptable Foods and Beverages](#) webpage. This webpage contains brand-specific lists of foods that meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards (CNS) and beverages that meet the requirements of state statute. For more information on the state beverage statute, refer to the CSDE's [Beverage Requirements](#) webpage.

Crediting Milk for OVS

SFAs must offer 1 cup (8 fluid ounces) of fluid milk daily for all grades at lunch. Students must select at least 1 cup of fluid milk to count as the milk component for OVS. A student's selection of 1 cup of fluid milk counts as one food component for OVS.

Students are not required to select the milk component for a reimbursable meal.



Meat/Meat Alternates (MMA) Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the MMA component at lunch. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for the MMA component, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the “Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12” section of the CSDE's *Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

Main Dish Requirement for Lunch

SFAs must serve the daily MMA component at lunch in a main dish, or in a main dish and one other food item. The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. For example, a lunch menu for grades 9-12 could provide the required 2 oz eq of the MMA component from a sandwich containing 2 ounces of tuna (2 oz eq), or a half sandwich containing 1 ounce of tuna (1 oz eq) served with ½ cup of yogurt (1 oz eq). SFAs cannot serve the daily MMA component for lunch in more than two food items.



When a lunch menu offers the daily MMA component as a main dish and one other food item, students must select both foods to count as the full component for OVS. SFAs must consider how this menu planning decision affects students' selection of reimbursable meals with OVS.

Requirement for recognizable main dish

Foods that are not a main dish do not credit as the MMA component. Examples include soup made with blended soft tofu and muffins made with peanut butter or yogurt. The USDA's intent for this requirement is to ensure that SFAs offer MMA in a form that is recognizable to students. The USDA emphasizes the importance of the nutrition education aspect of school nutrition programs, which includes the goal of helping children easily recognize the key food groups that contribute to a healthy meal.

The USDA allows two exceptions to the requirement for a recognizable main dish.

- Yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies credits as the MMA component. Other MMA served in smoothies (such as peanut butter) do not credit.
- Pasta made with 100 percent legume flours may credit as the MMA component if the menu also includes an additional meat or meat alternate, such as tofu, cheese, or meat.

Serving Size for MMA

The required quantities for the MMA component are in oz eq. The amounts in the MMA component refer to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients.

Table 2-6 summarizes the required oz eq for each grade group at lunch. The minimum daily serving is the amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch and the amount that students must select to count as the MMA component for OVS.

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving | Minimum weekly serving | |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | | Five-day week | Seven-day week |
| K-5 | 1 oz eq ¹ | 8 oz eq | 11 oz eq |
| 6-8 | 1 oz eq ¹ | 9 oz eq | 12½ oz eq |
| 9-12 | 2 oz eq | 10 oz eq | 14 oz eq |

¹ SFAs must serve additional MMA on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and grades 6-8. For grades 9-12, the minimum weekly requirement is the sum of the minimum daily requirement.

A menu item must provide at least ¼ oz eq of cooked lean meat or equivalent to credit toward the MMA component. SFAs can offer the MMA component by itself (such as grilled chicken or yogurt) or in a combination food, such as hamburger on a WGR bun, turkey sandwich on a whole-wheat roll, and pizza made with WGR crust.

To count as the MMA component for OVS, the amount selected by the student must be at least the full serving, i.e., 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8 and 2 oz eq for grades 9-12.

Amount required for 1 oz eq

A 1-oz eq serving of the MMA component equals:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish;
- 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended);
- 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food/spread, or cheese substitute (low-fat recommended);
- ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), e.g., kidney beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- ½ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- ¼ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein;
- 1 ounce of tempeh that contains specific ingredients;
- 3 ounces of surimi;
- ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and
- 1 ounce of APP that meets the USDA's APP requirements (appendix A of the NSLP and SBP regulations).



For guidance on the crediting requirements for tofu, tempeh, surimi, and APPs, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Offering Minimum Daily MMA as Two Separate Foods

SFAs may choose to offer the minimum daily serving of the MMA component at lunch as two separate foods, i.e., a main dish and one other food item (refer to “[Main Dish Requirement for Lunch](#)” in this section). When the lunch menu offers the minimum daily serving as a main dish and one other food item, students must select both foods to count as the full component for OVS. Student selections of less than the full serving do not count toward the OVS requirements.

Whether a student’s selection counts as the MMA component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the minimum daily serving for each grade group. The required oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8 are different from the required oz eq for grades 9-12.

Menu planning tip: Offering the full serving of the MMA component as a main dish and one other food item might make it more difficult for students to select the full amount required to count as a component for reimbursable meals. SFAs must consider how the menu offerings affect reimbursable meals with OVS. A better menu planning approach is offering all MMA choices in at least the minimum daily serving or package both items together, so any student’s selection counts as the MMA component for OVS (refer to “[Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch](#)”).



OVS examples for grades 9-12

Table 2-7 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades 9-12 that offers the minimum daily serving of the MMA component as two 1-oz eq foods. This menu provides 2 oz eq of MMA from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of low-fat yogurt (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce low-fat mozzarella cheese stick (1 oz eq). Students must take both foods to count as the MMA component for OVS. The yogurt or cheese stick alone does not count as the full MMA component because each serving is less than 2 oz eq.

| Table 2-7. Offering minimum daily MMA for grades 9-12 as two 1-oz eq foods | | | | |
|--|-------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Minimum daily serving: 2 oz eq | | | | |
| Planned MMA component | | Meal pattern contribution: 2 oz eq | | |
| Yogurt, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | | 1 oz eq | | |
| Low-fat mozzarella cheese stick, 1 ounce | | 1 oz eq | | |
| Student selects | Oz eq | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full MMA component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Low-fat yogurt Low-fat cheese stick | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq of MMA. | At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Low-fat yogurt | 1 | 0 | No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq of MMA. Selections of less than the required serving do not count as a component for OVS. | At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |
| Low-fat cheese stick | 1 | 0 | No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq of MMA. Selections of less than the required serving do not count as a component for OVS. | At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |

Offering More than Minimum Daily MMA

SFAs must serve additional MMA on some days to meet the minimum weekly lunch meal pattern requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 (refer to [table 2-6](#) in this section). SFAs may also choose to serve larger amounts of MMA to any grade groups if the menu does not exceed the weekly dietary specifications. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Menu planners may choose to provide additional MMA from a larger serving of one main dish MMA food (such as 3 oz eq of baked chicken instead of 2 oz eq of baked chicken) or from a main dish and one other food item (refer to "[Main Dish Requirement for Lunch](#)" in this section). These menu planning decisions affect students' selections of reimbursable meals with OVS.

Offering entrees as two separate MMA foods

Whether a student's choice counts as the MMA component for OVS depends on the serving size of the planned MMA menu items and the minimum daily serving for each grade group. Students must select at least the minimum daily serving to count as the MMA component for OVS. Selections of less than the minimum daily serving do not count toward the OVS requirements.

When the lunch menu offers more than the minimum daily serving from a main dish and one other food item, the following OVS requirements apply to student selections for a reimbursable meal.

- **If each MMA provides the minimum daily serving** (such as two different 1-oz eq MMA for grades K-5 and 6-8), students may select either food to count as the MMA component for OVS.
- **If either MMA provides less than the minimum daily serving** (such as a 2-oz eq MMA and a 1-oz eq MMA for grades 9-12), students must select both foods to count as the MMA component for OVS.

Student selections of more than the minimum daily serving (such as two 1-oz eq MMA for grades K-5 or 6-8) count as only one component for OVS.

Menu planning tip: Offering MMA with different oz eq might make it more difficult for students to select the full amount required to count as a component for reimbursable meals. SFAs must consider how the menu offerings affect reimbursable meals with OVS. A better menu planning approach is offering each MMA in at least the minimum daily serving or packaging both items together, so any student's selection counts as the MMA component for OVS (refer to "[Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch](#)").

OVS examples for two MMA with the same oz eq

Table 2-8 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that offers more than the minimum daily serving of MMA from two different foods with the same oz eq. This menu includes 2 oz eq of the MMA component from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of low-fat yogurt (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce low-fat mozzarella cheese stick (1 oz eq). Since each food provides 1 oz eq, students may take both foods together, or either one alone, to count as the MMA component for OVS.

| Table 2-8. Offering two 1-oz eq MMA for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch | | | | |
|---|-------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| Minimum daily serving: 1 oz eq ¹ | | | | |
| Planned MMA component | | Meal pattern contribution: 2 oz eq | | |
| Yogurt, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | | 1 oz eq | | |
| Low-fat mozzarella cheese stick, 1 ounce | | 1 oz eq | | |
| Student selects | Oz eq | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full MMA component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Low-fat yogurt Low-fat cheese stick | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of more than the required serving count as only one component for OVS. | At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Low-fat yogurt | 1 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq of MMA. | At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Low-fat cheese stick | 1 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq of MMA. | At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |

¹ SFAs must serve additional MMA on some days to meet the minimum weekly lunch requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 (refer to [table 2-6](#)).

OVS examples for two MMA with different oz eq

Table 2-9 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades 9-12 that offers more than the minimum daily serving of MMA from two foods with different oz eq. This menu includes 3 oz eq of the MMA component from 1 cup of low-fat yogurt (2 oz eq) and a 1-ounce low-fat mozzarella cheese stick (1 oz eq). Students may take the yogurt and cheese together, or the yogurt alone, to count as the MMA component for OVS. The cheese stick alone does not count toward the OVS requirements because the serving is less than 2 oz eq.

| Table 2-9. Offering two MMA menu items with different oz eq for grades 9-12 at lunch | | | | |
|--|-------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Minimum daily serving: 2 oz eq | | | | |
| Planned MMA component | | | Meal pattern contribution: 3 oz eq | |
| Yogurt, 1 cup | | | 2 oz eq | |
| Low-fat mozzarella cheese stick, 1 ounce | | | 1 oz eq | |
| Student selects | Oz eq | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full MMA component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Low-fat yogurt Low-fat cheese stick | 3 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 2 oz eq of MMA. Selections of more than the full serving size count as only one component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Low-fat yogurt | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq of MMA. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Low-fat cheese stick | 1 | 0 | No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq of MMA. Selections of less than the required serving do not count as a component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |

Offering Different Oz Eq Entree Choices

If the lunch menu offers a variety of daily entrees choices with different oz eq, only the entrees that contain the minimum daily serving credit as the MMA component for OVS. Table 2-10 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that allows students to choose from different oz eq entree choices. Table 2-11 shows some OVS examples for grades 9-12.

The planned lunch menu includes four entree choices that each provide at least 2 oz eq of MMA. Two choices provide the MMA component in one food (main dish) and two choices split the MMA component into two different foods (main dish and side item).

- Beef stew: One main dish food item that credits as 3 oz eq of MMA from 3 ounces of cooked beef.
- Roast chicken: One main dish food item that credits as 2 oz eq of MMA from 2 ounces of cooked chicken.
- Peanut butter sandwich (main dish) and cheese cubes (side item): Two foods that provide 2 oz eq of MMA from 3 tablespoons of peanut butter (1½ oz eq) and ½-ounce of low-fat cheese cubes (½ oz eq).
- Chickpea salad (main dish) and yogurt (side item): Two foods that provide 2 oz eq of MMA from ¼ cup of chickpeas (1 oz eq) and ½ cup of yogurt (1 oz eq).

The lunch meal pattern requires 1 oz eq of MMA for grade K-5 and 6-8, and 2 oz eq of MMA for grades 9-12. Since each entree choice provides at least the minimum daily serving for all grade groups, students may select any entree to count as the MMA component for OVS. However, if a student declines one of the two foods from the split entrees, some choices are less than the full serving and do not count as the MMA component for OVS. For example, if a student selects only the peanut butter sandwich (1½ oz eq) or only the chickpea salad (1 oz eq), the selection counts as the MMA component for grades K-5 and 6-8 (refer to table 2-10) but not for grades 9-12 (refer to table 2-11). SFAs must consider how entrees with different oz eq affect reimbursable meals with OVS.

Menu planning tip: Offering an entree as two foods that do not each provide at least the minimum daily oz eq might make it more difficult for students to select the full amount required to count as a component for reimbursable meals. SFAs must consider how the menu offerings affect reimbursable meals with OVS. A better menu planning approach is offering each food in at least the minimum daily serving or packaging both foods together, so any student's selection counts as the MMA component for OVS (refer to "[Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch](#)").

| Table 2-10. Offering different oz eq entree choices for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch | | | | |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Minimum daily serving: 1 oz eq | | | | |
| Student selects | Oz eq ¹ | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full MMA component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Beef stew (3 oz eq) | 3 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq of MMA. Selections of more than the full serving count as only one component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. Note: If the beef stew provides at least ½ cup of vegetables, the student only needs to select the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Roast chicken (2 oz eq) | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq of MMA. Selections of more than the full serving count as only one component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |



Table 2-10, *continued*

| Student selects | Oz eq | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full MMA component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
|--|-------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Chickpea salad (1 oz eq) Yogurt (1 oz eq) | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq of MMA. Selections of more than the full serving count as only one component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. The chickpea salad cannot credit as the vegetables component because it already counts as the MMA component. |
| Peanut butter sandwich (1½ oz eq of peanut butter) Low-fat cheese cubes (½ oz eq) | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq of MMA. Selections of more than the full serving count as only one component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. Note: If the bread on the sandwich provides at least 2 oz eq of the grains component, the student only needs to select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. |

¹ SFAs must document each entree's meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products and a standardized recipe for foods made from scratch (refer to "[Crediting Documentation](#)" in section 1).

| Table 2-11. Offering different oz eq entree choices for grades 9-12 at lunch | | | | |
|--|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Minimum daily serving: 2 oz eq | | | | |
| Student selects | Oz eq ¹ | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full MMA component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Beef stew (3 oz eq) | 3 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 2 oz eq of MMA. Selections of more than the full serving count as only one component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. Note: If the beef stew provides at least ½ cup of vegetables, the student only needs to select the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Roast chicken (2 oz eq) | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq of MMA. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Chickpea salad (1 oz eq) Yogurt (1 oz eq) | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq of MMA. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. The chickpea salad cannot credit as the vegetables component because it already counts as the MMA component. |

Table 2-11, *continued*

| Student selects | Oz eq ¹ | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full MMA component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Peanut butter sandwich (1½ oz eq of peanut butter) Low-fat cheese cubes (½ oz eq) | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student’s selection is more than the required 2 oz eq for the MMA component. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. Note: If the bread on the sandwich provides at least 1 oz eq of the grains component, the student only needs to select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. |
| ¹ SFAs must document each entree’s meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS for commercial products and a standardized recipe for foods made from scratch (refer to “ Crediting Documentation ” in section 1). | | | | |



Vegetables Component and Fruits Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the fruits component and vegetables component at lunch. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for fruits and vegetables, refer to section 3 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the “[Vegetables Component for Grades K-12](#)” section and “[Fruits Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. For example, a serving of canned corn cannot include the packing water and a serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes) credit when rehydrated only if the manufacturer’s PFS provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving.

The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned (in light syrup, water, or fruit juice), and dried fruits, and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed but cannot include water or syrup. When the menu planner credits the juice in canned fruit toward the fruits component, it also counts toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch](#)” in this section.



Serving Size for Vegetables

The required quantities for the vegetables component are in cups. All vegetables credit based on the served volume except raw leafy greens, which credit as half the volume served. For example, 1 cup of lettuce credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetable component. Examples of raw leafy greens include kale, greens (e.g., beet, collard, mustard, and turnip), spinach, arugula, and lettuce (e.g., iceberg, romaine, Boston, Bibb, red leaf, and spring mix).

Table 2-12 summarizes the required servings for each grade group at lunch. The minimum daily serving is the amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch and the amount that students must select to count as the full vegetables component for OVS. However, a student's selection of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving | Minimum weekly serving ² | |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| | | Five-day week | Seven-day week |
| K-5 | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup | $3\frac{3}{4}$ cups | $5\frac{1}{4}$ cups |
| 6-8 | $\frac{3}{4}$ cup | $3\frac{3}{4}$ cups | $5\frac{1}{4}$ cups |
| 9-12 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |

¹ The lunch meal pattern requires minimum weekly servings of five vegetable subgroups (dark green, red/orange, starchy, legumes, and other). Students are not required to select each subgroup but SFAs must provide the opportunity for students to select each subgroup. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Vegetable Subgroups in the National School Lunch Program](#).

SFAs may choose to offer a combination of several different vegetables to meet the daily requirement. Each serving must contain at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of vegetable (the minimum creditable amount) and the combined total must provide the minimum daily serving. For example, a lunch menu for grades K-5 could meet the required $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving of the vegetables component with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of carrots.

Servings that contain less than $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of vegetable do not credit toward the meal patterns. A student's selection of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable does not count toward the OVS requirement.



Serving Size for Fruits

The required quantities for the fruits component are in cups. All fruits credit based on the served volume except for dried fruit such as raisins, apricots, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried blueberries, and mixed dried fruit. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. For example, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component.

Table 2-13 summarizes the required servings for each grade group at lunch. The minimum daily serving is the amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch and the amount that students must select to count as the full fruits component for OVS. However, a student's selection of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

SFAs may choose to offer a combination of several different fruits to meet the daily requirement. Each serving must contain at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruit (the minimum creditable amount) and the combined total must provide the minimum daily serving. For example, a lunch menu for grades 9-12 could meet the required 1-cup serving of the fruits component with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of peaches and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of applesauce.



Servings that contain less than $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruit do not credit toward the meal patterns. A student's selection of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit does not count toward the OVS requirement.

Table 2-13. Meal pattern servings for the fruits component at lunch

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving | Minimum weekly serving | |
|-------------|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| | | Five-day week | Seven-day week |
| K-5 | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups |
| 6-8 | $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups | 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups |
| 9-12 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |



Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch

The lunch meal pattern requires a weekly limit for fruit juice and vegetable juice.

- Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly amount of fruits offered at lunch. For example, if a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 offers 2 cups of fruit over the week, the total amount of weekly fruit juice cannot exceed 1 cup.
- Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly amount of vegetables offered at lunch. For example, if a five-day lunch menu for grades 9-12 offers 5 cups of vegetables over the week, the total amount of weekly vegetable juice cannot exceed 2½ cups.

If the weekly menu includes larger amounts of fruits and vegetables, the weekly juice limit also increases. For example, if a five-day lunch menu for grades K-5 offers 3 cups of the fruits component over the week, the weekly juice limit increases to 1½ cups of fruit juice.

SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice available to students during the week toward the weekly juice limit, including:

- juice that is fresh, frozen or made from concentrate;
- frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice;
- pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies; and
- juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice unless the canned fruit is drained or served as an extra food. Drained fruit and canned fruit in light syrup or water do not count toward the weekly juice limit.

The meal patterns allow a serving of canned fruit to include the juices in which it is packed. For example, canned peaches ($\frac{3}{8}$ cup) in juice ($\frac{1}{8}$ cup) credit as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component. If the SFA credits the $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of juice from the canned fruit toward the fruits component, it also counts toward the weekly juice limit. However, juice from canned fruit does not count toward the weekly juice limit if the SFA plans the juice as an extra food that does not credit toward the meal patterns. For example, if food service personnel portion $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of canned fruit in a 5½-ounce container, then add the juice after measuring the full $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of fruit, the juice does not count toward the weekly juice limit.

For more information on crediting juice, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#) and [Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and sections 3 and 4 of the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Assorted Juice Choices at Lunch

When the daily lunch menu offers 1 cup of the fruits component and allows students to select two ½-cup servings from a variety of daily fruit and juice choices, students may select two servings of fruit or one serving of fruit and one serving of juice. Students cannot select two servings of juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. The school’s lunch menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of juice that students may select with each meal. For more information, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.

Planned versus Selected Servings of Fruits and Vegetables

Except for the fruits component for grades K-5 and 6-8, the planned serving size for the fruits and vegetables components is not the same as the serving that students must select for a reimbursable meal. Table 2-14 summarizes the menu planning and OVS requirements for the fruits and vegetables components at lunch.

| Grade group | Menu planning <i>SFA must plan and offer</i> | OVS <i>Student must select</i> |
|--------------------|--|--|
| K-5 and 6-8 | ½ cup of fruits ¾ cup vegetables | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables |
| 9-12 | 1 cup of fruits 1 cup of vegetables | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables |

SFAs must always plan and offer the minimum daily serving of the fruits component (refer to [table 2-13](#)) and vegetables component (refer to [table 2-12](#)) for each grade group). However, students are not required to select the full planned serving of fruits and vegetables. For a reimbursable meal under OVS, students must select at least ½ cup of vegetables, fruits, or both, and the full serving of at least two components.



Examples of student selections for $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables

To meet the $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup requirement for OVS, students may select any combination of fruits and vegetables that total $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. For example, students could select:

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of one individual fruit;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mixed fruits, e.g., fruit salad;
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit (credits as twice the volume served);
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of one individual vegetable;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mixed vegetables, e.g., peas and carrots;
- 1 cup of salad greens (credits as half the volume served);
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup combination of fruits and vegetables, e.g., $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetable; or
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of mixed fruits and vegetables, e.g., carrot-pineapple-raisin salad.

As a reminder, dried fruit and raw leafy greens credit toward the OVS requirements based on their meal pattern crediting volume. Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served. For example, a student's selection of $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dried fruit counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component for OVS. Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served. For example, a student's selection of 1 cup of raw leafy greens counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the vegetables component for OVS.



Crediting Student Selections of Fruits and Vegetables

Whether a student’s selection of fruits or vegetables counts as the full component or the minimum ½-cup serving for OVS depends on the selected amount and the required serving for the grade group.

- **Full serving:** Selections of the minimum daily serving of either fruits or vegetables count as one component for OVS. This selection counts as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup serving but cannot count as both in the same meal. For example, the NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires ½ cup of the fruits component. A student who selects ½ cup of fruit (full component) must also select the full serving of at least two other components or at least ½ cup of vegetables (OVS requirement) and the full serving of at least one other component. For more information, refer to “[Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables](#)” in this section.
- **More than the full serving:** Selections of more than the minimum daily serving of the fruits component or vegetables component count as only one component for OVS. For example, the NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires ¾ cup of vegetables. A student’s selection of 1 cup of vegetables count as one component. For a reimbursable meal, the student must also select the full serving of at least two other components or at least ½ cup of fruit (OVS requirement) and the full serving of at least one other component. For more information, refer to “[Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables](#)” in this section.
- **At least ½-cup serving:** Selections of at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables meet the OVS requirement. For a reimbursable meal, students must also select the full serving of at least two other components.
- **Less than ½-cup serving:** Selections of less than ½ cup of fruits or vegetables cannot count toward the OVS requirements unless they are combined with additional servings from either the fruits component or vegetables component to meet the minimum requirement. Meals without at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables are not reimbursable. Schools may charge a la carte prices for the selected foods (refer to “[A La Carte Sales](#)” in section 1). To encourage selections of reimbursable meals at the point of service, cashiers should allow students to return to the serving line and select additional fruits or vegetables. Another strategy is offering fruit and vegetable selections at the point of service. For example, the cashier’s station could have a basket of assorted whole fruits and bags of cut vegetables.

