


National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12

Module 5: Dietary Specifications



Connecticut State Department of Education
Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs

School Year 2024-25

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What's in a Meal Training Modules

- 1: Introduction to Training
- 2: Introduction to School Meal Patterns
- 3: National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Meal Pattern
- 4: School Breakfast Program (SBP) Meal Pattern
- 5: Dietary Specifications
- 6: Meal Pattern Documentation
- 7: Milk Component
- 8: Meats/Meat Alternates Component
- 9: Fruits Component
- 10: Vegetables Component
- 11: Grains Component
- 12: Whole Grain-rich (WGR) Requirement
- 13: Grain Ounce Equivalents
- 14: Water Availability During Meal Service
- 15: Offer versus serve (OVS) in the NSLP
- 16: Offer versus serve (OVS) in the SBP

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

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Topics

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Topics

- Dietary specifications for lunch
- Dietary specifications for breakfast
- Calories
- Saturated Fat
- Sodium
- Changes to dietary specifications
- Resources



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Introduction to Dietary Specifications

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Dietary Specifications

The USDA's nutrition standards for school meals for grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP

- Calorie ranges
- Saturated fat
- Sodium




Terms to Know

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Dietary Specifications = Weekly Averages

- Individual meal could exceed standards if average over week complies








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Dietary Specifications Based On

- Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs)
 - Institute of Medicine (IOM)
- Dietary Guidelines for Americans
 - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and USDA

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Dietary Specifications Apply To

- NSLP and SBP meal patterns for grades K-12






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Dietary Specifications Do Not Apply To

- Preschool meal patterns
- Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)






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Part of NSLP and SBP Meal Patterns

Dietary specifications (nutrition standards): Daily amount based on the average for a five-day week

Nutrition standards	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Calories ¹⁾	500-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (percentage of total calories)	< 10	< 10	< 10
Sodium (milligrams): Target 1A through June 30, 2027	≤ 1,110	≤ 1,225	≤ 1,280






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Final Rule Changes