Table 2-15 shows examples of crediting a student’s fruit selections with OVS.

Table 2-15. Crediting fruit selections with OVS at lunch

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving | Student selects | Counts as full component? | Credits as ½ cup for OVS? | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| K-5 and 6-8 | ½ cup | ½ cup | Yes ¹ | Yes ¹ | The full serving of at least two other components, or the full serving of at least one other component and at least ½ cup of vegetables. |
| 9-12 | 1 cup | ½ cup | No | Yes | The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables. |

¹ Selections of the full serving count as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both in the same meal.



Table 2-16 shows how to credit a student's vegetable selections with OVS.

| Table 2-16. Crediting vegetable selections with OVS at lunch | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Grade group | Minimum daily serving | Student selects | Counts as full component? | Credits as ½ cup for OVS? | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| K-5 and 6-8 | ¾ cup | ½ cup | No | Yes | The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be ½ cup of fruit. |
| 9-12 | 1 cup | ½ cup | No | Yes | The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit. |



Student Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables

If the SFA allows students to select more than the minimum daily serving of fruits or vegetables, a student's selection counts as only one of the three required components for OVS. For example, a student in grades 9-12 selects 1½ cups of fruit salad (one component). For a reimbursable meal, the student must also select the full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of vegetables and the full serving of one other component.

Table 2-17 shows examples of how to credit a student's selection of multiple servings of the fruits component and multiple servings of the vegetables component with OVS at lunch.

| Table 2-17. Crediting a student's selection of multiple fruits and vegetables with OVS at lunch | | | | |
|---|-----------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| Grade group | Minimum daily serving | Student selects | Number of components | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| K-5 and 6-8 | Fruits: ½ cup | Two ½-cup servings of fruit salad (1 cup) | 1 | The full serving of at least two other components, or full serving of one other component and at least ½ cup of vegetables |
| K-5 and 6-8 | Vegetables: ¾ cup | Two ½-cup servings of corn (1 cup) | 1 | The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be ½ cup of fruit. |
| 9-12 | Fruits: 1 cup | 1½ cups of fruit salad | 1 | The full serving of at least two other components, or full serving of one other component and at least ½ cup of vegetables |
| 9-12 | Vegetables: 1 cup | 3 cups of salad (credits as 1½ cups of vegetables) | 1 | The full serving of at least two other components, or full serving of one other component and at least ½ cup of fruit |

Offering Minimum Daily Fruits as Two or More Separate Servings

SFAs may choose to serve a combination of several fruits to meet the minimum daily requirement (refer to “[Serving Size for Fruits](#)” in this section). If the lunch menu offers the minimum daily serving of the fruits component as two or more separate servings (such as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup each of two different fruits to meet the $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup requirement for grades K-5 and 6-8), students must select all servings to count as the fruits component for OVS. Selections of less than the full serving do not count as the fruits component. However, a student’s selection of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Whether a student’s selection counts as the fruits component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the required daily serving for the grade group (refer to [table 2-13](#) in this section).



OVS examples for grades K-5 and 6-8

The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component. Table 2-18 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu that offers the minimum daily serving of the fruits component as two different servings. This menu provides the required $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit from $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of strawberries and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of oranges. Students must take both foods to count as the full fruits component or meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. The strawberries or oranges alone do not count toward the OVS requirements because each serving is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both fruit servings (full component) must also select either:

- the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of vegetables; or
- at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component.

Students who select only the strawberries ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) or oranges ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) must also select at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components.

Menu planning tip: Offering the fruits component in servings less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup might make it more difficult for students to select the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving required to count toward the OVS requirements for reimbursable meals. A better menu planning approach is offering all fruit choices in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings so that any student’s selection contains at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component for OVS (refer to “[Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch](#)”).

Table 2-18. Offering minimum daily fruits for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate foods at lunch

| Minimum daily serving: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup | | | | |
|---|---------------|--|--|--|
| Planned fruits component Strawberries, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup Oranges, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup | | Meal pattern contribution: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup total $\frac{1}{4}$ cup $\frac{1}{4}$ cup | | |
| Student Selects | Cups | Counts as at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit for OVS? | Counts as full fruits component? <i>Must be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Strawberries Oranges | $\frac{1}{2}$ | Yes | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for the fruits component and the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS. | The full serving of at least two other components, or at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Strawberries | $\frac{1}{4}$ | No | No. The student's selection is less than the required $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for the fruits component and the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS. Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cannot credit for OVS. | At least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |
| Oranges | $\frac{1}{4}$ | No | No. The student's selection is less than the required $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for the fruits component and the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS. Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cannot credit for OVS. | At least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |

OVS examples for grades 9-12

The NSLP meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires at least 1 cup of the fruits component. Table 2-19 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades 9-12 that offers the minimum daily serving of the fruits component as two different servings. This menu provides the required 1 cup of the fruit from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of strawberries and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of oranges. Students must take both foods to count as the full fruits component. The strawberries or oranges alone do not count as the full fruits component because each serving is less than 1 cup. However, each $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both fruit servings (full component) must also select either:

- the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables; or
- at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component.

Students who select only the strawberries ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) or oranges ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) must also select the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables.



Table 2-19. Offering minimum daily fruits for grades 9-12 as two separate foods at lunch

Minimum daily serving: 1 cup

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Planned fruits component | Meal pattern contribution: 1 cup total |
| Strawberries, ½ cup | ½ cup |
| Oranges, ½ cup | ½ cup |

| Student Selects | Cups | Counts as at least ½ cup of fruit for OVS? | Counts as full fruits component? <i>Must be at least ½ cup</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
|-------------------------|------|--|--|--|
| Strawberries Oranges | 1 | Yes | Yes. The student’s selection is the same as the required 1-cup serving for the fruits component and more than the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. | The full serving of at least two other components, or at least ½ cup of vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Strawberries | ½ | Yes | No. The student’s selection is less than the required 1-cup serving for the fruits component but the same as the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. | The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables. |
| Oranges | ½ | Yes | No. The student’s selection is less than the required 1-cup serving for the fruits component but the same as the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. | The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of vegetables. |

Offering Minimum Daily Vegetables as Two or More Separate Servings

SFAs may choose to serve a combination of several vegetables to meet the minimum daily requirement (refer to “[Serving Size for Vegetables](#)” in this section). If the lunch menu offers the minimum daily serving of the vegetables component as two or more separate servings (such as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup each of two different vegetables to meet the 1-cup requirement for grades 9-12), students must select all servings to count as the full vegetables component for OVS at lunch. Selections of less than the full serving do not count as the vegetables component. However, a student’s selection of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Whether a student’s selection counts as the vegetables component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the required serving for the grade group (refer to [table 2-12](#) in this section)



OVS examples for grades K-5 and 6-8

The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires at least $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component. Table 2-20 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu that offers the minimum daily serving of the vegetables component as two different servings. This menu provides the required $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component from $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of carrot sticks and $\frac{3}{8}$ cup of green peas. Students must take both foods to count as the full vegetables component or meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. The carrots or peas alone do not count as the full vegetables component because each serving is less than $\frac{3}{4}$ cup.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both vegetable servings (full component) must also select the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit. Students who select only the carrots ($\frac{3}{8}$ cup) or peas ($\frac{3}{8}$ cup) must also select at least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruit, and the full serving of two other components.

Menu planning tip: Offering the vegetables component in servings less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup might make it more difficult for students to select the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving required to count toward the OVS requirements for reimbursable meals. A better menu planning approach is offering all vegetable choices in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings so that any student’s selection meets the $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup requirement for OVS (refer to “[Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch](#)”).

Table 2-20. Offering minimum daily vegetables for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate foods at lunch

| Minimum daily serving: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup | | | | |
|--|---------------|---|--|--|
| Planned vegetables component | | Meal pattern contribution: $\frac{3}{4}$ cup total | | |
| Carrots, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup | | $\frac{3}{8}$ cup | | |
| Green peas, $\frac{3}{8}$ cup | | $\frac{3}{8}$ cup | | |
| Student Selects | Cups | Counts as at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables for OVS? | Counts as full vegetables component? <i>Must be at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Carrot sticks Green peas | $\frac{3}{4}$ | Yes | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving for the vegetables component and more than the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS. | At least two other components, one of which could be $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit. |
| Carrot sticks | $\frac{3}{8}$ | No | No. The student's selection is less than the required $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving for the vegetables component and the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS. Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cannot credit for OVS. | At least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of two other components. |
| Green peas | $\frac{3}{8}$ | No | No. The student's selection is less than the required $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup serving for the vegetables component and the minimum $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving for OVS. Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cannot credit for OVS. | At least $\frac{1}{8}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of two other components. |

OVS examples for grades 9-12

The NSLP meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires at least 1 cup of the vegetables component. Table 2-21 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades 9-12 that offers the full serving of the vegetables component as two separate foods. This menu provides the required 1 cup of vegetables from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of carrot sticks and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of green peas.

Students must take both foods to count as the full vegetables component. The carrots or peas alone do not count as the full vegetables component because each serving is less than 1 cup. However, a student's selection of either peas or carrots meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, students who select both vegetable servings (full component) must also select either:

- the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit; or
- at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and the full serving of at least one other component.

Students who select only the carrots ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) or peas ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) must also select the full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit.



| Table 2-21. Offering minimum daily vegetables for grades 9-12 as two separate foods at lunch | | | | |
|--|------|---|--|---|
| Minimum daily serving: 1 cup | | | | |
| Planned vegetables component | | Meal pattern contribution | | |
| Carrots, ½ cup | | ½ cup | | |
| Green peas, ½ cup | | ½ cup (1 cup total) | | |
| Student Selects | Cups | Counts as at least ½ cup of vegetables for OVS? | Counts as full vegetables component? <i>Must be at least ½ cup</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Carrot sticks Green peas | 1 | Yes | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1-cup serving for the vegetables component and more than the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. | At least two other components, or at least ½ cup of fruit and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Carrot sticks | ½ | Yes | No. The student's selection is less than the required 1-cup serving for the vegetables component but the same as the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. | The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit. |
| Green peas | ½ | Yes | No. The student's selection is less than the required 1-cup serving for the vegetables component but the same as the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. | The full serving of at least two other components, one of which could be 1 cup of fruit. |

Selecting Fruits, Vegetables, and One Other Component

With OVS at lunch, students must select at least three of the five food components offered, including at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. A student's selection of fruits, vegetables, and one other component could be a reimbursable meal depending on each the serving size.

OVS examples for grades K-5 and 6-8

The NSLP meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component. If a student selects only fruits, vegetables, and one other component, either the fruit selection or the vegetable selection must be the full serving for both foods to count as components for OVS. For example, an elementary student who selects $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit (full component), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable (less than full component but meets OVS requirement) and one other full component has a reimbursable meal.

Table 2-22 shows some OVS examples when students in grades K-5 and 6-8 select only fruits, vegetables, and one other component.

- **Vegetables component:** The planned lunch menu offers 1 cup of vegetables from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn, which provides an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ cup vegetables for grades K-5 and 6-8. A student's selection of $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of broccoli or corn does not count as the full vegetables component. However, each $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. **Note:** SFAs may serve larger amounts of any component if the menu does not exceed the weekly dietary specifications. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.
- **Fruits component:** The planned lunch menu offers the required $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit for grades K-5 and 6-8 from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red grapes. A student's selection of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red grapes counts as either the full fruits component or meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, a student who selects $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn or broccoli (less than full component but meets OVS requirement) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of grapes (full component) must also select the full serving of at least one other component. A student who selects $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn (more than the full vegetables component) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of grapes (full fruits component) must also select the full serving of at least one other component.

Table 2-22. Selecting fruits, vegetables, and one other component for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch

| Planned lunch menu | | Meal pattern components | | |
|---|------------|---|--|---|
| Grilled chicken, 1½ ounces cooked | | MMA, 1½ oz eq | | |
| Whole-grain roll, 2 ounces | | G, 2 oz eq | | |
| Broccoli, ½ cup Corn, ½ cup | | V, ½ cup V, ½ cup (1 cup total) | | |
| Red grapes, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | | |
| <p>Students must select at least 3 of the 5 food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 2 other components.</p> | | | | |
| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (F, M) and ½ cup of V. |
| Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Chicken (MMA) | 3 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (F, MMA) and ½ cup of V. |
| Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Roll (G) | 3 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (F, G) and ½ cup of V. |
| Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Roll (G) | 3 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (F, G) and ½ cup of V. |

Table 2-22, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|------------|---|--|---|
| Corn ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (F, M) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of V. |
| Corn ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup V) ¹ Grapes (F) Chicken (MMA) | 3 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (F, MMA) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of V. |

¹ Student selections of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables do not count as the full $\frac{3}{4}$ -cup component for grades K-5 and 6-8 but meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.



OVS examples for grades 9-12

The NSLP meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires 1 cup of fruits and 1 cup of vegetables. If a student selects only fruits, vegetables, and one other component, either the fruit selection or the vegetable selection must be the full 1-cup serving for both foods to count as components for OVS. For example, a high school student who selects 1 cup of fruit (full component), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetable (less than full component but meets OVS requirement), and one other full component has a reimbursable meal.

Table 2-23 shows some OVS examples when students in grades 9-12 select only fruits, vegetables, and one other component.

- **Vegetables component:** The planned lunch menu offers the required 1 cup of vegetables from $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn. A student's selection of $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of either vegetable does not count as the full vegetables component, but meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.
- **Fruits component:** The planned lunch menu offers the required 1 cup of fruit from two $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings of red grapes. A $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup serving of red grapes does not count as the full fruits component but meets the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables.

For a reimbursable meal, a student who selects $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn or broccoli (less than the full vegetables component but meets OVS requirement) and 1 cup of red grapes (full fruits component) must also select the full serving of at least one other full component. A student who selects $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of broccoli and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of corn (full vegetables component) and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of red grapes (less than full fruits component but meets OVS requirement) must also select the full serving of at least one other full component.



Table 2-23. Selecting fruits, vegetables, and one other component for grades 9-12 at lunch

| Planned lunch menu | | Meal pattern components | | |
|---|------------|---|--|---|
| Grilled chicken, 2 ounces cooked | | MMA, 2 oz eq | | |
| Whole-grain roll, 2 ounces | | G, 2 oz eq | | |
| Broccoli, ½ cup Corn, ½ cup | | V, ½ cup V, ½ cup (1 cup total) | | |
| Red grapes, two ½-cup servings | | F, 1 cup | | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | | |
| <p>Students must select at least 3 of the 5 food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 2 other components.</p> | | | | |
| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, 1 serving (½ cup F) ¹ Milk (M) | 3 | 1 | Yes | No. While the selected meal includes 1 cup of F and V combined, it contains only 1 full component (M). |
| Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, 1 serving (½ cup F) ¹ Chicken (MMA) | 3 | 1 | Yes | No. While the selected meal includes 1 cup of F and V combined, it contains only 1 full component (MMA). |
| Broccoli (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, 1 serving (½ cup F) ¹ Roll (G) | 3 | 1 | Yes | No. While the selected meal includes 1 cup of F and V combined, it contains only 1 full component (G). |

Table 2-23, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|--|------------|---|--|---|
| Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, 2 servings (F) Roll (G) | 4 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (F, G) and ½ cup of V. |
| Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, 2 servings (F) Milk (M) | 4 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal includes 2 full components (F, M) and ½ cup of V. |
| Corn (½ cup V) ¹ Grapes, 2 servings (F) Chicken (MMA) | 4 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (F, MMA) and ½ cup of V. |

¹ Student selections of ½ cup of fruits or vegetables do not count as the full component for grades 9-12 but meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.

Grains Component with OVS at Lunch

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the grains component at lunch. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for the grains component, refer to section 3 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the “[Grains Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

The grains component of the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12 includes a variety of foods, such as:

- breads, biscuits, bagels, rolls, tortillas, and muffins;
- snack products, such as crackers (including animal crackers and graham crackers), hard pretzels, hard bread sticks, tortilla chips, and popcorn;
- certain grain-based desserts, such as cookies, granola bars, cereal bars, cake, and pastries (cannot exceed 2 oz eq per week at lunch, refer to the CSDE’s *Crediting Grain-based Desserts for Grades K-12 in the School Nutrition Programs*);
- cereal grains, such as buckwheat, brown rice, bulgur, and quinoa;
- ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals;
- cooked breakfast cereals (instant and regular), such as oatmeal;
- bread products used as an ingredient in another menu item, such as combination foods, e.g., breading on fish or poultry and pizza crust in pizza; and
- pasta products, such as macaroni, spaghetti, noodles, orzo, and couscous.

To credit as the grains component in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns, grain menu items must be WGR or enriched and cannot exceed the limit for noncreditable grains. Breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified. Bran and germ credit the same as enriched grains.

WGR Requirement

At least 80 percent of the grains offered at lunch and breakfast must be WGR. The remaining grains must be enriched. The percentage of WGR grains must be calculated separately for lunch and breakfast. For comprehensive guidance on the WGR requirements, refer to the CSDE’s resources, *Calculating the Weekly Percentage of Whole Grain-rich Menu Items 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 Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

Serving Size for Grains

The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq. Table 2-24 summarizes the required oz eq for each grade group at lunch. The minimum daily serving is the amount that SFAs must offer with each lunch and the amount that students must select to count as the grains component for OVS.

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving ¹ | Minimum weekly serving | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | | Five-day week | Seven-day week |
| K-5 | 1 oz eq ² | 8 oz eq | 11 oz eq |
| 6-8 | 1 oz eq ² | 8 oz eq | 11 oz eq |
| 9-12 | 2 oz eq | 10 oz eq | 14 oz eq |

¹ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

² SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch

SFAs may choose to serve a combination of several different grains to meet the daily requirement. Each serving must contain at least $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq of grains (the minimum creditable amount). For example, a lunch menu for grades 9-12 could meet the required 2 oz eq of the grains component with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of brown rice (1 oz eq) and a 1-oz eq whole-grain roll.

Servings that contain less than $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq of grains do not credit toward the meal patterns. A student's selection of less than the minimum daily serving does not count toward the OVS requirement.

To count as the grains component for OVS, the amount selected by the student must be at least the minimum daily serving for the grade group.

Methods to Determine Grain Ounce Equivalents

The USDA allows two methods for determining the grain oz eq of a creditable product or recipe. These methods are summarized below. For detailed guidance on both methods, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).

SFAs are not required to use either method if the grain is part of a CN-labeled product, such as pizza and breaded chicken nuggets. CN-labeled products credit based on the stated crediting information for grain oz eq. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling Program](#).

Method 1: Weight or volume (USDA's Exhibit A chart)

Method 1 uses the USDA's [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#) chart to determine the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the grain group where the food belongs. This method is used for commercial grain products and may also be used for standardized recipes if the menu planner knows the weight (grams or ounces) of the prepared (cooked) serving. Some commercial grain products require method 2 and the SFA must obtain a PFS (refer to the CSDE's resource, [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs](#)).

The Exhibit A grain quantities are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs because the meal patterns are different. The CSDE's resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), lists the Exhibit A grain oz eq that apply to the meal patterns for grades K-12.



The amount of a creditable grain food that provides 1 oz eq varies because different types of foods contain different amounts of creditable grains. For example, to credit as 1 oz eq of the grains component, a roll must weigh 28 grams (1 ounce), a corn muffin must weigh 34 grams (1.2 ounces), and a blueberry muffin must weigh 55 grams (2 ounces). The minimum amount that credits toward the grains component is $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq.

Menu planners can use the USDA's online [Exhibit A Grains Tool](#) to determine a product's grain servings, and the required amount to obtain a specific meal pattern contribution. For more information, refer to the USDA's webinars, [Exhibit A Grains Tool to the Rescue](#) and [How to Maximize the Exhibit A Grains Tool](#).

Method 2: Creditable grains

Method 2 determines the oz eq for creditable commercial grain products and standardized recipes by calculating the total weight (grams) of creditable grains per serving. The grams of creditable grains are obtained from the commercial product's PFS or calculated from the grain quantities in the SFA's standardized recipe. The required grams of creditable grains are different for creditable foods and WGR foods.

- **Creditable foods:** To credit as 1 ounce equivalent of the grains component, foods in groups A-G must contain 16 grams of creditable grains and foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of creditable grains.
- **WGR foods:** To credit as 1 ounce equivalent of a WGR food, foods in groups A-G must contain 16 grams of creditable grains (including at least 8 grams of whole grains) and foods in groups H-I must contain 28 grams of creditable grains (including at least 14 grams of whole grains).

For detailed guidance, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and module 13 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*. For more information, visit the "Ounce Equivalents" section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs.

When method 2 is required for commercial products

SFAs must use method 2 and obtain a PFS from the manufacturer if the product's ingredients statement and packaging do not provide sufficient information to determine if the product meets the crediting requirements or WGR criteria for the school meal patterns. For specific guidance and examples, refer to the CSDE's resource, *When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the School Nutrition Programs*.

If the manufacturer will not supply a PFS, or the PFS does not provide the appropriate documentation, the product cannot credit as the grains component in school meals.

Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two or More Separate Servings

SFAs may choose to offer a combination of several different grains to meet the minimum daily requirement (refer to “[Serving Size for Grains](#)” in this section). If the lunch menu offers the minimum daily serving of the grains component as two or more separate servings (such as ½ cup of brown rice and a 1-oz eq roll to meet the 2 oz eq requirement for grades 9-12), students must select all servings to count as the grains component for OVS. Selections of less than the full serving do not count as the grains component for OVS.

Whether a student’s selection counts as the grains component for OVS depends on the amount the student selects and the minimum daily serving for each grade group (refer to [table 2-24](#) in this section).

Menu planning tip: Offering the full serving of the grains component as two different foods might make it more difficult for students to select the amount required to count as the full component for reimbursable meals. A better menu planning approach is offering all grains in at least the minimum daily serving or packaging both grain items together, so any student’s selection counts as the full grains component for OVS (refer to “[Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch](#)”).

OVS examples for grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-25 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that offers the minimum daily 1-oz eq serving of the grains component as two separate foods. This menu provides 1 oz eq of grains from ¼ cup of brown rice (½ oz eq) and a ½-ounce whole-grain roll (½ oz eq). Students must take both foods to count as the grains component for OVS. The brown rice or roll alone do not count as the grains component because each serving is less than 1 oz eq.



| Table 2-25. Offering minimum daily grains for grades K-5 and 6-8 as two separate foods at lunch | | | | |
|---|-------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Minimum daily serving: 1 oz eq | | | | |
| Planned grains component | | | Meal pattern contribution: 1 oz eq total | |
| Brown rice, ¼ cup | | | ½ oz eq | |
| Whole-grain roll, ½ ounce | | | ½ oz eq | |
| Student selects | Oz eq | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Brown rice Whole-grain roll | 1 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Brown rice | ½ | 0 | No. The student's selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving do not count as a component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |
| Whole-grain roll | ½ | 0 | No. The student's selection is less than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving do not count as a component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |

OVS examples for grades 9-12

Table 2-26 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades 9-12 that offers the minimum daily 2-oz eq serving of the grains component as two separate foods. This menu includes ½ cup of brown rice (1 oz eq) and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll (1 oz eq). Students must take both foods to count as the grains component for OVS. The brown rice or roll alone do not count as the grains component because each serving is less than 2 oz eq.

| Table 2-26. Offering minimum daily grains for grades 9-12 as two separate foods at lunch | | | | |
|--|-------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Minimum daily serving: 2 oz eq | | | | |
| Planned grains component | | | Meal pattern contribution: 2 oz eq total | |
| Brown rice, ½ cup | | | 1 oz eq | |
| Whole-grain roll, 1 ounce | | | 1 oz eq | |
| Student selects | Oz eq | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| Brown rice Whole-grain roll | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the grains component | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| Brown rice | 1 | 0 | No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving do not count as a component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |
| Whole-grain roll | 1 | 0 | No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving do not count as a component for OVS | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |

Offering More Than Minimum Daily Grains

SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly lunch meal pattern requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 (refer to [table 2-24](#) in this section). SFAs may also choose to serve larger amounts of grains to any grade groups if the menu does not exceed the weekly dietary specifications. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Menu planners may choose to provide additional grains from a larger serving of one grain food (such as a 2-oz eq roll instead of a 1-oz eq roll) or from a combination of different grain foods (such as ½ cup (1 oz eq) of spaghetti and a 1-oz eq whole-grain roll). These menu planning decisions affect students' selections of reimbursable meals with OVS.



Offering a combination of two or more grain foods

Whether a student's choice counts as the grains component for OVS depends on the serving size of the planned grain menu items and the minimum daily serving for each grade group. Students must select at least the minimum daily serving to count as the grains component for OVS. Selections of less than the minimum daily serving do not count toward the OVS requirements.

When the lunch menu offers more than minimum daily serving of the grains component from a combination of foods, the OVS requirements below apply.

- **If each grain menu item provides the minimum daily serving**, students may select any grain food to count as the grains component for OVS. For example, the lunch meal pattern for grades K-5 and 6-8 requires 1 oz eq of the grains component. If the lunch menu offers two different 1-oz eq grains, students may select both grain foods, or either one alone, to count as the grains component for OVS.
- **If any grain menu item provides less than the minimum daily serving**, students must select the food or combination of foods that provide at least the minimum daily serving. For example, the lunch meal pattern for grades 9-12 requires 2 oz eq of the grains component. If the lunch menu offers 3 oz of grains from a 2-oz eq grain food and a 1-oz eq grain food, students must select both grain foods, or the 2 oz eq grain food, to count as the grains component for OVS. The 1-oz eq grain food alone does not count as the grains component because it does not provide the minimum daily serving for grade 9-12.

Student selections of more than the minimum daily serving (such two 1-oz eq WGR rolls for grades K-5 and 6-8) count as only one component for OVS.

OVS examples for two grain foods with the same oz eq

Table 2-27 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that offers more than the minimum daily grains from two grain foods with the same oz eq. This menu includes 2 oz eq of the grains component from ½ cup of WGR spaghetti and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll. To count as the grains component for OVS, students may take the spaghetti and roll together, or either one alone.

| Table 2-27. Offering two 1-oz eq grain foods for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch | | | | |
|--|-------|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| Minimum daily serving: 1 oz eq ¹ | | | | |
| Planned grains component | | | Meal pattern contribution: 2 oz eq total | |
| WGR spaghetti, ½ cup | | | 1 oz eq | |
| Whole-grain roll, 1 ounce | | | 1 oz eq | |
| Student selects | Oz eq | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 1 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| WGR spaghetti WGR roll | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of more than the required serving count as only one component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| WGR spaghetti | 1 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| WGR roll | 1 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 1 oz eq for the grains component. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |

¹ SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8 at lunch (refer [table 2-30](#)).

OVS examples for two grain foods with different oz eq


Table 2-28 shows some OVS examples with a lunch menu for grades 9-12 that offers more than the minimum daily grains from two grain foods with different oz eq. This menu includes 3 oz eq of the grains component from 1 cup of WGR spaghetti and a 1-ounce whole-grain roll. To count as the grains component for OVS, students may take the spaghetti and roll together, or the spaghetti alone. The roll alone does not count toward the OVS requirements because the serving is less than 2 oz eq.

| Table 2-28. Offering two grain foods with different oz eq for grades 9-12 at lunch | | | | |
|--|-------|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Minimum daily serving: 2 oz eq | | | | |
| Planned grains component | | | Meal pattern contribution: 3 oz eq total | |
| WGR spaghetti, 1 cup | | | 2 oz eq | |
| Whole-grain roll, 1 ounce | | | 1 oz eq | |
| Student selects | Oz eq | OVS contribution (full component) | Counts as full grains component? <i>Must be at least 2 oz eq</i> | Additional foods needed for reimbursable meal |
| WGR spaghetti WGR roll | 3 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is more than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of more than the required serving count as only one component for OVS | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| WGR spaghetti | 2 | 1 | Yes. The student's selection is the same as the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least one other component. |
| WGR roll | 1 | 1 | No. The student's selection is less than the required 2 oz eq for the grains component. Selections of less than the required serving do not count as a component for OVS. | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other components. |

Strategies for OVS Implementation at Lunch

SFAs decide how to offer the required food components for OVS at lunch. These menu planning decisions determine the choices that students may select for reimbursable meals. SFAs can increase the likelihood that students will select reimbursable meals by using strategies that encourage students to take at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and the minimum daily serving of at least two other components.

The three critical elements for successful OVS implementation include strategic menu planning, clear communication, and staff training. The following guidelines help simplify the menu planning process and make it easier for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable lunches with OVS.

- **Offer combination entrees:** Offer combination entrees (such as pizza and a cheeseburger on a bun) that provide the full serving of the grains component and MMA component. Students who choose the entree have already selected two full components, and only need to select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables for a reimbursable meal.
- 
- **Offer components as one food:** Offer the full serving of the grains component and MMA component as one food instead of two, so any student's selection counts as a full component for OVS. For example, offer a 2-oz eq package of WGR crackers for grades 9-12 instead of two packages that are each 1 oz eq. For more information, refer to [“Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two Separate Foods”](#) and [“Offering Minimum Daily MMA as Two Separate Foods”](#) in this section.
 - **Package foods with less than the full serving together:** When a food is less than the full serving of the grains or MMA components, package it together with another food so students must take both. For example, wrap a 1-oz eq yogurt ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) and a 1-oz eq cheese stick together to provide 2 oz eq for grades 9-12, or wrap two $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz eq packages of crackers together to provide 1 oz eq for grades K-5 and 6-8.
 - **Offer all vegetable choices in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings:** Offer all grades a variety of vegetables in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings and allow students to select up to two servings. This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. **Note:** This menu planning approach provides an additional $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of daily vegetables for grades K-5 and 6-8. SFAs may serve larger amounts of any component if the menu does not exceed the weekly dietary specifications. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE's [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

- **Offer all fruits in ½-cup servings:** Offer all grades a variety of fruits in ½-cup servings. Allow students in grades K-5 and 6-8 to select at least one serving. Allow students in grades 9-12 to select at least two servings. This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.
- **Plan fruit and vegetable choices to meet the weekly juice limit:** Review lunch menus for compliance with the weekly juice limit. Provide clear information on lunch menus and cafeteria signage that instructs students on the amount of juice they can select with each lunch. For more information, refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Lunch](#)” in this section, “[Assorted Juice Choice at Breakfast](#)” in section 3, and “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1. **Note:** Serving more fruit than juice provides the best nutrition for students. Juice is more calorie dense than whole fruits and vegetables and does not provide the same nutritional benefits.
- **Provide clear signage:** Check that lunch menus and cafeteria signage clearly communicate all menu choices and what students must select for a reimbursable lunch. Check that signage is located on the serving line near the food component to which it applies. A helpful strategy for determining if signage is clear and effective is to conduct a cafeteria walk-through from the beginning of the serving line to the point of service. For more information, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.
- **Provide staff training:** Provide regular OVS training to help school food service staff understand and identify the required NSLP meal pattern components, how food items credit for each meal choice on the lunch menu, and what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the point of service. A recommended best practice for cafeteria managers is to conduct a daily pre-service meeting with all applicable staff to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to “[Food service staff training](#)” in section 1.

For more information on menu planning for lunch, refer to the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and the CSDE’s resource, *Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the NSLP*.



Sample Lunch Menus

The menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate what students may select from each component for a reimbursable lunch, based on the planned daily lunch menu for each grade group. Signage must be located at the beginning of the serving line and near each food component to indicate what and how much students can take for a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.

This section contains four sample daily lunch menus that show how SFAs could communicate the OVS requirements to students. To demonstrate how menu planning choices affect OVS, each sample menu:

- offers the same two foods but changes the amounts that students may select from each component;
- provides at least the minimum daily serving of each component;
- includes choices within each component; and
- offers all entrees as combination foods that provide at least the minimum daily serving of the grains component and at least the minimum daily serving of the MMA component.

Note: These sample lunch menus meet the daily meal pattern requirements for the purpose of illustrating the OVS requirements. However, the NSLP meal pattern also requires weekly minimums for the grains component and MMA component. To meet these weekly requirements for grades K-5 and 6-8, weekly lunch menus must include additional servings of grains and MMA on some days.



Sample lunch menu 1 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-29 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that allows students to select one choice from each component. All menu items offer each component in at least the minimum daily serving for both grade groups.

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices but must select at least one serving of fruits or vegetables and two other components. Each 1/2-cup fruit choice credits as either the full component or the minimum 1/2-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both in the same meal. Each 3/4-cup vegetable choice credits the full vegetables component or meets the OVS requirement for at least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables.

| Table 2-29. Sample lunch menu 1 for grades K-5 and 6-8 | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Each lunch includes 5 components: MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least 1 fruit or vegetable and 2 other components. For a nutritious meal, take all 5!</p> | | | |
| Must choose at least 1 | | | |
| MMA: 2 oz eq Grains: 2 oz eq | Vegetables: 3/4 cup | Fruits: 1/2 cup | Milk: 1 cup |
| May choose 1 | May choose up to 2 | May choose 1 | May choose 1 |
| Baked chicken with WGR cornbread Hamburger on WGR bun Southwest chili with whole-grain roll Turkey whole-grain wrap | Broccoli florets Carrot sticks Garden salad Green beans Roasted potatoes Seasoned corn | Banana Blueberries Green grapes Pineapple chunks Raisins Sliced peaches | Fat-free milk Low-fat milk Low-fat chocolate milk |

Table 2-30 shows some OVS examples with student selections for sample lunch menu 1.

| Table 2-30. OVS examples for sample lunch menu 1 | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Planned lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 | | | | Meal pattern components |
| Milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored Fat-free milk, flavored | | | M, 1 cup |
| Fruits May choose 1 | Raisins, ¼ cup ¹ Blueberries, ½ cup Green grapes, ½ cup | Pineapple chunks, ½ cup Sliced peaches, ½ cup Banana, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup |
| Vegetables May choose 1 | Carrot sticks, ¾ cup Broccoli florets, ¾ cup Garden salad, 1½ cups ¹ | Seasoned corn, ¾ cup Roasted potatoes, ¾ cup Green beans, ¾ cup | | V, ¾ cup |
| MMA and grains May choose 1 | Hamburger (2 ounces cooked) on whole-wheat bun (2 ounces) Turkey (2 ounces) in whole-grain wrap (2 ounces) Baked chicken (2 ounces cooked) with WGR corn bread (2.4 ounces) Southwest chili (½ cup beans) with whole-grain roll (2 ounces) | | | G, 2 oz eq MMA, 2 oz eq |
| Students must select at least 3 of the 5 food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 2 other components. | | | | |
| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Hamburger on whole-wheat bun (MMA, G) Pineapple chunks (F) | 2 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, F). |
| Carrot sticks (V) Banana (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (V, F, M). |

Table 2-30, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|------------|---|--|--|
| Hamburger on whole-wheat bun (MMA, G) Milk (M) | 2 | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V. |
| Baked chicken (MMA) Corn bread (G) Roasted potatoes (V) | 3 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, V). |
| Baked chicken (MMA) Green grapes (F) Broccoli florets (V) | 3 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, F, V). |
| Baked chicken (MMA) Raisins (F) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, F, M). |
| Southwest chili (MMA) Whole-grain roll (G) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V. |
| Turkey wrap (MMA and G) Garden salad (V) Milk (M) | 3 | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 full components (MMA, G, V, M). |

¹ Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served and raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served.

Sample lunch menu 2 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-31 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that allows students to select one choice from the milk, fruits, grains, and MMA components, and two choices from the vegetables component. The menu offers all vegetables in ½-cup servings to make it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for fruits and vegetables. Each ½-cup vegetable choice does not provide the full vegetables component but meets the OVS requirement.

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices but must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and two other components. Students may select two different vegetables or two servings of the same vegetable because the planned menu allows any two choices from the vegetables component. Selections of two ½-cup vegetable servings count as only one component for OVS at lunch. For more information, refer to “[Selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables](#)” in the “Fruits and Vegetables” section.

| Table 2-31. Sample lunch menu 2 for grades K-5 and 6-8 | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Each lunch includes 5 components: MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least 1 fruit or vegetable and 2 other components. For a nutritious meal, take all 5!</p> | | | |
| Must choose at least 1 | | | |
| MMA and grains | Vegetables * | Fruits * | Milk |
| May choose 1 | May choose up to 2 | May choose 1 | May choose 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked chicken with enriched cornbread • Hamburger on whole grain-rich bun • Southwest chili with whole-grain roll • Turkey whole-grain wrap | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrot sticks • Broccoli florets • Garden salad • Green beans • Seasoned corn • Roasted potatoes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple • Banana • Blueberries • Green grapes • Pineapple chunks • Sliced peaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat-free milk • Low-fat milk • Low-fat chocolate milk |
| * Each serving is ½ cup | | | |

Sample lunch menu 3 for grades K-5 and 6-8

Table 2-32 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily lunch menu for grades K-5 and 6-8 that allows students to select one choice from the milk, grains, and MMA components; two choices from the fruits component; and two choices from the vegetables component. The menu offers all fruits and vegetables in ½-cup servings to make it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement. Each ½-cup fruit choice counts as either the full component or the minimum ½-cup requirement for OVS but cannot count as both in the same meal. Each ½-cup vegetable choice does not count as the full vegetables component but meets the OVS requirement.

| Table 2-32. Sample lunch menu 3 for grades K-5 and 6-8 | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Each lunch includes 5 components: MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least 1 fruit or vegetable and 2 other components. For a nutritious meal, take all 5!</p> | | | |
| Must choose at least 1 | | | |
| MMA and grains | Vegetables * | Fruits * | Milk |
| May choose 1 | May choose up to 2 | May choose up to 2 | May choose 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked chicken with enriched cornbread • Hamburger on whole grain-rich bun • Southwest chili with whole-grain roll • Turkey whole-grain wrap | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrot sticks • Broccoli florets • Garden salad • Green beans • Seasoned corn • Roasted potatoes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple • Banana • Blueberries • Green grapes • Pineapple chunks • Sliced peaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat-free milk • Low-fat milk • Low-fat chocolate milk |
| * Each serving is ½ cup | | | |

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices but must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and two other components. Students may select two different fruits, or two servings of the same fruit, because the planned menu allows any two choices from the fruits component. Students may select two different vegetables, or two servings of the same vegetable,

because the planned menu allows any two choices from the vegetable component. Selections of two 1/2-cup fruit servings or two 1/2-cup vegetable servings count as only one component for OVS at lunch. For more information, refer to “Student selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables” in the “Fruits and Vegetables” section.

Sample lunch menu 4 for grades 9-12

Table 2-33 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily lunch menu for grades 9-12 that allows students to select one choice from the milk, grains, and MMA components, two choices from the fruits component, and two choices from the vegetables component. The menu offers all fruits and vegetables in 1/2-cup servings to make it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement to select at least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables. Each 1/2-cup fruit choice does not count as the full fruits component but meets the OVS requirement for at least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables. Each 1/2-cup vegetable choice does not count as the full vegetables component but meets the OVS requirement for at least 1/2 cup of fruits or vegetables.

| Table 2-33. Sample lunch menu 4 for grades 9-12 | | | |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Each lunch includes 5 components: MMA, grains, vegetables, fruits, and milk. Choose at least 1 fruit or vegetable and 2 other components. For a nutritious meal, take all 5!</p> | | | |
| Must choose at least 1 | | | |
| MMA and grains | Vegetables * | Fruits * | Milk |
| May choose 1 | May choose up to 2 | May choose up to 2 | May choose 1 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baked chicken with enriched cornbread • Hamburger on whole grain-rich bun • Southwest chili with whole-grain roll • Turkey whole-grain wrap | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrot sticks • Broccoli florets • Garden salad • Green beans • Seasoned corn • Roasted potatoes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apple • Banana • Blueberries • Green grapes • Pineapple chunks • Sliced peaches | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fat-free milk • Low-fat milk • Low-fat chocolate milk |
| * Each serving is 1/2 cup | | | |

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all choices but must select at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables and two other components. Students may select two different fruits, or two servings of the same fruit, because the planned menu allows any two choices from the fruits component. Students may select two different vegetables, or two servings of the same vegetable, because the planned menu allows any two choices from the vegetable component. Selections of two $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup fruit servings or two $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup vegetable servings count as only one component for OVS at lunch. For more information, refer to “[Student selections of Multiple Fruits or Vegetables](#)” in the “Fruits and Vegetables” section.

Table 2-34 shows some OVS examples with student selections for sample lunch menu 4.



Table 2-34. OVS examples for sample lunch menu 4

| Planned lunch menu for grades 9-12 | | | Meal pattern components | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| Milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored Fat-free milk, flavored | | M, 1 cup | |
| Fruits May choose 1 or 2 | Raisins, ¼ cup ¹ Blueberries, ½ cup Green grapes, ½ cup | Pineapple chunks, ½ cup Sliced peaches, ½ cup Banana, ½ cup | F, 1 cup | |
| Vegetables May choose 1 or 2 | Carrot sticks, ½ cup Broccoli florets, ½ cup Garden salad, 1 cup ¹ | Seasoned corn, ½ cup Roasted potatoes, ½ cup Green beans, ½ cup | V, 1 cup | |
| MMA and grains May choose 1 | Hamburger (2 ounces cooked) on whole-wheat bun (2 ounces) Turkey (2 ounces) in whole-grain wrap (2 ounces) Baked chicken (2 ounces cooked) with WGR corn bread (2.4 ounces) Southwest chili (½ cup beans) with whole-grain roll (2 ounces) | | G, 2 oz eq MMA, 2 oz eq | |
| Students must select at least 3 of the 5 food components, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 2 other components. | | | | |
| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Baked chicken (MMA) Peaches (½ cup F) Garden salad (½ cup V) | 3 | 1 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains 1 full component (MMA) and at least ½ cup of F or V (1 cup combined) but is missing another full component. |

Table 2-34, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items | Full food components <i>Must be at least 2</i> | At least ½ cup of F or V <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|------------|---|--|--|
| Southwest chili (MMA) Carrot sticks (½ cup V) Carrot sticks (½ cup V) Milk (1 M) | 4 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, V, M). |
| Turkey wrap (MMA and G) Garden salad (½ cup V) Milk (M) | 3 | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, M) and includes ½ cup of V. |
| Southwest chili (MMA) Whole-grain roll (G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 full components (MMA, G, M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F or V. |
| Green beans (½ cup V) Seasoned corn (½ cup V) Blueberries (½ cup F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (V, M) and includes ½ cup of F. |
| Baked chicken (MMA) Corn bread (G) Green grapes (½ cup F) Roasted potatoes (½ cup V) | 4 | 2 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 2 full components (MMA, G) and includes 1 cup of F and V combined. |

¹ Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served and raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served.

3 — OVS at Breakfast

The requirements for implementing OVS for breakfast are defined by [7 CFR 220.8\(e\)](#) of USDA's SBP regulations. OVS at breakfast is optional for all grades.

The SBP meal pattern requirements do not change with OVS. All breakfast menus must meet the daily and weekly SBP meal pattern requirements. The daily requirements are the minimum amount of the three food components (grains, fruits, and milk). The weekly requirements include the juice limit (no more than 50 percent), minimum ounce equivalents (oz eq) of grains, whole grain-rich (WGR) requirement (at least 80 percent of weekly grains must be WGR), and dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, sodium and trans fat.

The OVS requirements for breakfast are different from the OVS requirements for lunch. OVS at breakfast requires a minimum number of food items instead of food components. The definitions below apply only to OVS at breakfast.



- A **food component** is one of the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts, including grains (with optional MMA substitutions), fruits (with optional vegetable substitutions), and milk.
- A **food item** is a specific food offered within the three food components for the breakfast meal pattern. One food item equals 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) of the grains component, ½ cup of the fruits component, and 1 cup of the milk component. **Note:** This definition applies only to breakfast. Food items credit differently for OVS at lunch.

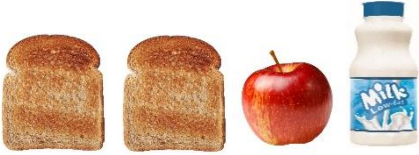

OVS applies to the daily meal pattern requirements. SFAs must offer 4 food items from the three food components in at least the minimum daily serving for each grade group. For a reimbursable breakfast under OVS, students must select at least 3 food items, including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered). These requirements apply regardless of the number of food items offered. For example, if a breakfast menu offers more than 4 food items, students must still select at least the required 3 food items.

Without OVS, SFAs must offer the minimum daily serving of the three food components and students must select all three food components.

Overview of OVS Requirements for Breakfast

For a breakfast to be reimbursable under OVS, SFAs must meet the criteria below.

- Menu planning:** Breakfast menus must include at least 4 food items from the three food components (milk, fruits, and grains). The planned serving for each food item must be at least the minimum daily serving for each grade group. The 4 food items may include two servings of grains (either two of the same grain or two different grains), one serving of grains and one serving of MMA substitution, two servings of fruits or vegetable substitutions (either two of the same fruit/vegetable, two different fruits/vegetables, or one fruit and one vegetable) but cannot include two servings of milk. Table 3-1 shows some examples of acceptable menu planning for breakfast.

| Table 3-1. Examples of acceptable menu planning for breakfast | |
|---|---|
| Plan a minimum of 4 food items ¹ | |
| Menu A | Menu B |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grains Grains (or MMA substitutions) Fruits Milk  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grains Fruits (or vegetable substitutions) Fruits (or vegetable substitutions) Milk  |
| <p>¹ The 4 food items may include two servings of grains (either two of the same grain or two different grains) or two servings of fruit (either two of the same fruit or two different fruits) but cannot include two servings of milk.</p> | |

- Optional MMA substitutions:** SFAs may choose to substitute MMA for grains after offering 1 oz eq of grains. For example, a breakfast menu that includes a 1 oz eq whole-grain roll (grains component) may also include 1 oz eq of low-fat cheese (MMA component) offered as a substitution for the grains component. MMA substitutions count toward the minimum weekly grains requirement and the weekly dietary specifications. For more information, refer to “[MMA Substitutions](#)” in this section.

- **Optional vegetable substitutions:** SFAs may substitute vegetables for the fruits component at any breakfast, without including vegetables from the other subgroups in the weekly menu. The USDA allows this flexibility through June 30, 2024. For more information, refer to [“Vegetable Substitutions”](#) in this section.
- **Duplicate servings:** Duplicate servings are two servings of the same food, such as two apples or two bagels. When the fruits component (including vegetable substitutions) or grains component (including MMA substitutions) includes two or more choices, SFAs may allow students to select duplicate servings. For example, if the breakfast menu offers any two 1 oz eq choices from the grains component, students may select two servings of the same grain item, such as two servings of cereal. If the breakfast menu offers any two ½-cup choices from the fruits component, students may select two servings of the same fruit, such as two servings of fruit salad. SFAs must clearly communicate this information on the breakfast menu and cafeteria signage and must train food service staff to recognize reimbursable meals with duplicate servings. For more information, refer to [“Meal identification signage”](#) in section 1 and [“Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast”](#) and [“Duplicate Grain Selections at Breakfast”](#) in this section.
- **Larger amounts:** SFAs may serve larger amounts of any component if the weekly breakfast menu does not exceed the USDA’s dietary specifications (nutrition standards) for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#). **Note:** SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the SBP meal pattern’s minimum weekly requirements for each grade group. Serving the minimum daily 1 oz eq of grains will not meet the weekly requirements. For more information, refer to section 4 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).
- **Unit pricing:** Meals must be priced as a unit, i.e., students pay the same price regardless of whether they take three or more food items. SFAs must establish one price for a complete reimbursable breakfast in the paid meal category and one price for a complete reimbursable breakfast in the reduced-price meal category. SFAs may set different unit prices (tiered pricing) for various combinations of foods offered as a reimbursable breakfast, such as one price for a meal with a larger breakfast entree and another price for a meal with different combinations of foods. However, all students, including those eligible for free and reduced-price meals, must be allowed to select any reimbursable breakfast. Breakfasts with a higher unit price must be available at no cost for all free-eligible students and at no more than 30 cents for all reduced-eligible students.

- **Required signage:** SFAs must post two different types of cafeteria signage that clearly communicates the food items for each daily menu choice and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal. The first type of signage must identify all planned reimbursable breakfasts (i.e., all offered full meals), including the food items and portions and any choices or combination of choices available within each component. This signage must be near or at the beginning of each serving line. The second type of signage must indicate what food items and amounts students may select for a reimbursable breakfast with OVS, based on the planned daily menu for each grade group. This signage must be posted at all applicable points in the serving line where the food items are available. For more information, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.
- **Required student selections:** Students must select at least 3 food items, including at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered) and the full serving of at least two other food items. Selections of less than $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables do not count as a food item for OVS, unless the student also selects additional fruits or vegetables to provide at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. To encourage selections of reimbursable meals, SFAs should offer all fruits and vegetables in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings.
- **Declining foods:** After selecting the required 3 food items (including at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables), students may decline any other food items or may take smaller portions of the declined food items. However, selections of less than the full serving do not count as a food item for OVS. For example, if the breakfast menu provides 1 oz eq of grains from two $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz eq WGR mini blueberry muffins, students must take both muffins to count as 1 food item for OVS. One muffin ($\frac{1}{2}$ oz eq) does not credit because it is less than the full serving.



Table 3-2 summarizes the OVS requirements for all grade groups at breakfast.

| Table 3-2. Summary of OVS requirements for breakfast | | | |
|--|----------------|---------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Menu planning: The breakfast menu must meet all daily and weekly requirements of the SBP meal pattern. SFAs must offer the minimum daily serving of at least 4 food items from the three food components. • Reimbursable meal: Students must select at least 3 food items, including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both. | | | |
| Component | Minimum amount | 1 food item = | Requirements |
| Milk | 1 cup | 1 cup | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must offer a variety (at least two different choices) of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk, either unflavored or flavored. • At least one milk choice must be unflavored. |
| Fruits | 1 cup | ½ cup | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fruit juice and vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings. “Juice” includes 100 percent juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice (unless the canned fruit is drained). • Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of raisins = ½ cup = 1 food item • Vegetables may substitute for fruits. • Raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served, e.g., 1 cup of raw spinach = ½ cup = 1 food item |
| Grains | 1 oz eq | 1 oz eq | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be WGR (at least 80 percent of weekly grains) or enriched. • May offer optional MMA substitutions after offering 1 oz eq of grains (1 oz eq MMA = 1 oz eq grains = 1 food item). • MMA substitutions count toward the weekly grains requirement and dietary specifications. |

Table 3-3 shows some examples of breakfast menus that meet the OVS menu planning requirements for all grade groups. Each menu contains at least 4 food items from the three components (milk, fruits, and grains).

| Table 3-3. Examples of acceptable breakfast menus for OVS | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Planned menu items | Meal pattern components | Number of food items | Total food items |
| Whole-grain corn muffin, 2½ ounces ¹ | G, 2 oz eq | 2 G | 5 |
| Orange juice, ½ cup ² | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Strawberries, ½ cup ² | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |
| Whole-grain granola cereal, ¼ cup ¹ | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G | 4 |
| Vanilla yogurt, ½ cup ³ | G (MMA substitution), 1 oz eq | 1 G | |
| Fruit salad, 1 cup ⁴ | F, 1 cup | 1 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |
| Whole-grain mini pancakes, 2½ ounces ¹ | G, 2 oz eq | 2 G | 5 |
| Choice of juice, ½ cup ² | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Peaches, ½ cup ² | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |
| Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce ¹ | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G | 7 |
| Cheese omelet, 1 egg and 1 ounce cheese ³ | G (MMA substitution), 3 oz eq | 3 G | |
| Strawberries, 1 cup ³ | F, 1 cup | 2 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |

Table 3-3, *continued*

| Planned menu items | Meal pattern components | Number of food items | Total food items |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| Whole-grain cereal flakes, 1 cup ¹ | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G | 5 |
| Whole-grain blueberry muffin, 2 ounces ¹ | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G | |
| Apple and orange wedges, 1 cup ⁴ | F, 1 cup | 2 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |
| Oatmeal, ½ cup ¹ | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G | 4 |
| Blueberries, ½ cup ² | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Banana, one 150 count (½ cup) ² | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |

¹ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE’s resources, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, *How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

² SFAs may choose to credit each ½-cup serving of fruit as 1 food item.

³ SFAs may choose to credit 1 oz eq of MMA as either a 1 oz eq grain substitution or an extra food (refer to “[MMA Substitutions](#)” in this section).

⁴ SFAs may choose to credit 1 cup of the same fruit as either 1 or 2 food items (refer to “[Crediting Fruit Items](#)” in this section).

Food Items at Breakfast

Food items at breakfast credit differently from food items at lunch. A food item at breakfast is a specific food offered within the three food components for the breakfast meal pattern. One food item equals 1 oz eq of the grains component, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component, and 1 cup of the milk component. Table 3-4 shows how some menu offerings credit as food items at breakfast.

Table 3-4. Examples of crediting menu offerings at breakfast

Example 1: Whole-grain bagel

A 2-ounce whole-grain bagel (2 oz eq) contains one food component (grains) that provides 2 food items (two grains) for OVS at breakfast. Alternatively, the menu planner may choose to credit the bagel as 1 food item. For more information, refer to “[Crediting Grains as One or More Food Items](#)” in this section.



Example 2: Variety of assorted fruit choices

A variety of assorted $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup fruit choices (such as apples, oranges, blueberries, and red grapes) is one food component (fruits) that contains 4 food items (four fruits) for OVS at breakfast. The menu planner may choose to credit two separate $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings of the same fruit as 2 food items for breakfast. For more information, refer to “[Crediting Fruit Items](#)” in this section.



Example 3: School-made fruit and milk smoothie

A smoothie made with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed fruit and 1 cup of milk contains two food components (milk and fruit) that provide 2 food items for OVS. Amounts less than the required 1-cup serving of milk do not count as a food item for OVS. Pureed fruit in smoothies credits only as juice and counts toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section, “[Milk Variety](#)” in section 2, and the CSDE’s resource, *Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.



Example 4: School-made yogurt parfait

A yogurt parfait made with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (1 oz eq) of low-fat yogurt (MMA as a grain substitution), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fresh fruit, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (1 oz eq) of whole-grain granola contains two food components (grains and fruit) that provide 3 food items for OVS (two grains and one fruit).



Offering Fruits or Grains as More than 1 Food Item

SFAs may choose to offer the minimum daily serving of the fruits component (including vegetable substitutions) and the minimum daily serving of grains component (including MMA substitutions) as more than 1 food item. This menu planning option is allowed only when:

- each food item provides the minimum creditable amount, i.e., $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq for grains (including MMA substitutions) and $\frac{1}{8}$ cup for fruits (including vegetable substitutions); and
- the combined total of all food items for the component provides the minimum daily serving required by the SBP meal pattern, i.e., 1 oz eq of grains (including MMA substitutions) and 1 cup of fruits (including vegetable substitutions).

To count as a food item for OVS, students must select at least the full serving, except for the fruits component (including vegetable substitutions). The OVS requirement for the fruits component is at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup.

SFAs must ensure clear communication with students and staff about the SBP meal pattern requirements and OVS by:

- posting cafeteria signage in all schools that clearly communicates the meal components for all breakfast choices, and indicates what students must select for a reimbursable meal (refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1); and
- providing adequate training for school food service staff on the SBP meal pattern requirements, including the required servings for each grade group, how to credit foods, and how to recognize reimbursable meals with OVS. For more information, refer to “[Food service staff training](#)” in section 1.

SFAs should consider the serving size of food items and plan breakfast menus to make it easy for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable meals. To implement OVS at breakfast, SFAs must always plan breakfast menus to include the full serving of at least 4 food items from the three food components.

For more information on offering the full fruits component as more than one item, refer to “[Counting Fruit Items at Breakfast](#)” in this section. For more information on offering the grains component as more than one item, refer to “[Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast](#)” in this section.



Milk Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the milk component at breakfast. For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for milk, refer to section 3 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the “[Milk Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Serving Size for Milk

Milk credits based on volume (fluid ounces). Table 3-5 summarizes the SBP meal pattern servings for the milk component. This is the minimum amount that SFAs must offer with each breakfast, and the minimum amount that students must select to count as a food item for OVS.

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving | Minimum weekly serving | |
|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | | Five-day week | Seven-day week |
| K-5 | 1 cup (8 fluid ounces) | 5 cups | 7 cups |
| 6-8 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |
| 9-12 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |

Milk may be used as a beverage, on cereal, or both. SFAs must offer a variety (at least two different choices) of milk with all meals. Choices may include low-fat and fat-free milk, either unflavored or flavored. At least one milk choice must be unflavored. For more information, refer to “[Milk Variety](#)” in section 2.

In addition to meeting the USDA meal pattern requirements for the milk component, all milk sold to students in public schools must meet the beverage requirements for milk under C.G.S [Section 10-221q](#). The state beverage statute requires that milk cannot contain more than 4 grams of sugars per ounce or any artificial sweeteners. These requirements apply to all milk sold to students as part of and separately from reimbursable meals (i.e., a la carte sales). The state beverage statute does not apply to private schools or RCCIs. For more information, refer to “[State Requirement for Milk](#)” in section 2.

Crediting Milk Items for OVS

OVS at breakfast requires at least 4 food items, which may include two servings of grains or two servings of fruits but cannot include two servings of milk. Students must select the full 1-cup serving of milk to count as 1 food item for OVS. SFAs may offer larger servings of milk; however, a student's selection of more than 1 cup of milk counts as only 1 food item for OVS.

Milk in Breakfast Smoothies

Low-fat or fat-free milk used in fruit or vegetable smoothies counts as the milk component. The requirements below apply to crediting smoothies as food items for OVS at breakfast.

- Smoothies that contain less than 1 cup of milk do not count as a milk food item for OVS.
- When reimbursable meals include smoothies, SFAs must also offer a variety of fluid milk on the serving line to meet the USDA's requirement for a variety of milk options (refer to "[Milk Variety](#)" in section 2).
- Commercial smoothies do not count as a milk food item for OVS. They do not meet the USDA's requirements for fluid milk because they do not comply with the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standard of identity for milk.

For additional OVS crediting information, refer to "[Fruits and Vegetables in Breakfast Smoothies](#)" in this section. For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Table 3-6 shows some OVS examples and student selections for a breakfast menu that offers 4 food items, including a smoothie made with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of pureed fruit and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of milk. The pureed fruit credits only as juice and provides 1 food item (1 fruit). The milk is an extra food. It does not count as a food item for OVS because the amount is less than the required 1-cup serving. Smoothies made with at least 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free milk and at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit or juice may credit as 2 food items (milk and fruit) at breakfast.

Table 3-6. Offering breakfast smoothies made with fruit and milk

| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern contribution | Food items |
|---|---|---|---|
| WGR corn muffin, 2½ ounces ¹ | | G, 2 oz eq | 2 G |
| Kiwi, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup ² | 1 F |
| Strawberry smoothie | | | |
| ½ cup of low-fat milk | | Extra | 0 |
| ½ cup of pureed strawberries | | F, ½ cup ³ | 1 F |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Smoothie (1 F) | 1 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 1 food item (1 F). |
| Smoothie (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 F, 1 M). |
| Smoothie (1 F) Corn muffin (2 G) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F, 2 G). |
| Smoothie (1 F) Kiwi (1 F) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (2 F). |

Table 3-6, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|---|---|--|
| Kiwi (1 F) Corn muffin (2 G) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 F, 2 G, 1 M). |
| Smoothie (1 F) Corn muffin (2 G) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 F, 2 G, 1 M). |

- ¹ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), [How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).
- ² SFAs may choose to credit ½ cup of fruit as 1 food item (refer to “[Crediting Fruit Items](#)” in this section).
- ³ Pureed fruit credits only as juice and counts with all other juices toward the weekly juice limit (refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section).
- ⁴ When reimbursable meals include smoothies, SFAs must also offer a variety of fluid milk on the serving line to meet the USDA’s requirement for a variety of milk options.



Fruits Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the fruits component at breakfast, including optional vegetable substitutions. The fruits component includes fresh, frozen, canned (in light syrup, water, or fruit juice), and dried fruits, and pasteurized full-strength fruit juice. A serving of canned fruit may include the 100 percent juice in which the fruit is packed but cannot include water or syrup. When the menu planner credits the juice in canned fruit toward the fruits component, it also counts toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

The vegetables component includes fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables, and pasteurized full-strength vegetable juice. A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. For example, a serving of canned corn cannot include the packing water and a serving of baked beans cannot include the sauce. Dried vegetables (such as potato flakes) credit when rehydrated only if the manufacturer’s PFS provides specific documentation on the amount of vegetables per serving.

For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for fruits and vegetables, refer to section 3 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the “[Vegetables Component for Grades K-12](#)” section and “[Fruits Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Serving Size for Fruits

The required quantities for the fruits component are in cups. All fruits and vegetable substitutions credit based on the served volume except for dried fruit, which credit as twice the volume served, and raw leafy greens, which credit as half the volume served.

Table 3-7 summarizes the required servings of the fruits component for each grade group at breakfast. The minimum daily serving is 1 cup for all grades. SFAs may choose to offer a combination of several different fruits or vegetable substitutions. For example, a breakfast menu could offer ½ cup of peaches and ½ cup of applesauce or ½ cup of oranges and ½ cup of hash-brown potatoes. Each serving must contain at least ⅛ cup of fruit or vegetable (the minimum creditable amount).

Students must select at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution) for a reimbursable meal. A student’s selection of ½ cup counts as 1 food item and meets the OVS requirement for at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. A student’s selection of less than ½ cup does not count toward the OVS requirement.

Table 3-7. Meal pattern servings for the fruits component at breakfast

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving ¹ | Minimum weekly serving | |
|-------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| | | Five-day week | Seven-day week |
| K-5 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |
| 6-8 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |
| 9-12 | 1 cup | 5 cups | 7 cups |

¹ SFAs may substitute vegetables for the fruits component if the substitutions meet the USDA's requirements (refer to "Vegetable Substitutions" in this section).

Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast

Fruit juice together with vegetable juice (including fruit/vegetable juice blends) cannot exceed half of the weekly amount of the fruits component offered at breakfast. SFAs must calculate the weekly juice limit based on the total cups of fruits (and vegetable substitutions, if offered) that students are allowed to select at a given meal, regardless of the number of options or variety of fruits available. For example, if a five-day breakfast menu for grades 9-12 offers 5 cups of the fruits component over the week, the breakfast menu may offer up to 2½ cups of juice over the week. If the weekly menu includes larger amounts of fruits and vegetables, the weekly juice limit also increases.

When calculating the total amount of juice offered during the week, SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice available to students at breakfast during the week. This includes juice that is fresh, frozen, or made from concentrate, frozen juice pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits and vegetables in fruit/vegetable smoothies, and juice from canned fruit served in 100 percent juice, unless the canned fruit is drained or served as an extra food.

Drained fruit and canned fruit in light syrup or water do not count toward the weekly juice limit. The school meal patterns allow a serving of canned fruit to include the juice in which it is packed. For example, canned peaches (¾ cup) in juice (⅛ cup) credit as ½ cup of the fruits component. The juice from canned fruit counts toward the weekly juice limit if the SFA credits the juice toward the fruits component.

However, juice from canned fruit does not count toward the weekly juice limit if the SFA plans the juice as an extra food that does not credit toward the meal patterns. For example, if food service personnel portion ½ cup of canned fruit in a 5½-ounce container, then add the juice after measuring the full ½-cup serving of fruit, the juice does not count toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and sections 3 and 4 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Juice limits for daily breakfast menus offering larger amounts of fruit

If the daily breakfast menu offers more than 1 cup of the fruits component, the maximum amount of juice that students may select also increases. An example is a five-day breakfast menu that offers a variety of ½-cup fruit choices and allows students to select up to 2 cups (four servings) each day. Since this breakfast menu offers 2 cups of fruit per day, students may select up to half that amount, i.e., 1 cup of juice daily.

Assorted Juice Choices at Breakfast

Fruit juice together with vegetable juice (including fruit and vegetable juice blends) cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits offered at breakfast. When the daily breakfast menu offers 1 cup of fruit (minimum daily serving), schools cannot offer more than ½ cup of juice and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice.

If SFAs allow students to select two ½-cup servings from a variety of daily fruit and juice choices, students may select either two fruits or one fruit and one juice. Students cannot select two servings of juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. Each school’s breakfast menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate the amount of juice that students may select with each meal. For more information on signage, refer to “Meal identification signage” in section 1.

Table 3-8 shows examples of sample language for offering assorted fruit and juice choices when SFAs allow students to select two ½-cup servings of fruit to meet the required 1-cup serving. Since this breakfast menu offers 5 cups of fruit per week (1 cup per day), students cannot select more than 2½ cups of juice per week (½ cup per day).

| Table 3-8. Sample language for offering 1 cup of assorted fruit and juice choices | |
|--|---|
| Example 1 | Example 2 |
| May choose 2 fruits or 1 fruit and 1 juice | May choose up to 2 fruits (no more than 1 juice) |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruit • Canned fruit, drained ¹ • 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice • Fresh vegetables | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh fruit • Canned fruit, drained ¹ • 100 percent fruit or vegetable juice • Fresh vegetables |
| <p>¹ If canned fruit with juice is not drained, students cannot select juice and canned fruit because this exceeds the weekly juice limit (refer to “Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast” in this section).</p> | |

Counting Fruit Items at Breakfast



At breakfast only, ½ cup of fruit or vegetable substitution counts as 1 food item for OVS. SFAs may choose to count 1 cup of fruit or vegetable substitution as either 1 or 2 food items. The USDA allows SFAs to make this decision for maximum flexibility in menu planning. If implemented, SFAs must clearly communicate this information to staff and students to ensure that students are selecting reimbursable meals and staff are correctly identifying reimbursable meals.

Counting 1 cup of fruit as 2 food items

Table 3-9 shows how counting 1 cup of fruit as 2 food items affects a student’s selections for reimbursable breakfasts with OVS. For this example, the planned breakfast menu includes:

- 2 grains (1 oz eq each) from two WGR mini-blueberry muffins (2 oz eq total);
- 1 cup of blueberries (credited as 2 food items); and
- 1 milk (choice of 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free milk).

Since the SFA counts 1 cup of blueberries as 2 food items (two fruits), the breakfast menu offers 5 food items. Students may select the blueberries (2 food items) and milk (1 food item) for a reimbursable meal. This selection includes 3 food items including 2 fruits and 1 milk.



| Table 3-9. Example of counting 1 cup of fruit as 2 food items | |
|---|--|
| <p>Planned breakfast menu</p>  <p>2 oz eq (2 G)</p> <p>1 cup (2 F)</p> <p>1 cup (1 M)</p> | <p>Student selects</p>  <p>2 F</p> <p>1 M</p> |
| <p>Reimbursable meal? Yes</p> | |

Counting 1 cup of fruit as 1 food item

Table 3-10 shows how counting 1 cup of fruit as 1 food item affects a student’s selections for reimbursable breakfasts with OVS. For this example, the planned breakfast menu includes:

- 2 grains (1 oz eq each) from two WGR mini-blueberry muffins (2 oz eq total);
- 1 cup of blueberries (credited as 1 food item); and
- 1 milk (choice of 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free milk).

Since the SFA credits 1 cup of blueberries as 1 food item (1 fruit), the breakfast menu offers four food items. Students cannot select the blueberries (1 food item) and milk (1 food item) for a reimbursable breakfast because it includes only 2 food items. For a reimbursable meal, students must also select at least one 1 oz-eq mini-muffin (1 food item).

| Table 3-10. Example of counting 1 cup of fruit as 1 food item | | |
|---|----------------|---|
| Planned breakfast menu  | | Student selects  |
| 2 oz eq (2 G) | 1 cup (1 F) | 1 cup (1 M) |
| | | 1 F 1 M |
| Reimbursable meal? No | | |

Deciding how to count 1 cup of fruits or vegetables

Offering all fruit and vegetable choices in ½-cup servings is a best practice to help encourage students’ selections of reimbursable meals. However, for some situations it may be advantageous to count 1 cup of fruit as one item. An example is a breakfast menu that offers a variety of fresh fruit choices, including 125-138 count apples, 150-count bananas, and 138-count oranges.

The USDA’s *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) indicates that a 125-138 count apple credits as 1 cup of fruit, which means the menu planner could choose to count this apple as 2 food items for OVS. However, the FBG indicates that the banana and orange each credit as ½ cup of fruit. It could be confusing to students and food service staff to count one apple as 2 food items but count one banana or one orange as only 1 food item. In this case, it might be simpler to count all fresh fruit choices as 1 food item. This makes it easy for students to understand what they can select for a reimbursable meal and helps staff to identify reimbursable meals.

Vegetable Substitutions

The SBP meal pattern does not require the vegetables component. Per Section 740, Division A of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023 ([Public Law 117-328](#)), SFAs may substitute any vegetables (including potatoes and other starchy vegetables) for the fruits component at any breakfast, without including vegetables from other subgroups in the weekly menu. The USDA allows this flexibility through June 30, 2024. For more information, refer to [USDA Memo SP 06-2023](#), [CACFP 05-2023](#), and [SFSP 02-2023: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs](#).

Fruits and Vegetables in Breakfast Smoothies

Smoothies made from any combination of pureed fruits and vegetables, 100 percent juice (including vegetable/fruit juice blends), and milk credit as 2 food items for OVS at breakfast if they contain at least 1 cup of milk (refer to “[Milk in Breakfast Smoothies](#)” in this section); and at least ½ cup of pureed fruits, pureed vegetables, or any combination of 100 percent fruit or vegetables juice. Students who select the smoothie (2 food items) must also select at least one other food item for a reimbursable meal.

Pureed fruits and vegetables used in smoothies credit only as juice. SFAs must count pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies with all other juices toward the weekly juice limit. For more information, refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

Yogurt and soy yogurt credit as the MMA component (grains substitution) in school-made smoothies. For example, a smoothie made with ½ cup of pureed fruit, ½ cup of low-fat yogurt, and ½ cup of low-fat milk counts as 2 food items (one fruit and one grain from the MMA substitution). In this example, the milk is an extra food. It does not count as a food item for OVS because the serving is less than the 1 cup. For more information on MMA substitutions for the grains component, refer to “[MMA Substitutions](#)” in this section.

For more information on crediting smoothies, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and [USDA Memo SP 40-2019](#), [CACFP 17-2019](#), and [SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in the Child Nutrition Programs](#).







Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast

The SBP meal pattern requires at least 1 cup of fruit daily for all grades. If the SFA offers a variety of different ½-cup servings of fruits (or optional vegetable substitutions), students must be allowed to select up to two choices. Students may select two of the same fruit (duplicate selections) or two different fruits to count as 2 food items for OVS. To count as 1 food item for OVS, students must select at least ½ cup of fruit.

If the daily breakfast menu offers a variety of ½-cup juice choices, students cannot select more than one juice to comply with the weekly juice limit. The menu signage must clearly communicate this requirement. For more information, refer to “Meal identification signage” in section 1 and “Assorted Juice Choice at Breakfast” in this section.

Tables 3-11 shows some OVS examples with a breakfast menu that allows duplicate fruit selections. Since this menu is planned to allow any two fruit choices, students may select two ½-cup servings of the same fruit (two servings of blueberries or two servings of strawberries), or two ½-cup servings of different fruits (one serving of blueberries and one serving of strawberries). Each ½-cup serving of fruit counts as 1 food item (1 fruit) for OVS.

| Table 3-11. Examples of reimbursable breakfast selections with duplicate fruits | | |
|---|--|---|
| Planned breakfast menu (5 food items) | |  |
| • 2 oz eq of grains | Two 1-ounce WGR pancakes | |
| • 1 cup of fruit May choose any 2 | ½ cup of blueberries ½ cup of strawberries | |
| • 1 cup of milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored Fat-free milk, flavored | |
| Reimbursable meals | | |
|  |  |  |
| 2 F and 2 G | 2 F and 2 G | 2 F and 2 G |

When breakfast menus allow duplicate fruit choices, the school's meal identification signage must clearly instruct students on how much food to select daily from each component for a reimbursable meal, based on the planned serving sizes for each menu item.

Table 3-12 shows some OVS examples with a menu that allows students to select one or two ½-cup servings of fruit with each breakfast. Since this menu is planned to allow any two fruit choices, students may select two ½-cup servings of the same fruit or two ½-cup servings of different fruits. Schools must have signage located on the serving line near the fruits component that informs students of this choice. For more information, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.

| Table 3-12. Offering duplicate fruit selections at breakfast | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Component | Planned breakfast menu | Meal pattern contribution | Food items |
| Grains | WGR pancakes, 3 ounces ¹ | G, 2 oz eq | 2 G |
| Fruits May choose 1 or 2 | Strawberries, ½ cup Blueberries, ½ cup Watermelon, ½ cup Cinnamon applesauce, ½ cup | F, 1 cup | 2 F |
| Milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored, 1 cup Low-fat milk, flavored, 1 cup Fat-free milk, unflavored, 1 cup Fat-free milk, flavored, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Pancakes (2 G) Watermelon (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (2 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Pancakes (2 G) Blueberries (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G, 1 F). |

Table 3-12, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|--|---|---|---|
| Strawberries (1 F) Blueberries (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F, 1 M). |
| Watermelon (1 F) Watermelon (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F, 1 M). |
| Pancakes (2 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G, 1 M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Pancakes (2 G) Blueberries (1 F) Strawberries (1 F) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (2 G, 2 F). |
| Pancakes (2 G) Cinnamon applesauce (1 F) Cinnamon applesauce (1 F) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (2 G, 2 F). Students may select two servings of the same fruit because the planned menu allows any two fruit choices. |
| Pancakes (2 G) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (2 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Pancakes (2 G) Blueberries (1 F) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 5 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 5 food items (2 G, 2 F, 1 M). |

¹ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE’s resources, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, *How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Dried Fruits

Dried fruits (such as such as raisins, apricots, dried cherries, dried cranberries, dried blueberries, and mixed dried fruit) credits as twice the volume served. For example, ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component, i.e., 1 food item for OVS at breakfast. SFAs may choose to count ½ cup of dried fruit as 1 or 2 food items for OVS at breakfast. For more information, refer to “[Counting Fruit Items at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

Table 3-13 shows some OVS examples for a breakfast menu that credits ½ cup of raisins as 2 food items. The menu includes four foods that provide 5 food items. Students who select the raisins (2 food items) must select one other food item for a reimbursable breakfast.



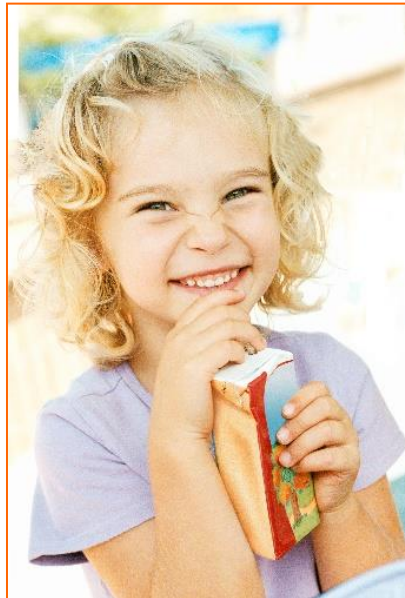
| Table 3-13. Offering ½ cup of dried fruit as 2 food items | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern components | Food items |
| Whole-grain banana muffin, 2 ounces ¹ | | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G |
| Whole-grain granola cereal, ¼ cup ¹ | | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G |
| Raisins, ½ cup ² | | F, 1 cup | 2 F |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | Milk, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Raisins (2 F) Banana muffin (1 G) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F and 1 G). |
| Raisins (2 F) Cereal (1 G) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F and 1 G). |

Table 3-13, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|--|---|---|--|
| Raisins (2 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F and 1 M). |
| Cereal (1 G) Banana muffin (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G and 1 M) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruit. |
| Cereal (1 G) Raisins (2 F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 G, 2 F and 1 M). |
| Banana muffin (1 G) Raisins (2 F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 G, 2 F, and 1 M). |
| Cereal (1 G) Banana muffin (1 G) Raisins (2 F) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (2 G and 2 F). |

¹ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), [How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).

² SFAs may choose to credit ½ cup of dried fruit as 1 or 2 food items for OVS at breakfast.



Grains Component with OVS at Breakfast

This section addresses the OVS requirements for the grains component at breakfast, including optional MMA substitutions. Grains served at breakfast must meet the same WGR criteria as grains served at lunch (refer to “[WGR Requirement](#)” in section 2).

For guidance on the meal pattern and crediting requirements for the grains component, refer to section 3 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and visit the “[Grains Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE’s *Crediting Foods for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs* webpage.

Serving Size for Grains

The required quantities for the grains component are in oz eq. Table 3-14 summarizes the required oz eq for each grade group at breakfast. The minimum daily serving is the amount that SFAs must offer with each breakfast. A student’s selection of 1-oz eq grain or MMA substitution counts as 1 food item for OVS (refer to “[Food Items at Breakfast](#)” and “[MMA Substitutions](#)” in this section).

| Grade group | Minimum daily serving ^{1, 2, 3} | Minimum weekly serving | |
|-------------|--|------------------------|----------------|
| | | Five-day week | Seven-day week |
| K-5 | 1 oz eq | 7 oz eq | 10 oz eq |
| 6-8 | 1 oz eq | 8 oz eq | 11 oz eq |
| 9-12 | 1 oz eq | 9 oz eq | 12½ oz eq |

¹ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE’s resources, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, *How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

² SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly requirements.

³ SFAs may substitute 1 oz eq of the MMA component for 1 oz eq of the grains component after offering at 1 oz eq of grains (refer to “[MMA Substitutions](#)” in this section).

SFAs have two options for calculating the oz eq for creditable commercial grain products and grain foods made from scratch.

- **Method 1: oz eq chart (weights or volume):** This method determines the oz eq for creditable grain products and recipes using the weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for the appropriate grain group in the USDA’s oz eq chart. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.
- **Method 2: creditable grains:** This method determines the serving size for grain products and recipes based on the amount of creditable grains (whole and enriched) per serving. For groups A-G (baked goods), 1 oz eq of grains must provide 16 grams of creditable grains. For group H (cereal grains) and group I (RTE breakfast cereals), 1 oz eq of grains must provide 28 grams of creditable grains or meet the specified weights and volumes.

For more information on both methods, refer to “[Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains](#)” in section 2, and the CSDE’s resource, *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Rounding Rules for Grains: OVS versus SBP Meal Pattern

How grains count as food items for OVS at breakfast is different from how grains credit for the SBP meal patterns. Each procedure has a different rounding requirement.

- **Meal pattern:** When crediting grain products toward the WGR requirement and the minimum daily and weekly servings for the SBP meal pattern, SFAs must round down the total amount of oz eq to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ oz eq.
- **OVS:** When counting grain products as food items for OVS, SFAs must round down the total amount of oz eq to the nearest whole number of oz eq (refer to “[Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq](#)” in this section).

For example, a 1.9-oz eq WGR product credits as $1\frac{3}{4}$ oz eq of grains toward the daily and weekly meal pattern requirements but counts as only 1 food item for OVS. Table 3-15 shows some examples of crediting grains toward the SBP meal pattern and the OVS requirements.

Table 3-15. Crediting grains for the SBP meal pattern and OVS

| Planned grains component | Product weight (ounces) | USDA serving size (oz eq chart) | | Meal pattern contribution (oz eq) ¹ | OVS contribution (food items) ¹ |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| | | Group | Required weight (ounces) | | |
| Whole-grain bagel | 2 | B | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Whole-grain roll | 1.49 | B | 1 | 1.25 | 1 |
| WGR pancakes | 2.75 | C | 1.2 | 2.25 | 2 |
| WGR corn muffin | 2 | C | 1.2 | 1.5 | 1 |
| WGR apple muffin | 2 | D | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| WGR French toast | 4 | E | 2.4 | 1.5 | 1 |

¹ Amounts less than the full oz eq do not count as a food item for OVS. For OVS at breakfast, SFAs may choose to credit a 2-oz eq grain product as 1 or 2 food items (refer to “[Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast](#)” in this section).



Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast

Breakfast menu items that provide more than 1 oz eq of grains or MMA substitutions may count as more than 1 food item for OVS, if the additional amount provides at least 1 oz eq. For example, SFAs may credit:

- a 2-oz eq WGR muffin as 2 food items;
- a 3-oz eq WGR bagel as 3 food items; and
- a 2-oz eq omelet offered as a MMA substitution as 2 food items.

SFAs may also choose to count menu items that provide more than 1 oz eq of grains or MMA substitutions as only 1 food item. For example, SFAs may choose to count a 2-oz eq grain product as 1 or 2 food items and a 3-oz eq grain product as 1, 2, or 3 food items.

Amounts less than 1 oz eq do not count as a food item for OVS. When counting grains and MMA substitutions as food items for OVS, SFAs must round down to the nearest whole number of oz eq. For example, a 1½-oz eq WGR muffin counts as only 1 food item for OVS. Table 3-16 shows some examples of counting grains and MMA substitutions as food items for OVS at breakfast.

| Amount | Daily and weekly meal pattern contribution | Number of food items (grains) for OVS |
|----------------|---|--|
| ¼ oz eq | ¼ oz eq | 0 |
| ½ oz eq | ½ oz eq | 0 |
| ¾ oz eq | ¾ oz eq | 0 |
| 1 oz eq | 1 oz eq | 1 |
| 1¼ oz eq | 1¼ oz eq | 1 |
| 1½ oz eq | 1½ oz eq | 1 |
| 1¾ oz eq | 1¾ oz eq | 1 |
| 2 oz eq | 2 oz eq | 2 |
| 2¼ oz eq | 2¼ oz eq | 2 |
| 2½ oz eq | 2½ oz eq | 2 |
| 2¾ oz eq | 2¾ oz eq | 2 |
| 3 oz eq | 3 oz eq | 3 |

The USDA allows SFAs to decide how to count grains for OVS for maximum flexibility in menu planning. These decisions are at the discretion of the SFA and apply only to breakfast menus. This option does not apply to grains offered at lunch.







Regardless of how SFAs decide to count grains for OVS, all grains must count toward the minimum daily and weekly grains and the USDA’s weekly dietary specifications. If breakfasts regularly include larger servings of grains, it might be difficult for menus to comply with the weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For information on planning menus to meet the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Counting 2 oz eq of grains as 2 food items

Table 3-17 shows how counting 2 oz eq of grains as 2 food items affects the number of other food items that students must select for a reimbursable breakfast with OVS. For this example, the planned breakfast includes:

- one 4-ounce WGR blueberry muffin (2 oz eq), counted as 2 food items;
- ½ cup of strawberries and ½ cup of orange juice (1 cup), counted as 2 food items; and
- a choice of 1 cup of unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk, counted as 1 food item.

Since the SFA counts the 4-ounce muffin as 2 food items, this breakfast menu offers 5 food items. Students may select the muffin (2 food items) and ½ cup of fruit (1 food item) for a reimbursable breakfast. This selection contains 3 food items, including two grains and one fruit.







| Table 3-17. Example of counting a 2-oz eq grain as 2 food items at breakfast | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Planned breakfast menu: 5 food items | | | | Student selects |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 oz eq (2 G) | ½ cup (1 F) | ½ cup (1 F) | 1 cup (1 M) |  |
| | | | | 2 G 1 F |
| | | | | Reimbursable meal? Yes |

Counting 2 oz eq of grains as 1 food item

Table 3-18 shows how counting 2 oz eq of grains as 1 food item affects the number of other food items that students must select for a reimbursable breakfast with OVS. For this example, the planned breakfast includes:

- one 4-ounce WGR blueberry muffin (2 oz eq), counted as 1 food items;
- ½ cup of strawberries and ½ cup of orange juice (1 cup), counted as 2 food items; and
- a choice of 1 cup of unflavored or flavored low-fat or fat-free milk, counted as 1 food item.

Since the SFA counts the 4-ounce muffin as 1 food item, this breakfast menu offers 4 food items. Students cannot select the muffin (1 food item) and ½ cup of fruit (1 food item) for a reimbursable breakfast because this includes only 2 food items. Students must also select at least one additional food item (juice or milk) for a reimbursable meal.

| Table 3-18. Example of counting a 2-oz eq grain as 1 food item at breakfast | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| Planned breakfast menu: 4 food items | | Student selects | |
|  |  |  |  |
| 2 oz eq (1 G) | ½ cup (1 F) | ½ cup (1 F) | 1 cup (1 M) |
| | | |  |
| | | |  |
| | | | 1 G |
| | | | 1 F |
| | | | Reimbursable meal? No |

SFAs must clearly communicate the crediting information for grains at breakfast to staff and students to minimize confusion and ensure that students are selecting reimbursable meals. Signage must be located at the beginning of the serving line and near each food component to indicate what and how much students can take for a reimbursable meal. For more information on signage, refer to “Meal identification signage” in section 1.

Table 3-19 shows some OVS examples for a breakfast menu that counts a 2-ounce whole-grain bagel (2 oz eq) as 2 food items. Students who select the bagel must also select at least ½ cup of fruit for a reimbursable breakfast.

| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern components | Food items |
|---|---|---|---|
| Whole-grain bagel, 2 ounces | | G, 2 oz eq | 2 G |
| Orange, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Banana, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Orange (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 F, 1 M). |
| Bagel (2 G) Orange (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G, 1 F). |
| Bagel (2 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G, 1 M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Orange (1 F) Banana (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F, 1 M). |
| Bagel (2 G) Orange (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains four 4 items (2 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Bagel (2 G) Orange (1 F) Banana (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 5 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains five 5 items (2 G, 2 F, 1 M). |

Deciding how to count grains with multiple oz eq

The advantage of counting grains with multiple oz eq as more than 1 food item is helping to increase reimbursable meals. Students who select a grain food that counts as more than 1 food item only need one more food item (½ cup of fruits or vegetables) for a reimbursable breakfast.

The advantage of counting grains with multiple oz eq as 1 food item is encouraging students to select additional foods for a more nutritious breakfast. Students who select a grain food that counts as 1 food item must also select at least two more food items for a reimbursable breakfast, including at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables.



There are several factors for menu planners to consider when determining which option might work best for their SBP. Some considerations include the types of food items offered, the number of other food items offered in the meal, what meals students typically select (based on production record data), the cost of menu items, and how the offered food items affect students' ability to select reimbursable meals and staff's ability to recognize reimbursable meals.

Offering Minimum Daily Grains as Two Separate Foods

If the breakfast menu offers the minimum daily 1 oz eq serving of the grains component as two separate foods, students must select both foods to count as 1 food item for OVS. Selections of less than 1 oz eq do not count as a food item for OVS.

Table 3-20 shows some OVS examples when the breakfast menu provides 1 oz eq of grains from two ½-oz eq mini WGR blueberry mini-muffins. Students must take both muffins to count as 1 food item for OVS. One muffin alone does not count toward the OVS requirements because the serving is less than 1 oz eq.

Menu planning tip: Offering the grains component as two different foods might make it more difficult for students to select the amount required to count as 1 food item for reimbursable breakfasts. A better menu planning approach is offering all grains in at least the minimum daily serving (1 oz eq) or packaging both grain items together, so any student's selection counts as 1 food item for OVS (refer to "[Strategies for OVS Implementation at Breakfast](#)").


| Table 3-20. Offering 1 oz eq of grains as two separate foods at breakfast | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Planned grains component (1 oz eq) | Student selects | Meal pattern contribution (oz eq) | OVS contribution (food items) | Additional food items student must select for reimbursable breakfast |
| Two ½ oz eq mini WGR blueberry muffins ¹  | 2 muffins | 1 | 1 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 1 other food item |
| | 1 muffin | ½ | 0 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least 2 other food items |
| <p>¹ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE's resources, <i>Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program</i>, <i>How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program</i>, and <i>Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program</i>.</p> <p>² Student selections of less than 1 oz eq of grains do not count as a food item for OVS (refer to "Counting Multiple Oz Eq Grains at Breakfast" in this section).</p> | | | | |

Table 3-21 shows some OVS examples for a breakfast menu that offers 1 oz eq of grains from two mini ½-oz eq blueberry mini-muffins.

| Table 3-21. OVS examples for offering 1 oz eq of grains as two separate foods at breakfast | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern components | Food items |
| WGR 1-ounce blueberry mini-muffins, two | | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G |
| Orange juice, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Strawberries, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Mini-muffins, two (1 G) Orange juice (1 F) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 G, 2 F, 1 M). |
| Mini-muffins, one (½ oz eq G) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 F, 1 M). Selections of less than 1 oz eq of grains do not count as a food item for OVS (refer to "Counting Multiple Oz Eq Grains at Breakfast" in this section). |
| Mini-muffins, two (1 G) Orange juice (1 F) Strawberries (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 2 F). |

| Table 3-21, <i>continued</i> | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Mini-muffins, two (1 G) Orange juice (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Mini-muffins, two (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 2 | No | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 M) and is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Orange juice (1 F) Strawberries (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F, 1 M). |

Offering More Than Minimum Daily Grains

SFAs must serve additional grains on some days to meet the minimum weekly breakfast meal pattern requirements for all grades (refer to [table 3-14](#) in this section). SFAs may also choose to serve larger amounts of grains than the weekly minimums if the menu does not exceed the weekly dietary specifications. For information on meeting the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Menu planners may choose to provide additional grains from a larger serving of one grain food (such as a 2-oz eq muffin that counts as 2 food items instead of a 1-oz eq muffin that counts as 1 food item) or from a combination of different grain foods (such as 1 oz eq of breakfast cereal that counts as 1 food item and a 1-oz eq whole-grain granola bar that counts as 1 food item). These menu planning decisions affect students’ selections of reimbursable meals with OVS.

Offering 2 food items that are each at least 1 oz eq

If the breakfast menu offers the grains component as two separate foods that are each at least 1 oz eq, students may select either one to count as 1 food item for OVS. The same concept applies to MMA offered as grain substitutions. Table 3-22 shows some OVS examples with this menu planning approach.

Table 3-22. OVS examples for offering two 1-oz eq grain items at breakfast

| Planned grains component | Student selects | Meal pattern contribution | Food items | Additional food items student must select for reimbursable breakfast |
|---|-----------------|---------------------------|------------|---|
| Breakfast 1: 2 oz eq Oatmeal, ½ cup (1 oz eq) WGR corn muffin, 1.2 ounces (1 oz eq) ¹ | Oatmeal | 2 oz eq | 2 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. |
| | Oatmeal | 1 oz eq | 1 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of one other food item. |
| | WGR corn muffin | 1 oz eq | 1 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of one other food item. |
| Breakfast 2: 2 oz eq Oatmeal, ½ cup (1 oz eq) Low-fat yogurt, ½ cup (1 oz eq) <i>MMA substitution</i> | Oatmeal | 2 oz eq | 2 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. |
| | Oatmeal | 1 oz eq | 1 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of one other food item. |
| | Low-fat yogurt | 1 oz eq | 1 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of one other food item. |

¹ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, *How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and *Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

Offering 2 food items with different oz eq

If the breakfast menu offers more than 1 oz eq of the grains component as two foods with different serving sizes, only the food that provides at least 1 oz eq counts as 1 food item for OVS. Selections of less than 1 oz eq do not count. Table 3-23 shows some OVS examples with this menu planning approach.

| Table 3-23. Offering more than 1 oz eq of grains as 2 food items with different oz eq at breakfast | | | | |
|--|------------------------|---------------------------|------------|--|
| Planned grains component | Student selects | Meal pattern contribution | Food items | Additional food items student must select for reimbursable breakfast |
| Breakfast 1: 1½ oz eq: Mini whole-wheat bagel, 1 ounce (1 oz eq) Peanut butter, 1 tablespoon (½ oz eq) <i>MMA substitution</i> | Mini whole-wheat bagel | 1½ oz eq | 1 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the minimum daily serving of one other food item. |
| | Mini whole-wheat bagel | 1 oz eq | 1 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the minimum daily serving of one other food item. |
| | Peanut butter | ½ oz eq ² | 0 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full serving of at least two other food items. Note: Selections of less than 1 oz eq do not count as a food item for OVS (refer to “ Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast ” in this section). |
| Breakfast 2: 3 oz eq: WGR muffin, 1 ounce (1 oz eq) Hard-boiled egg, one (2 oz eq) <i>MMA substitution</i> | WGR muffin | 3 oz eq | 3 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. |
| | Egg | 2 oz eq | 2 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables. |
| | WGR muffin | 1 oz eq | 1 | At least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the minimum daily serving of one other food item. |

Duplicate Grain Selections at Breakfast

SFAs may choose whether to allow students to select duplicate grain items at breakfast. Breakfast menus may offer two or more different grain items of at least 1 oz eq and allow students to take any two grain items. A student’s selection of two of the same grain items (duplicate selections) counts as 2 food items (grains) for OVS.

Tables 3-24 and 3-25 show OVS examples of reimbursable meals for a breakfast menu with 5 food items, including duplicate grains. Since the planned breakfast menu allows any two grain choices, students may select two pieces of toast or two servings of cereal to count as 2 food items (grains) for OVS. For a reimbursable breakfast, students must also select at least ½ cup of fruit.

The school’s meal identification signage must clearly instruct students on how much food to select daily from each component for a reimbursable meal, based on the planned serving sizes for each grade group. For this example, the cafeteria signage must communicate that students may select either two servings of whole-grain cereal, two granola bars, or one serving of each. This signage must be located on the serving line near the grains component. For more information, refer to “Meal identification signage” in section 1.





| Table 3-24. Examples of reimbursable breakfast selections with duplicate grains | | |
|--|--|--|
| Planned breakfast menu (5 food items) | | |
| 2 oz eq of grains May choose any 2 | 1 oz eq of whole-grain cereal 1 oz eq of whole-grain toast | |
| 1 cup of fruit May choose any 2 | ½ cup of cantaloupe ½ cup of fresh plums | |
| 1 cup of milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored | |
|  | | |
| Reimbursable meals | | |
|  <p>2 G and 1 F</p> |  <p>2 G and 1 F</p> |  <p>2 G and 1 F</p> |

Table 3-25. Offering duplicate grain selections at breakfast

| Component | Planned breakfast menu | Meal pattern contribution | Food items |
|---|---|---|--|
| Grains May choose 1 or two 2 | Whole-grain cereal flakes, 1 cup | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G |
| | Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce ¹ | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G |
| Fruits May choose 1 or two 2 | Cantaloupe, ½ cup | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| | Fresh plums, ½ cup | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| | Low-fat milk, flavored, 1 cup | | |
| | Fat-free milk, unflavored, 1 cup | | |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Cereal (1 G) Cantaloupe (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M). |
| Toast (1 G) Cantaloupe (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, and 1 M). |
| Cereal, 2 servings (2 G) Cantaloupe (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G and 1 F). |
| Cereal, 2 servings (2 G) Plum (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G and 1 F). |

Table 3-25, continued

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|---|---|--|
| Cereal (1 G) Toast (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G and 1 M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Cereal (1 G) Toast (1 G) Cantaloupe (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G and 1 F). |
| Plum (1 F) Cantaloupe (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F and 1 M). |
| Toast, 2 servings (2 G) Plum (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G and 1 F). |
| Toast (1 G) Cantaloupe (1 F) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G and 1 F). |

MMA Substitutions

The SBP meal pattern does not require the MMA component. SFAs may choose to offer 1 oz eq of MMA as a grains substitution if the breakfast menu already includes 1 oz eq of grains. For example, a breakfast menu that includes a 1-oz eq whole-grain bagel may also include 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (1 oz eq of MMA). MMA substitutions credit toward the required daily and weekly servings of the grains component and count toward the weekly dietary specifications.



MMA substitutions credit on an oz eq per oz eq basis, i.e., 1 oz eq of MMA credits as 1 oz eq of grains. The amount of MMA required to provide 1 oz eq of grains (one grain item) includes:

- 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish (edible portion as served, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients);
- 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended);
- 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese, cheese food/spread, or cheese substitute (low-fat recommended);
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes), e.g., kidney beans, chickpeas (garbanzo beans), lentils, and split peas;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ large egg;
- 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butters, e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, cashew butter, and sunflower seed butter;
- 1 ounce of nuts or seeds, e.g., almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, pine nuts, pistachios, soy nuts, and walnuts;
- 2.2 ounces of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein;
- 1 ounce of tempeh that contains specific ingredients;
- 3 ounces of surimi;
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and
- 1 ounce of APP that meets the USDA's APP requirements (appendix A of the SBP regulations).

For guidance on the crediting requirements for tofu, tempeh, surimi, and APPs, refer to section 3 of the CSDE's *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Menu planning options for MMA substitutions

SFAs may decide whether to count MMA substitutions as a food item for OVS. The USDA allows two options for crediting MMA at breakfast.

- **Option 1 – grain substitution:** Offer a serving of MMA as a grain substitution that counts toward the weekly grains requirement. MMA offered in place of grains credit as grain food items for OVS. MMA substitutions credit toward the daily and weekly grain servings. Tables 3-27 and 3-28 show some examples of menu planning and OVS using this option.
- **Option 2 – extra food:** Offer a serving of MMA as an extra food that does not count toward the weekly grains requirement. MMA offered as extras do not credit as food items for OVS. When SFAs use this option, the breakfast menu must include at least 4 food items in addition to the extra MMA item. Tables 3-26 and 3-27 show some examples of menu planning and OVS using this option.

To simplify OVS for staff and students, the CSDE strongly recommends consistent crediting of MMA at breakfast. SFAs should choose one option and credit MMA foods the same way for all breakfast menus. Whatever method is chosen, make sure to communicate this information to food service staff and students so they understand the required food items for a reimbursable meal. Cafeteria signage must clearly identify all MMA substitutions that are part of reimbursable meals. For more information, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.

Most SFAs that choose to offer MMA substitutions at breakfast count them as creditable foods (option 1). Offering a MMA substitution as an extra food (option 2) may work best for foods offered in amounts too small to count as a food item for OVS, such as 1 tablespoon of peanut butter or ¼ ounce of cheese.

For both options, MMA must count toward the weekly dietary specifications. The inclusion of MMA cannot cause the breakfast menu to exceed the average weekly limits for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For information on planning menus to meet the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*.

Deciding how to count MMA

SFAs decide how to count MMA breakfast foods for OVS. For example, menu planners may choose to count 2 oz eq of MMA as an extra food (zero food items), 2 oz eq of MMA substitutions (2 food items), or 1 oz eq of MMA substitution (1 food item). These decisions are at the discretion of the SFA and apply only to breakfast menus. This option does not apply to MMA offered at lunch.

The USDA allows SFAs to make these decisions for maximum flexibility in menu planning. SFAs must clearly communicate this information to staff and students, to minimize confusion and ensure that students are selecting reimbursable meals.

When considering how to count MMA as grain substitutions, SFAs must ensure that breakfast menus meet the OVS requirements. Breakfast menus must include at least 4 food items from the three food components. Students must select at least 3 food items for a reimbursable meal, including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered).

SFAs should ensure that school food service personnel receive appropriate training on how to identify reimbursable breakfasts under OVS. SFAs must clearly communicate with school food service staff regarding how to credit MMA for OVS at breakfast. The cafeteria must also have appropriate signage that clearly communicates the breakfast meal components, and what students

must select for a reimbursable meal. Signage must be located on the serving line near the food component to which it applies. For more information, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.

Table 3-26 shows some OVS examples for a breakfast menu with 5 food items, including 1 oz eq of MMA (peanut butter) offered as a grain substitution (option 1).

| Table 3-26. Offering MMA substitution in a breakfast menu with 5 food items | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern components | Food items |
| Whole-wheat bagel, 1-ounce | | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G |
| Peanut butter, 2 tablespoons | | G, 1 oz eq (MMA substitution) | 1 G |
| Red apple slices, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Blueberries, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter, (1 G) Blueberries (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution). |
| Bagel (1 G) Blueberries (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F and 1 M). |
| Blueberries (1 F) Red apple slices (1 F) Cheese (1 G) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F, 1 G from MMA substitution). |

Table 3-26, continued

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|--|--|--|
| Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter, (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 M, 2 G including 1 MMA substitution) but is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Peanut butter (1 G) Red apple slices (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F, 1 M, 1 G from MMA substitution). |
| Bagel (1 G) Red apple slices (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Blueberries (1 F) Peanut butter (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F, 1 M, 1 G from MMA substitution). |



Table 3-27 shows some OVS examples for a breakfast menu with 4 food items, including one MMA (peanut butter) offered as an extra food item (option 2).

| Table 3-27. Offering MMA as an extra food in a breakfast menu with 4 food items | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| Planned breakfast menu | Meal pattern components | Food items | |
| Whole-wheat bagel, 1-ounce | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G | |
| Peanut butter, 1 tablespoon | None (extra food) ¹ | 0 | |
| Red apple slices, ½ cup | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Blueberries, ½ cup | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Bagel (1 G) Red apple slices (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Bagel (1 G) Blueberries (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Peanut butter (extra) ¹ Red apple slices (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 F, 1 M). |
| Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter (extra) ¹ Blueberries (1 F) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 F). |

Table 3-27, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|---|--|--|
| Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter (extra) ¹ Milk (1 M) | 2 | No | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 M) and is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Blueberries (1 F) Red apple slices (1 F) Peanut butter (extra) ¹ | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (2 F). |
| Blueberries (1 F) Peanut butter (extra) ¹ Milk (1 M) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 F, 1 M). |
| ¹ MMA planned as extra foods do not credit as food items for OVS. | | | |

Combination Breakfast Foods

Combination breakfast foods often contain at least one serving of grains and one serving of MMA. Some examples include breakfast burritos with scrambled eggs (MMA) in a whole-corn tortilla shell (grains) and breakfast sandwiches with ham and cheese (MMA) on a whole-wheat English muffin (grains). The two options for crediting MMA at breakfast also apply to combination foods. For more information, refer to “[MMA Substitutions](#)” in this section.

Crediting combination foods containing 2 food items (grain and MMA substitution)

Table 3-28 and 3-29 show how SFAs could use each MMA substitutions option to credit a breakfast burrito (combination food) that contains 1 oz eq of grains and 1 oz eq of MMA.

- **Using option 1 – grain substitution:** Table 3-28 shows some OVS examples when the SFA chooses to credit the scrambled eggs in the breakfast burrito as a MMA substitution. For this example, the burrito counts as 2 food items (one grain and one MMA substitution) and the menu offers 5 food items.
- **Using option 2 – extra food:** Table 3-29 shows some OVS examples when the SFA chooses to credit the scrambled eggs in the breakfast burrito as an extra food that does not credit toward the grains component. For this example, the burrito counts as 1 food item and the menu offers 4 food items.



Table 3-28. Offering a 2-oz eq combination food as 2 grain items in a breakfast menu with 4 food items

| Planned breakfast menu | Meal pattern components | Food items | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Breakfast burrito with scrambled egg (½ egg) in whole-corn tortilla shell (1 ounce) | G, 1 oz eq (MMA substitution) G, 1 oz eq | 2 G | |
| Garden salsa, ½ cup | F, ½ cup (V substitution) ¹ | 1 F | |
| Cantaloupe wedges, ½ cup | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Breakfast burrito (2 G) Garden salsa (1 F) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (2 F including V substitution, 2 G including 1 MMA substitution). |
| Breakfast burrito (2 G) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (2 G including 1 MMA substitution), 1 M, 1 F. |
| Breakfast burrito (2 G) Garden salsa (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F from V substitution, 2 G including 1 MMA substitution). |
| Breakfast burrito (2 G) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F and 2 G including 1 MMA substitution). |

Table 3-28, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|---|---|--|
| Breakfast burrito (2 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 M, 2 G including 1 MMA substitution) but is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Garden salsa (1 F) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 M, 2 F including 1 V substitution). |

¹ Vegetable may credit as the fruits component (refer to “[Vegetable Substitutions](#)” in this section).



Table 3-29. Offering a 2-oz eq combination food as 1 grain item in a breakfast menu with 4 food items

| Planned breakfast menu | Meal pattern components | Food items | |
|---|--|---|--|
| Breakfast burrito with scrambled egg (½ egg) in whole-corn tortilla shell (1 ounce) | None (extra food) ¹ G, 1 oz eq | 0 1 G | |
| Garden salsa, ½ cup | F, ½ cup (V substitution) ² | 1 F | |
| Cantaloupe wedges, ½ cup | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Breakfast burrito (1 G) Garden salsa (1 F) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F including V substitution, 1 G). |
| Breakfast burrito (1 G) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Breakfast burrito (1 G) Garden salsa (1 F) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 F from V substitution). |
| Breakfast burrito (1 G) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 F). |

Table 3-29, continued

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|---|--|--|--|
| Breakfast burrito (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 2 | No | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 F) and is missing at least ½ cup of fruit. |
| Breakfast burrito (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 2 | No | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 F) and is missing at least ½ cup of fruit. |
| Garden salsa (1 F) Cantaloupe wedges (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 M, 2 F including 1 V substitution). |

¹ MMA planned as extra foods do not credit as food items for OVS.
² Vegetable may credit as the fruits component (refer to “[Vegetable Substitutions](#)” in this section).

Crediting combination foods containing 3 food items (grains and MMA substitution)

Tables 3-30 and 31 show how SFAs could use the MMA substitution options to credit a breakfast sandwich (combination food) that contains 2 oz eq of grains and 1 oz eq of MMA substitution.

- **Using option 1:** Table 3-30 shows some OVS examples when the SFA chooses to credit the egg in the breakfast sandwich as a grain substitution (option 1). For this example, the breakfast sandwich counts as 3 food items (two grains and one MMA as a grain substitution) and the menu offers 6 food items.
- **Using option 2:** Table 3-31 shows some OVS examples when the SFA chooses to credit the egg in the breakfast sandwich as an extra food that does not credit toward the grains component (option 2). For this example, the breakfast sandwich counts as 2 food items and the menu offers 5 food items.

Table 3-30. Offering a 3-oz eq combination food as 3 grain items in a breakfast menu with 6 food items

| Planned breakfast menu | Meal pattern components | Food items | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Egg sandwich (½ egg) with ham and cheese (½ ounce total) on whole-wheat English muffin (2 ounces) | G, 1½ oz eq (MMA substitution) ¹ G, 2 oz eq | 3 G | |
| Green grapes, ½ cup | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Apple juice, ½ cup | F, ½ cup | 1 F | |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | M, 1 cup | 1 M | |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Egg sandwich (3 G) Green grapes (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 5 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 5 food items (1 F, 1 M, 3 G including 1 MMA substitution). |
| Egg sandwich (3 G) Milk (1 M) | 4 | No | No. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 M, 3 G including 1 MMA substitution) but is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Egg sandwich (3 G) Green grapes (1 F) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 F, 3 G including 1 MMA substitution). |
| Egg sandwich (3 G) Apple juice (1 F) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 F, 3 G including 1 MMA substitution). |
| Green grapes (1 F) Apple juice (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F, 1 M). |
| <p>¹ When crediting grains (and MMA substitutions) as food items for OVS, SFAs must round down the total amount of oz eq to the nearest whole number of oz eq (refer to “Counting Multiple Oz Eq Grains at Breakfast” and “Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern” in this section).</p> | | | |

Table 3-31. Offering a 3-oz eq combination food as 3 grain items in a breakfast menu with 5 food items

| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern components | Food items |
|---|---|---|---|
| Egg sandwich (½ egg) with ham and cheese (½ ounce total) on whole-wheat English muffin (2 ounces) | | None (extra food) ¹ None (extra food) ¹ G, 2 oz eq | 0 0 2 G |
| Green grapes, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Apple juice, ½ cup | | F, ½ cup | 1 F |
| Choice of low-fat or fat-free milk, 1 cup | | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Egg sandwich (2 G) Green grapes (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (2 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Egg sandwich (2 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G, 1 M) but is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Egg sandwich (2 G) Green grapes (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G, 1 F). |
| Egg sandwich (2 G) Apple juice (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F, 2 G). |
| Green grapes (1 F) Apple juice (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F, 1 M). |
| ¹ MMA planned as extra foods do not credit as food items for OVS. | | | |



Strategies for OVS Implementation at Breakfast

SFAs decide how to offer the required food items for OVS at breakfast. These menu planning decisions determine the choices that students may select for reimbursable meals. SFAs can increase the likelihood that students will select reimbursable breakfasts by using strategies that encourage students to take at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables, and the minimum daily serving of at least 2 food items.

The three critical elements for successful OVS implementation include strategic menu planning, clear communication, and staff training. The following guidelines help simplify the menu planning process and make it easier for students to select (and school food service staff to identify) reimbursable breakfasts with OVS.

- **Consistent crediting:** Be consistent with the crediting of food items. For example, decide whether to count a 2 oz eq WGR bagel as 1 or 2 food items, then credit it the same way for all breakfast menus. Consistent crediting makes it easier for students to understand what foods they can choose and helps staff to identify reimbursable meals.
- **Offer all fruits and vegetables in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings:** Offer all grades a variety of fruits and vegetables in $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup servings and allow students to select up to two servings. This makes it easier for students to meet the OVS requirement for at least $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruits or vegetables. Provide clear information on breakfast menus and cafeteria signage that instructs students on the amount they can select with each breakfast. For more information on signage, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.
- **Plan fruit and vegetable choices to meet the weekly juice limit:** Plan fruit and vegetable choices to meet the weekly juice limit and review lunch menus for compliance. Provide clear information on breakfast menus and cafeteria signage that instructs students on the amount of juice they can select with each breakfast. For more information, refer to “[Assorted Juice Choice at Breakfast](#)” in this section. **Note:** Serving more fruit than juice provides the best nutrition for students. Juice is more calorie dense than whole fruits and vegetables and does not provide the same nutritional benefits.
- **Offer all grain choices in at least the minimum daily serving:** Offer all grains in at least 1 oz eq so any choice counts as at least 1 food item for OVS. For example, offer a 1-oz eq muffin (1 food item) instead of two $\frac{1}{2}$ -oz eq muffins (1 food item). For more information, refer to “[Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

- **Offer the same oz eq for all choices of food items:** Offer the same oz eq for all choices of grains and MMA substitutions so each choice counts as the same number of food items for OVS. For example, offer 2-oz eq servings of all muffins, bagels, and RTE breakfast cereal or offer 1-oz eq servings of all yogurts, cheese sticks, and peanut butter. This makes it easier for students to understand what they can take and simpler for staff to identify reimbursable meals. When the choices are different serving sizes, such as a 1 oz eq grain and a 2 oz eq grain, it can be confusing for students and staff to understand what is required for a reimbursable meal.
- **Offer breakfast choices that provide at least 2 food items:** Some examples include a 2 oz eq WGR muffin (2 food items), a 3-oz eq whole-grain bagel (3 food items), and a breakfast sandwich made with 1 oz eq English muffin and 1 oz eq egg (3 food items including a MMA substitution). Students who select a menu choice with at least 2 food items only need ½ cup of fruits (or optional vegetable substitutions) for a reimbursable breakfast. For more information, refer to [“Counting Grains with Multiple Oz Eq at Breakfast”](#) in this section.
- **Provide clear signage:** Check that breakfast menus and cafeteria signage clearly communicate all menu choices and what students must select for reimbursable breakfasts. Schools must have signage located on the serving line near each food component that informs students of the menu choices. A helpful strategy for determining if signage is sufficient and effective is to conduct a cafeteria walk-through from the beginning of the serving line to the point of service. For more information, refer to [“Meal Identification Signage”](#) in section 1.
- **Provide staff training:** Provide regular OVS training to help school food service staff understand and identify the required S meal pattern components, how food items credit for each meal choice on the lunch menu, and what constitutes a reimbursable meal at the point of service. A recommended best practice for cafeteria managers is to conduct a daily pre-service meeting with all applicable staff to review each menu choice and what students must select for a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to [“Food service staff training”](#) in section 1.

For more information on menu planning for breakfast, refer to sections 3 and 4 of the CSDE’s *Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12*, and the CSDE’s resource, *Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the SBP*.

Sample Breakfast Menus

The menu and cafeteria signage must clearly communicate how many food items students may select daily from each component for a reimbursable breakfast, based on the planned daily breakfast menu for each grade group. Signage must be located at the beginning of the serving line and near each food component to indicate what and how much students can take for a reimbursable meal. For more information, refer to “[Meal identification signage](#)” in section 1.

Sample breakfast menus 1 through 3 show how SFAs could communicate the OVS requirements to students. To demonstrate how menu planning choices affect OVS, each sample menu:

- includes at least 4 food items;
- offers the same food items but changes the amounts that students may select from each component;
- includes choices within each component; and
- offers each component in at least the minimum daily serving of the grains component and at least the minimum daily serving required by the SBP meal pattern.

Each sample breakfast menu could be served to any grade group. However, SFAs must be careful to meet the more restrictive sodium and calorie requirements when using one breakfast menu for grades K-12. For information on planning menus to meet the dietary specifications, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

Note: These sample breakfast menus meet the daily SBP meal pattern requirements for the purpose of illustrating the OVS requirements. However, the SBP meal pattern also requires weekly minimums for the grains component. To meet this requirement, weekly breakfast menus must include additional servings of grains on some days over the week. For more information, refer to [table 3-15](#) in this section, and section 4 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).



Sample breakfast menu 1

Table 3-34 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily breakfast menu that allows students to select 4 food items including:

- 1 food item from the grains component (1 oz eq);
- 2 food items (½ cup each) from the fruits component (1 cup total); and
- 1 food item from the milk component (1 cup).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all 4 food items but must select at least 3 food items, including ½ cup of fruit and two other food items. Students may select duplicate food items from the fruits component such as two servings of the same fruit (except for juice), or two different fruits, because the planned menu allows any two choices (food items) from the fruits component. For more information, refer to “[Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

| Table 3-34. Sample breakfast menu 1 | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Choose at least 3 of the 4 food items, including at least 1 fruit. For a nutritious meal, choose all 4!</p> | | |
| <p style="text-align: center;">Milk</p> <p style="text-align: center;">May choose 1</p> <p>Low-fat milk, unflavored</p> <p>Low-fat milk, flavored</p> <p>Fat-free milk, unflavored</p> <p>Fat-free milk, flavored</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Fruits</p> <p style="text-align: center;">May choose up to 2</p> <p><i>Choose 2 fruits OR 1 fruit and 1 juice</i></p> <p>Fresh cut-up fruit</p> <p>Canned fruit ¹</p> <p>Whole fruit</p> <p>Dried fruit</p> <p>100 percent fruit juice ¹</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Grains</p> <p style="text-align: center;">May choose 1</p> <p>Whole-grain cereals, assorted</p> <p>Oatmeal</p> <p>Whole-grain toast</p> <p>Whole-grain muffins</p> <p>Whole-grain mini bagel</p> <p>Whole-grain mini pancakes</p> |
| <p>¹ SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice toward the weekly juice limit, including juice in canned fruit, unless the fruit is drained. Students cannot select juice and canned fruit in juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit (refer to “Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast” in this section). Since this menu offers 5 cups of fruit per week (1 cup per day), schools cannot offer and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice per day (refer to “Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast” in this section).</p> | | |

Table 3-35 shows some OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 1.

| Table 3-35. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 1 | | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern components | Food items |
| Milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored Fat-free milk, flavored | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Fruit May choose 2 fruits or 1 fruit and 1 juice | Fresh cut-up fruit choices, ½ cup Whole fruit choices, ½ cup Canned fruit choices, ½ cup Dried fruits, ¼ cup ¹ 100 percent fruit juice, assorted, ½ cup | F, 1 cup | 2 F |
| Grains ² May choose 1 ³ | Whole-grain cereal (1 cup flakes or rounds, 1¼ cups puffed and ½ cup granola) Oatmeal, ½ cup cooked Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce Whole-grain muffins, 2 ounces Whole-grain corn muffin, 1.2 ounces Whole-grain mini bagel, 1 ounce Whole-grain pancakes, 1.2 ounces | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitution, if offered). | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Oatmeal (1 G) Corn muffin (1 G) Canned fruit (1 F) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 F). The second G does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one G choice. ² |

| Table 3-35, <i>continued</i> | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Muffin (1 G) Whole fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Toast, 2 slices (2 G) Fruit juice (1 F) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G, 1 F). The second G does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one G choice. ² |
| Bagel (1 G) Fresh cut-up fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Fruit juice (1 F) Canned fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 F, 1 M). |
| <p>¹ Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.</p> <p>² SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE’s resources, <i>Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program</i>, <i>How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program</i>, and <i>Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program</i>.</p> <p>³ The SFA decides the number of food items that students may select from each component. Since this planned menu allows only one grain choice, an additional grain selection cannot count as a food item for OVS (refer to “Counting Multiple Oz Eq Grains at Breakfast” and “Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern” in this section).</p> | | | |

Sample breakfast menu 2

Table 3-36 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily breakfast menu that allows students to select 5 food items including:

- 1 food item from the grains component (1 oz eq);
- 1 food item from the MMA component as a grain substitution (1 oz eq);
- 2 food items ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup each) from the fruits component (1 cup total); and
- 1 food item from the milk component (1 cup).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all 5 food items but must select at least 3 food items, including $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit and two other food items. Students may select duplicate food items from the fruits component (such as two servings of the same fruit, except for juice), or two different fruits, because the planned menu allows any two choices (food items) from the fruits component. Students cannot select duplicate food items from the grains component, such as two bagels or two yogurts (MMA substitutions), because the planned menu allows only one choice (food item) from each component. For more information, refer to “[Duplicate Fruit Selections at Breakfast](#)” and “[Duplicate Grain Selections at Breakfast](#)” in this section.



Table 3-36. Sample breakfast menu 2

Choose **at least 3** of the 5 food items including at least 1 fruit.
For a nutritious meal, choose all 5!

| Milk | Fruits | Grains | Meat/meat alternates |
|--|--|---|---|
| May choose 1 | May choose up to 2 | May choose 1 | May choose 1 |
| Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored Fat-free milk, flavored | <i>Choose 2 fruits OR 1 fruit and 1 juice</i> Fresh cut-up fruit Canned fruit ¹ Whole fruit Dried fruit 100 percent fruit juice ¹ | Whole-grain cereals, assorted Oatmeal Whole-grain toast Whole-grain muffins Whole-grain mini bagel Whole-grain mini pancakes | Low-fat yogurt, assorted flavors Peanut butter Low-fat cheese stick |

¹ SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice toward the weekly juice limit, including juice in canned fruit, unless the fruit is drained. Students cannot select juice and canned fruit in juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. Since this menu offers 5 cups of fruit per week (1 cup per day), schools cannot offer and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice per day. For more information, refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

Table 3-38 shows some OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 2.

Table 3-37. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 2

| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern components | Food items |
|---|--|---|---|
| Milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored Fat-free milk, flavored | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Fruit May choose 2 fruits or 1 fruit and 1 juice | Fresh cut-up fruit choices, ½ cup Whole fruit choices, ½ cup Canned fruit choices, ½ cup ¹ Dried fruits, ¼ cup (credits as ½ cup) ² 100 percent fruit juice, assorted, ½ cup | F, 1 cup | 2 F |
| Grains ^{3,4} May choose 1 | Whole-grain cereal (1 cup flakes or rounds, 1¼ cups puffed and ½ cup granola) Oatmeal, ½ cup cooked Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce Whole-grain muffins, 2 ounces Whole-grain corn muffin, 1.2 ounces Whole-grain mini bagel, 1 ounce Whole-grain pancakes, 1.2 ounces | G, 1 oz eq | 1 G |
| MMA ⁴ May choose 1 | Low-fat yogurt, assorted flavors, ½ cup Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce Peanut butter, 2 tablespoons | G, 1 oz eq (MMA substitution) | 1 G |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Bagel (1 G) Cheese stick (1 G) Milk (1 M) Fresh fruit (1 F) | 4 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 4 food items (1 F, 1 M, 2 G including 1 MMA substitution). |

Table 3-37, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|--|---|---|---|
| Muffin (1 G) Canned fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Waffles (1 G) Yogurt (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 M, 2 G including 1 MMA substitution) but is missing at least ½ cup of F. |
| Fruit juice (1 F) Yogurt (1 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F, 1 M, 1 G from MMA substitution). |
| Yogurt, two servings (2 G) Canned fruit (1 F) | 2 | Yes | No. The selected meal contains only 2 food items (1 G from MMA substitution, 1 F). The second yogurt does not count as a food item for OVS because the planned menu allows only one MMA choice. ² |

¹ Students cannot select juice and canned fruit in juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit (refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section).

² Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component.

³ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), [How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).

⁴ The SFA decides the number of food items that students may select from each component. Since this planned menu allows only one grain choice and one MMA choice, students cannot select an additional grain or MMA selection to count as a food item for OVS. For more information, refer to “[Counting Multiple Oz Eq Grains at Breakfast](#)” and “[Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern](#)” in this section.

Sample Breakfast Menu 3

Table 3-38 shows an example of cafeteria signage for a daily breakfast menu that allows students to select five items including:

- 2 food items (each containing 1 oz eq) from the grains and MMA components combined, including MMA as grains substitutions (2 oz eq total);
- 2 food items (½ cup each) from the fruits component (1 cup total); and
- 1 food item from the milk component (1 cup).

This menu clearly communicates that students may select all 5 food items but must select at least 3 food items, including ½ cup of fruit and two other food items. Students may select duplicate food items from the fruits component, such as two servings of the same fruit (except for juice) or two different fruits, because the planned menu allows any two choices (food items) from the fruits component. Students may also select duplicate food items from the grains and MMA component (such as two bagels or two cheese sticks) because the planned menu allows any two choices (2 food items). For more information, refer to “[Duplicate Grain Selections](#)” in this section.



Table 3-38. Sample breakfast menu 3

Choose **at least 3** of the 5 food items, including at least 1 fruit.
For a nutritious meal, choose all 5!

| Milk | Fruits | Grains and meat/meat alternates | |
|--|--|---|---|
| May choose 1 | May choose up to 2 | May choose up to 2 | |
| Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored Fat-free milk, flavored | <i>Choose 2 fruits OR 1 fruit and 1 juice</i> Fresh cut-up fruit Canned fruit ¹ Whole fruit Dried fruit 100 percent fruit juice ¹ | Whole-grain cereals, assorted Oatmeal Whole-grain toast Whole-grain muffins, assorted Whole-grain mini bagel Whole-grain mini pancakes | Low-fat yogurt, assorted flavors Peanut butter Low-fat cheese stick |

¹ SFAs must count all sources of 100 percent juice toward the weekly juice limit, including juice in canned fruit, unless the fruit is drained. Students cannot select juice and canned fruit in juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit. Since this menu offers 5 cups of fruit per week (1 cup per day), schools cannot offer and students cannot select more than ½ cup of juice per day. For more information, refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section.

Table 3-39 shows some OVS examples with student selections for sample breakfast menu 4.

Table 3-39. OVS examples for sample breakfast menu 3

| Planned breakfast menu | | Meal pattern components | Food items |
|---|--|---|--|
| Milk May choose 1 | Low-fat milk, unflavored Low-fat milk, flavored Fat-free milk, unflavored Fat-free milk, flavored | M, 1 cup | 1 M |
| Fruit May choose 2 fruits or 1 fruit and 1 juice | Fresh cut-up fruit choices, ½ cup Whole fruit choices, ½ cup Canned fruit choices, ½ cup ¹ Dried fruits, ¼ cup ² 100 percent fruit juice, assorted, ½ cup | F, 1 cup | 2 F |
| Grains ³ and MMA ⁴ May choose 1 or 2 | Whole-grain cereal (1 cup flakes or rounds, 1¼ cups puffed and ¼ cup granola) Oatmeal, ½ cup cooked Whole-grain toast, 1 ounce Whole-grain muffins, 2 ounces Whole-grain corn muffin, 1.2 ounces Whole-grain mini bagel, 1 ounce Whole-grain pancakes, 1.2 ounces Low-fat yogurt, assorted flavors, ½ cup ⁵ Low-fat cheese stick, 1 ounce ⁵ Peanut butter, 2 tablespoons ⁵ | G, 2 oz eq | 2 G |
| Students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruits, vegetables, or both | | | |
| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be "Yes"</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
| Yogurt, two servings (2 G) Canned fruit (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G from MMA substitutions, 1 F). |
| Oatmeal (1 G) Whole fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |

Table 3-39, *continued*

| Student selects | Food items <i>Must be at least 3</i> | Do the 3 food items include at least ½ cup of F (or V substitution) <i>Must be “Yes”</i> | Reimbursable meal? |
|--|---|---|---|
| Cheese sticks, two (2 G) Fresh cut-up fruit (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G from MMA substitutions, 1 F). |
| Cereal, two servings (2 G) Milk (1 M) | 3 | No | No. The selected meal contains 3 food items (2 G, 1 M) but is missing at least ½ cup of fruit. |
| Muffin (1 G) Whole fruit (1 F) Milk (1 M) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 G, 1 F, 1 M). |
| Bagel (1 G) Peanut butter (1 G) Juice (1 F) | 3 | Yes | Yes. The selected meal contains 3 food items (1 F, 2 G including 1 MMA substitution). |

- ¹ Students cannot select juice and canned fruit in juice because this exceeds the weekly juice limit (refer to “[Weekly Juice Limit at Breakfast](#)” in this section).
- ² Dried fruits credit as twice the volume served.
- ³ SFAs must document that the serving provides the required oz eq or minimum creditable grains. For guidance on oz eq, refer to the CSDE’s resources, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), [How to Use the Ounce Equivalents Chart for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and [Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).
- ⁴ The SFA decides the number of food items that students may select from each component. Since this planned menu allows up to two grain or MMA choices, students may select any two choices (same or different) to count as 2 food items for OVS (refer to “[Counting Multiple Oz Eq Grains at Breakfast](#)” and “[Crediting Grains for OVS versus the SBP Meal Pattern](#)” in this section).
- ⁵ MMA planned as a grain substitution.

4 — Resources

This section includes links to resources and websites that assist SFAs with meeting the NSLP and SBP meal pattern, crediting, and OVS requirements for grades K-12. Topics include CSDE guides and resource lists, crediting and meal pattern resources, menu planning guidance, regulations and policy, and related websites.

More links to information on the federal and state requirements and guidance for school meals are available on the CSDE's [Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages. For a detailed list of resources for the NSLP and SBP meal patterns and crediting requirements for grades K-12, refer to the CSDE's [Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

Comparison Charts

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschoolers and Grades K-12 National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Comparison_Preschool_Grades_K-12_SNP.pdf

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Grains Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Crediting Requirements and Documentation

Accepting Processed Product Documentation National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

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

Crediting Commercial Processed Products for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

4 | Resources

Crediting Foods Made from Scratch for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#ScratchFoods>

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

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs: Training Resources (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-training-resources>

Recipe Analysis Workbook (USDA’s Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-interactive-web-based-tool>

Standardized Recipe Form for School Nutrition Programs:
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Standardized_Recipe_Form_Schools.docx

Standardized Recipes (“Related Resources” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs#StandardizedRecipes>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer’s Product Formulation Statement (USDA):
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

USDA Memo TA-2010 (v.3): Guidance for Accepting Processed Product Documentation for Meal Pattern Requirements:
<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/TA07-2010v3os.pdf>

Using Child Nutrition (CN) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CN_Labels_SNP.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>

Yield Study Form for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Yield_Study_Form.pdf

CSDE Guides

Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Action Guide for Child Care Nutrition and Physical Activity Policies (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SWP/Action_Guide.pdf

Afterschool Snack Program Handbook (CSDE):

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

Guide to Competitive Foods in HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Competitive_Foods_Guide_HFC.pdf

Guide to Competitive Foods in Non-HFC Public Schools (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Competitive_Foods_Guide_Non_HFC.pdf

Guide to Competitive Foods in Private Schools and Residential Child Care Institutions (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CompFoods/Competitive_Foods_Private_RCCI.pdf

Menu Planning Guide for Preschoolers in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Menu_Planning_Guide_Preschool.pdf

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>

CSDE Resource Lists

Resource List for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Child_Nutrition_Programs.pdf

Resource List for Competitive Foods (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Competitive_Foods.pdf

Resource List for Dietary Guidance and Nutrition Information (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Dietary_Guidance.pdf

Resource List for Food Safety in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Food_Safety.pdf

Resource List for Health and Achievement (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Achievement.pdf

Resource List for Menu Planning and Food Production in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Menu_Planning.pdf

Resource List for Nutrition Education (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Nutrition_Education.pdf

Resource List for Obesity Data and Preventions (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Obesity.pdf

Resource List for Physical Activity and Physical Education (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/ResourcesPhysicalActivity.pdf>

Resource List for Special Diets in Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Special_Diets.pdf

Resource List for Wellness Policies for Schools and Child Care (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/Resources/Resources_Wellness_Policy.pdf

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

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

Fruits Component

Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP (CSDE):

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

Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

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

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 07-19: Compliance Issues with the Vegetables and Fruits Components for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2019/OM07-19.pdf>

Food Buying Guide Section 3: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Fruits Component (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section3_Fruits.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 3: Yield Table for Fruits (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section3_FruitsYieldTable.pdf

Fruits Component for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

Portion Guide for Fresh Fruits (Start with Half a Cup):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SWHAC/PortionGuideFruit85x14.pdf>

What’s in a Meal Module 9: Fruits Component (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>

USDA Memo SP 06-2023, CACFP 05-2023, and SFSP 02-2023: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/consolidated-appropriations-act-2023-effect-programs>

USDA Memo SP 34-2019, CACFP 15-2019, and SFSP 15-2019: Crediting Coconut, Hominy, Corn Masa, and Masa Harina in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-coconut-hominy-corn-masa-and-masa-harina-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

What's in a Meal Module 9: Fruits Component (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>

Grains Component

Calculation Methods for Grain Ounce Equivalents 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 the Grains Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

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

Exhibit A Grains Tool (USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs):

<https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/ExhibitATool/Index>

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://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/ExhibitATool/Index>

Food Buying Guide Section 4: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Grains Component (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section4_Grains.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 4: Yield Table for Grains (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section4_GrainsYieldTable.pdf

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

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

Grains Component for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE):

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

SDA Memo SP 23-2019, CACFP 10-2019 and SFSP 09-2019: Crediting Popcorn in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-popcorn-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 30-2012: Grain Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/grain-requirements-national-school-lunch-program-and-school-breakfast-program>

What’s in a Meal Module 11: Grains Component (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>

What’s in a Meal Module 12: Whole Grain-rich Requirement (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>

What’s in a Meal Module 13: Grains Ounce Equivalents (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>

Meal Patterns and Menu Planning

Breakfast Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (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#BreakfastMealPatterns>

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for Preschoolers and Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Preschool/Comparison_Preschool_Grades_K-12_SNP.pdf

Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards for School Meals) (CSDE’s Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Program webpage):

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

Lunch Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (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#LunchMealPatterns>

Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (“Documents/Forms” section of the 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>

Menu Planning Checklists for Lunch for Grades K-12 (CSDE’s Forms for School Nutrition Programs webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Forms-for-School-Nutrition-Programs#MenuPlanningChecklistsLunchGradesK-12>

Menu Planning for School Meals (“Related Resources” 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/Related-Resources#MenuPlanningSchoolMeals>

Nutrition Standards for School Meals (USDA webpage):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/nutrition-standards-school-meals>

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the NSLP (CSDE):

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

Overview of Menu Planning for Grades K-12 in the SBP (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SBP/Overview_Menu_Planning_SBP_gradesK-12.pdf

Production Records for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Production-Records-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Requirements for Production Records in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Forms/ProdRecord/Requirements_Production_Records_NSLP_SBP.pdf

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

What's in a Meal Module 2: Introduction to School Meal Patterns (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>

What's in a Meal Module 3: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Meal Pattern (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>

What's in a Meal Module 4: School Breakfast Program (SBP) Meal Pattern (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>

Meat/Meat Alternates Component

Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements (Product Analysis) for Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA) Products (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

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 Deli Meats in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

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

4 | Resources

Crediting Legumes in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Legumes_SNP.pdf

Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Nuts_Seeds_SNP.pdf

Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Tofu_SNP.pdf

Crediting Yogurt for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/Credit_Yogurt_SNP_grades_K-12.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 1: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Meat/Meat Alternates Component (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section1_MeatsAndMeatAlternates.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 1: Yield Table for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section1_MeatsAndMeatAlternatesYieldTable.pdf

Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#MMA>

Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products (APP) (USDA):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/questions-and-answers-alternate-protein-products-app>

Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/APP_Requirements_SNP.pdf

Reviewer’s Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):
https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

USDA Memo SP 21-2019, CACFP 08-2019, and SFSP 07-2019: Crediting Shelf-Stable, Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Products in the Child Nutrition Programs:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-shelf-stable-dried-and-semi-dried-meat-poultry-and-seafood-products-child-nutrition>

USDA Memo SP 24-2019, CACFP 11-2019, and SFSP 10-2019: Crediting Surimi Seafood in the Child Nutrition Programs: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-surimi-seafood-child-nutrition-programs>:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-surimi-seafood-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 25-2019, CACFP 12-2019, and SFSP 11-2019: Crediting Tempeh in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-tempeh-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019, and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 53-2016 and CACFP 21-2016: Crediting Tofu and Soy Yogurt Products in the School Meal Programs and the CACFP:

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/crediting-tofu-and-soy-yogurt-products-school-meal-programs-and-cacfp>

What's in a Meal Module 8: Meat/Meat Alternates Component (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>

Webinar: Additional Meat/Meat Alternates Options for CNPs: Crediting Tempeh and Surimi (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/additional-meat-meat-alternate-tempeh-and-surimi>

Webinar: Moving Forward: Update on Food Crediting in Child Nutrition Programs with Guidance for Dried Meat Products (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/moving-forward-update-food-crediting-dried-meat-products>

Milk Component

Allowable Milk Substitutions for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs:

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

Comparison of Meal Pattern Requirements for the Milk Component in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 06-19: Summary of Federal and State Milk Requirements for the NSLP, SBP, SSO of the NSLP, ASP of the NSLP, and Special Milk Program (SMP):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2019/OM07-19.pdf>

4 | Resources

- Food Buying Guide Section 5: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Milk Component (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section5_Milk.pdf
- Food Buying Guide Section 5: Yield Table for Milk (USDA):
https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section5_MilkYieldTable.pdf
- Milk Component for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-School-Nutrition-Programs/Documents#Milk>
- USDA Memo SP 07-2010, CACFP 04-2010, and SFSP 05-2010: Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/qas-milk-substitution-children-medical-or-special-dietary-needs-non-disability>
- USDA Memo SP 39-2019: Clarification on the Milk and Water Requirements in the School Meal Program:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/clarification-milk-and-water-requirements-school-meal-program>
- What’s in a Meal Module 7: Milk Component (CSDE’s Training Program, What’s in a Meal: in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials>

OVS

- Lunch Meal Pattern Components Poster (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/lunchpostercomp.pdf>
- Lunch Offer versus Serve Poster (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/lunchposterOVS.pdf>
- Offer versus Serve for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Offer-versus-Serve-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>
- Offer versus Serve Guide for School Meals (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/OVS_guide_SNP.pdf

Offer versus Serve Lunch Poster for Elementary Schools (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/OVS_ElemPoster.pdf

Offer versus Serve Lunch Poster for High Schools (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/OVS_HS-Poster.pdf

Offer versus Serve Lunch Poster for Middle Schools (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.us/sites/default/files/resource-files/OVS_MiddlePoster.pdf

Offer versus Serve NSLP Posters (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-versus-serve-national-school-lunch-program-posters>

Offer versus Serve Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: National School Lunch Program (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-lunch-program-tip-sheet>

Offer versus Serve Tip Sheet for School Food Service Managers: School Breakfast Program (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/offer-vs-serve-breakfast-program-tip-sheet>

Overview of Offer versus Serve in the National School Lunch Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/Overview_OVS_NSLP.pdf

Overview of Offer versus Serve in the School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/Overview_OVS_SBP.pdf

Signage Requirements for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/OVS/Signage_Requirements_NSLP_SBP.pdf

USDA Memo SP 35-2011 and CACFP 23-2011: Clarification on the Use of Offer versus Serve and Family Style Meal Service:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/clarification-use-offer-vs-serve-and-family-style-meal-service>

USDA Memo SP 41-2015: Updated Offer vs Serve Guidance for the NSLP and SBP Beginning SY 2015-16:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/updated-offer-vs-serve-guidance-nslp-and-sbp-beginning-sy2015-16>

What's in a Meal Module 15: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the NSLP (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>

What's in a Meal Module 16: Offer versus Serve (OVS) in the SBP (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>

Vegetables Component

Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

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

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

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

Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

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

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

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

CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 07-19: Compliance Issues with the Vegetables and Fruits Components for Grades K-12 National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program:

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OM2019/OM07-19.pdf>

Food Buying Guide Section 2: Overview of Crediting Requirements for the Vegetables Component (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/Content/TablesFBG/USDA_FBG_Section2_Vegetables.pdf

Food Buying Guide Section 2: Yield Table for Vegetables (USDA):

https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov/files/Reports/USDA_FBG_Section2_VegetablesYieldTable.pdf

Portion Guide for Fresh Vegetables (Start with Half a Cup):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/SWHAC/PortionGuideVeg85x14.pdf>

USDA Memo SP 40-2019, CACFP 17-2019, and SFSP 17-2019: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/smoothies-offered-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 26-2019, CACFP 13-2019 and SFSP 12-2019: Crediting Pasta Products Made of Vegetable Flour in the Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/crediting-pasta-products-made-vegetable-flour-child-nutrition-programs>

USDA Memo SP 06-2023, CACFP 05-2023, and SFSP 02-2023: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/consolidated-appropriations-act-2023-effect-programs>

Vegetable Subgroups in the NSLP (CSDE):

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

Vegetables Component for Grades K-12 (“Documents/Forms” section of CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage):

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

Webinar: Crediting Vegetable Noodles and Coconut in the Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/crediting-vegetable-noodles-and-coconut-child-nutrition-programs>

What’s in a Meal Module 10: Vegetables Component (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>

Regulations and Policy

Child Nutrition Programs Legislation & Regulations (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/program-legislation-regulations>

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the National School Lunch Program (7 CFR 210) (USDA):

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

Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) for the School Breakfast Program (7 CFR 220) (USDA):

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

Comparison of Programs: SFSP/NSLP/Seamless Summer Option (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/comparison-programs-sfspnslpseamless-option>

4 | Resources

- CSDE Operational Memorandum No. 31-11: Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Water Availability during National School Lunch Program Meal Service:
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Memos/OMEarlierYears/OM31-11.pdf>
- Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296):
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/pl-111-296>
- Questions and Answers on Connecticut Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE):
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/HFC/Questions_Answers_Connecticut_Statutes_School_Foods_Beverages.pdf
- Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>
- USDA Final Rule (77 FR 4088): Nutrition Standards for the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs:
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2012-01-26/pdf/2012-1010.pdf>
- USDA Final Rule (87 FR 6984): Child Nutrition Programs: Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium:
<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/02/07/2022-02327/child-nutrition-programs-transitional-standards-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium>
- USDA FNS Instruction 786-8: Reimbursement for Off-Site Meal Consumption:
<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/FNSinstruction/786-8.pdf>
- USDA Memo SP 05-2022: Meal Requirements Under the NSLP & SBP: Q&A for Program Operators Updated to Support the Transitional Standards Effective July 1, 2022
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/sp052022-questions-answers-program-operators>
- USDA Memo SP 06-2023, CACFP 05-2023, and SFSP 02-2023: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023: Effect on Child Nutrition Programs:
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/consolidated-appropriations-act-2023-effect-programs>
- USDA Memo SP 17-2012: Procurement Questions and Answers to Assist in the Implementation of the final rule titled Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program.
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/procurement-qas-assist-implementation-final-rule>

Websites

Afterschool Snack Program (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/afterschool-snacks>

An Opportunity for Schools: Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/opportunity-schools>

Beverage Requirements (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Beverage-Requirements>

Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program>

Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Child Nutrition Sharing Site (ICN):

<https://theicn.org/cnss/>

Choose MyPlate (USDA):

<https://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

Competitive Foods in Schools (CSDE):

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

Connecticut Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Connecticut General Statutes for School Foods and Beverages (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Requirements-for-School-Foods-and-Beverages/Regulations>

Dietary Guidelines for Americans (USDA):

<https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>

Farm to School (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Farm-to-School>

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Documents & Resources (USDA webpage):

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

Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Instructions (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/FNS-Instructions-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Food Buying Guide for Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/FNS-Instructions-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Food Labeling & Nutrition (FDA):

<https://www.fda.gov/food/food-labeling-nutrition>

4 | Resources

Laws and Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Laws-and-Regulations-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Manuals and Guides for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Manuals-and-Guides-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Meal Pattern Training Materials for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Pattern-Training-Materials>

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

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

Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

National School Lunch Program (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/National-School-Lunch-Program>

Nutrition Education (CSDE):

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

Nutrition Standards for School Meals (USDA):

<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/legislation/nutritionstandards.htm>

Offer versus Serve for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Offer-versus-Serve-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Operating Child Nutrition Programs during COVID-19 (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Operating-Child-Nutrition-Programs-during-COVID-19>

Operational Memoranda for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Lists/Operational-Memoranda-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Procurement for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Procurement-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Production Records for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Production-Records-for-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

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

Resources for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Resources-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

School Breakfast Program (CSDE):

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

School Wellness Policies (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/School-Wellness-Policies>

Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP (CSDE): <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Seamless-Summer-Option-SSO-of-the-NSLP>

Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Special-Diets-in-School-Nutrition-Programs>

Training for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Training-for-Child-Nutrition-Programs>

Water Availability (CSDE's Program Guidance for School Nutrition Programs webpage):
<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Program-Guidance-School-Nutrition-Programs#WaterAvailability>

Glossary

a la carte sales: Foods and beverages that are sold separately from reimbursable meals in the USDA school nutrition programs. For more information, refer to “competitive foods” in this section.

Afterschool Snack Program (ASP): The USDA’s federally assisted snack program implemented through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The ASP provides cash reimbursement to help schools serve snacks to children in afterschool activities aimed at promoting the health and well-being of children and youth. Schools must provide children with regularly scheduled activities in an organized, structured, and supervised environment that includes educational or enrichment activities, e.g., mentoring/tutoring programs. Programs must meet state or local licensing requirements and health and safety standards. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Afterschool Snack Program](#) webpage.

age/grade groups: The three grade groupings (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12) of the USDA meal patterns for breakfast and lunch. The classification of grade groups is based on the nutritional needs of children and the ages that typically correspond with these grade levels (ages 5-10 for grades K-5, ages 11-13 for grades 6-8, and ages 14-18 for grades 9-12).

alternate protein products (APP): APPs are generally single ingredient powders that are added to foods. Some examples include soy flours, soy concentrates, soy isolates, whey protein concentrate, whey protein isolates, and casein. APPs include vegetable protein products. The USDA has specific requirements for the crediting of APP in Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Requirements for Alternate Protein Products in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), and the USDA’s resource, [Questions and Answers on Alternate Protein Products](#).

Child Nutrition (CN) label: A statement that clearly identifies the contribution of a food product toward the meal pattern requirements, based on the USDA’s evaluation of the product’s formulation. Products eligible for CN labeling include main dish entrees that contribute to the meat/meat alternates component of the meal pattern requirements, e.g., beef patties, cheese or meat pizzas, meat or cheese and bean burritos, egg rolls, and breaded fish portions. The CN label will also indicate the contribution of other meal components that are part of these products. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the School Nutrition Programs](#), and visit the USDA’s [Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labeling](#) webpage.

Child Nutrition Programs: The USDA’s federally funded programs that provide nutritious meals and snacks to children, including the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program, Special Milk Program (SMP), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The CACFP also provides nutritious meals and snacks to the frail elderly in adult day care centers. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

combination foods: Foods that contain more than one food component, such as pizza, burritos, and smoothies made with milk and fruit. For example, macaroni and cheese contains pasta (grains) and cheese (meat/meat alternate). Combination foods generally cannot be separated (such as pizza and burritos) or are not intended to be separated (such as a hamburger on a bun or turkey sandwich).

creditable food: A food or beverage that counts toward meeting the meal pattern requirements for reimbursable meals and ASP snacks in the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

creditable grains: The ingredients in a commercial grain product or standardized recipe that credit toward the grains component. Creditable grains include whole grains, enriched grains, bran, and germ.

dietary specifications: The USDA’s nutrition standards for meals in the NSLP and SBP. The dietary specifications include weekly calorie ranges, and limits for saturated fat and sodium. In addition, Nutrition Facts labels and manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fats per serving for all food products and ingredients used to prepare school meals. For information, refer to section 6 of the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#).

edible portion: The portion of a food that can be eaten after the nonedible parts are removed, for example, cooked, lean meat without bone, and fruit without seeds or pits.

enriched grains: Refined grains (such as wheat, rice, and corn) and grain products (such as cereal, pasta, and bread) that have some vitamins and minerals added to replace the nutrients lost during processing. The five enrichment nutrients are added within limits specified by the FDA, and include thiamin (B₁), riboflavin (B₂), niacin (B₃), folic acid, and iron. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Crediting Enriched Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).

enrichment: Adding back nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) originally present in a food that were lost during processing. Enrichment nutrients are added back in approximately the same levels as were originally present in the food. For more information, refer to “enriched grains” in this section.

entree: Refer to “main dish” in this section.

Exhibit A chart: A USDA chart that indicates the required weight (groups A-G) or volume (groups H-I) for a grain food to provide 1 oz eq (NSLP and SBP) or 1 serving (ASP) of the grains component. This chart may be used for commercial grain products and for standardized recipes that indicate the weight of the prepared (cooked) serving. The required amounts for the grains component are not the same for all Child Nutrition Programs. The CSDE’s resource, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#), lists the Exhibit A grain ounce equivalents that apply to grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP. For more information, refer to the USDA’s [Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs](#).

extra foods: Refer to “noncreditable foods” in this section.

fluid milk substitutes: Nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) that can be used as a substitute for fluid milk in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. For reimbursable meals and ASP snacks, nondairy beverages served to children without disabilities must comply with the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes. For more information, refer the CSDE’s resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#).

food components: The five food groups that comprise reimbursable meals in the NSLP (milk, meat/meat alternates, vegetables, fruits, and grains) and the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts in the SBP (grains with optional meat/meat alternate substitutions, fruits with optional vegetable substitutions, and milk). For more information on the individual food components, refer to the CSDE’s [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals for Grades K-12](#), and visit the CSDE’s [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

food item: A specific food offered within the food components that comprise reimbursable meals in the USDA school nutrition programs. A food item may contain one or more food components or more than one serving of a single component. For example, an entree could provide 1 oz eq of the grains component and 1 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component, and a 2 ounce whole grain or enriched bagel could provide 2 oz eq of the grains component.

fortification: Adding nutrients (usually vitamins or minerals) that were not originally present in a food or beverage or adding nutrients at levels that are higher than originally present. Fortification is used for naturally nutrient-rich products based on scientifically documented health needs (such as fortifying milk with vitamin D to increase the body’s absorption of calcium), or to enhance the perceived nutritional value of products with little or no natural nutritional value, e.g., fortifying “energy” bars made from processed flour with multiple vitamins and minerals. Fortification nutrients are added to products in varying amounts, from small percentages up to amounts greater than recommended intakes.

fruits component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and pasteurized full-strength juice. Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings. For more information, visit the “[Fruits Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

full component: The daily quantity designated by the menu planner (no less than the established minimum) to meet the required weekly ranges.

full serving: Refer to “full component” in this section.

full-strength fruit or vegetable juice: An undiluted product obtained by extraction from sound fruit. Full-strength juice may be fresh, canned, frozen, or reconstituted from concentrate and may be served in either liquid or frozen state or as an ingredient in a recipe. The name of the full-strength fruit juice on the label must include one of the following terms: “juice,” “full-strength juice,” “100 percent juice,” “reconstituted juice,” or “juice from concentrate.” For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *[Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#)*.

grade groups: Refer to “age/grade groups” in this section.

grains component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that is comprised of cereal grains and products made from their flours. Creditable grain foods include products and recipes that are whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched. Creditable cooked and ready-to-eat (RTE) breakfast cereals include products that are WGR, enriched, or fortified. For more information, visit the “[Grains Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

legumes: Plants that grow in pods. Legumes include pulses, which are the edible dried seeds of plants in the legume family, such as beans, lentils, chickpeas, and split peas. Pulses include all beans, peas, and lentils cooked from dry, canned, or frozen, such as kidney beans, pinto beans, black beans, pink beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), split peas, pigeon peas, mung beans, and lentils. The meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs allow legumes to credit as either the meat/meat alternates component or the vegetable component. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, *[Crediting Legumes in the in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#)*.

local educational agency (LEA): A public board of education or other public or private nonprofit authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties that is recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public or private nonprofit elementary schools or secondary schools. The term also includes any other public or private nonprofit institution or agency having administrative control and

direction of a public or private nonprofit elementary school or secondary school, including residential child care institutions, Bureau of Indian Affairs schools, and educational service agencies and consortia of those agencies, as well as the state educational agency in a state or territory in which the state educational agency is the sole educational agency for all public or private nonprofit schools.

main dish: The main dish is generally considered the main food item in the menu, which is complemented by the other food items. Examples of main dish items include pizza, chicken stir-fry, and chef's salad with ham, hard-boiled egg, and cheese.

meal pattern: The required food components and minimum serving sizes that schools and institutions participating in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs must provide to receive federal reimbursement for meals and snacks served to children. For more information, visit CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

meals: Refer to “reimbursable meals” in this section.

meat alternates: Foods that provide a similar protein content to meat. Meat alternates include alternate protein products, cheese, eggs, cooked dry beans or peas, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut, and coconut), yogurt, soy yogurt, commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein in a ¼-cup (2.2 ounces) serving, and tempeh. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Crediting Deli Meats in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, *Crediting Legumes in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, *Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, *Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*, and *Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

meat/meat alternates component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes meats (e.g., beef, poultry, and fish) and meat alternates, such as eggs, cheese, yogurt, beans and peas (legumes) nuts, and seeds. For more information, visit the “[Meat/Meat Alternates Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

menu item: Any planned main dish, vegetable, fruit, bread, grain, or milk that is part of the reimbursable meal. Menu items consist of food items. For more information, refer to “food item” in this section.

milk component: The meal component of the USDA meal patterns that includes pasteurized fluid milk that meets the fat content and flavor requirements of the USDA regulations. The milk component also includes fluid milk substitutes that meet the USDA's nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes. For more information, refer to “fluid milk substitutes” and “nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes” in this section and visit the “[Milk Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE's Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

National School Lunch Program (NSLP): The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The NSLP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free lunches to children each school day. It was established under the National School Lunch Act, signed by President Harry Truman in 1946. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [National School Lunch Program](#) webpage.

noncreditable foods: Foods and beverages that do not contribute toward the meal patterns for the USDA’s Child Nutrition Programs. Noncreditable foods and beverages are either in amounts too small to credit (i.e., foods and beverage that do not provide the minimum creditable amount of a food component) or they do not fit into one of the meal pattern components. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Noncreditable Foods for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program](#).

noncreditable grains: Grain ingredients that do not contribute toward the grains component. Examples include fiber, bran, germ, and modified food starch (including potato, legume, and other vegetable flours). For more information, refer to the CSDE’s guide, [Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12](#).

nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes: The nutrition requirements for nondairy beverages (such as soy milk) used as fluid milk substitutes in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs. The USDA requires that any fluid milk substitutes are nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk and meet the following nutrients based on a 1-cup serving (8 fluid ounces): 276 milligrams (mg) of calcium; 8 grams (g) of protein; 500 international units (IU) of vitamin A; 100 IU of vitamin D; 24 mg of magnesium; 222 mg of phosphorus; 349 mg of potassium; 0.44 mg of riboflavin; and 1.1 micrograms (mcg) of vitamin B-12. For more information, refer to the CSDE’s resource, [Allowable Milk Substitutes for Children without Disabilities in School Nutrition Programs](#).

offer versus serve (OVS): A provision that applies to menu planning and the determination of reimbursable meals for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP. OVS allows students to decline a certain number of food components or items in the meal. The SFA must offer the required meal components to each student. In the NSLP, students must select at least ½ cup of fruits or vegetables and the full portion (minimum serving size) of at least two other components. In the SBP, students must select at least 3 food items including at least ½ cup of fruit (or vegetable substitutions, if offered). OVS must be implemented in senior high schools for lunch but is optional for breakfast. For junior high, middle schools and elementary schools, OVS is optional for both breakfast and lunch.

ounce equivalent: A weight-based unit of measure for the grains component and meat/meat alternate component of the NSLP and the SBP meal patterns for grades K-12. Ounce equivalents account for dry versus cooked grains and variations in meats/meat alternates. One oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component is sometimes more than a measured ounce, depending on the food's density and nutrition content. An ounce equivalent of the grains component is less than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as pretzels, breadsticks, and crackers), equal to a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as bagels, biscuits, bread, rolls, cereal grains, and RTE breakfast cereals), and more than a measured ounce for some grain foods (such as muffins and pancakes). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

point-of-service meal count: The point in the food service operation where staff can make an accurate determination that a reimbursable free, reduced-price, or paid meal has been served to an eligible child. This is typically at the end of the serving line after the child has had the chance to receive all components of the reimbursable meal.

product formulation statement (PFS): An information statement obtained from the manufacturer that provides specific information about how a product credits toward the USDA's meal pattern requirements, and documents how this information is obtained citing Child Nutrition Program resources or regulations. All creditable ingredients in this statement must match a description in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. The PFS must be prepared on company letterhead with the signature of a company official and the date of issue. Unlike a CN label, a PFS does not provide any warranty against audit claims. SFAs must check the manufacturer's crediting information for accuracy prior to including the product in reimbursable meals. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, *Using Product Formulation Statements in the School Nutrition Programs* and *Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.

recognizable food item: A food that is visible in the offered breakfast or lunch, and allows students to identify the food groups and amounts recommended for consumption at mealtime. Foods must be recognizable to credit in the NSLP and SBP meal patterns. The USDA allows some exceptions, such as yogurt blended in fruit or vegetable smoothies, pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies, and pasta made with 100 percent vegetable flours.

reimbursable meals: Meals and ASP snacks that meet the meal pattern requirements of the USDA's regulations for Child Nutrition Programs. Reimbursable meals contain the minimum serving of each required food component.

residential child care institution (RCCI): RCCIs include, but are not limited to homes for the mentally, emotionally or physically impaired, and unmarried mothers and their infants; group homes; halfway houses; orphanages; temporary shelters for abused children and for runaway children; long-term care facilities for chronically ill children; and juvenile detention centers. A long-term care facility is a hospital, skilled nursing facility, intermediate care facility, or distinct part thereof, which is intended for the care of children confined for 30 days or more.

School Breakfast Program (SBP): The USDA’s federally assisted meal program operating in public and nonprofit private schools and residential child care institutions. The SBP provides nutritionally balanced, low-cost or free breakfasts to children each school day. The program was established under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to ensure that all children have access to a healthy breakfast at school to promote learning readiness and healthy eating behaviors. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [School Breakfast Program](#) webpage.

school food authority (SFA): The governing body that is responsible for the administration of one or more schools and has the legal authority to operate the USDA school nutrition programs.

school nutrition programs: The USDA’s school nutrition programs include the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Afterschool Snack Program (ASP) of the NSLP, Seamless Summer Option (SSO) of the NSLP, Special Milk Program (SMP), Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP), and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Supper Program implemented in schools. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [School Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP (SSO): The USDA’s federally assisted summer feeding program that combines features of the NSLP, SBP, and SFSP, and serves meals free of charge to children ages 18 and younger from low-income areas. School districts participating in the NSLP or SBP are eligible to apply to the CSDE to participate in the SSO. SSO meals follow the meal patterns of the NSLP and SBP. For more information, visit the [Seamless Summer Option of the NSLP](#) webpage.

serving size or portion: The weight, measure, number of pieces, or slices of a food or beverage. SFAs must provide the minimum serving sizes specified in the USDA meal patterns for meals and snacks to be reimbursable.

Special Milk Program (SMP): The USDA’s federally assisted program that provides milk to children in schools and child care institutions that do not participate in other federal meal service programs. The SMP reimburses schools for the milk they serve. Schools in the NSLP or SBP may also participate in the SMP to provide milk to children in half-day pre-kindergarten and kindergarten programs where children do not have access to the school meal programs. For more information, visit the CSDE’s [Special Milk Program](#) webpage.

standardized recipe: A recipe that a given food service operation has tested and adapted for use. This recipe produces the same good results and yield every time when the exact procedures are used with the same type of equipment, and the same quantity and quality of ingredients. Standardized recipes include specific information such as ingredients, weights and measures, preparation directions, serving directions, yield, and portion size. For more information, refer to the “[Standardized Recipes](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

surimi: Pasteurized, ready-to-eat, restructured seafood usually made from pollock (fish). A 3-ounce serving of surimi credits as 1 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component.

tempeh: A highly nutritious fermented soybean cake traditionally made from whole soybeans. A 1-ounce serving of tempeh credits as 1 oz eq of the meat/meat alternates component.

trans fats: A type of unsaturated fat that is structurally different from the unsaturated fatty acids that occur naturally in plant foods, and therefore has different health effects. Trans fats increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. Most trans fats are artificially made as the result of “hydrogenation.” This manufacturing process transforms liquid vegetable oils into a solid (saturated) fat to increase shelf life and enhance the flavor and texture of food products. Sources of trans fatty acids include partially hydrogenated vegetable oils used in processed foods such as desserts, microwave popcorn, frozen pizza, some margarines, and coffee creamer. Trans fats are also present naturally in foods that come from ruminant animals (e.g., cattle and sheep) such as dairy products, beef, and lamb.

USDA Foods: Foods available to the USDA Child Nutrition Programs through the CSDE’s Food Distribution Program. USDA Foods are available to schools in several ways, including Direct Delivery USDA Foods, Further Processed USDA Foods, the USDA Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program, the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Pilot, and the SFSP USDA DoD Pilot. For more information, visit the USDA’s [USDA Foods Programs](#) webpage and the CSDE’s [Food Distribution Program](#) webpage.

vegetable subgroups: The five categories of vegetables within the vegetables component that are required over the week in the NSLP meal pattern. The subgroups include dark green, red/ orange, beans and peas (legumes), starchy, and other vegetables. For more information, visit the “[Vegetables Component for Grades K-12](#)” section of the CSDE’s Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs webpage.

whole fruits and vegetables: Fresh, frozen, canned, and dried fruits and vegetables that are unprocessed or minimally processed, and do not contain added ingredients such as fat, sugars, or sodium.

whole grain-rich: For the NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12, whole grain-rich foods must contain at least 50 percent whole grains, any other grain ingredients must be enriched, and any noncreditable grains must be less than two percent ($\frac{1}{4}$ ounce equivalent) of the product formula. For more information, refer to the CSDE's guide, *Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12*.

whole grains: Grains that consist of the entire kernel, including the starchy endosperm, the fiber-rich bran, and the nutrient-rich germ. All grains start out as whole grains but many are processed to remove the bran and germ, which also removes many of the nutrients. Whole grains are nutrient rich, containing vitamins, minerals, fiber, antioxidants, and health-enhancing phytonutrients such as lignans and flavonoids. Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole oats, oatmeal, whole-grain cornmeal, brown rice, whole rye, whole barley, wild rice, buckwheat, and bulgur (cracked wheat). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, *Crediting Whole Grains in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program*.



CONNECTICUT STATE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION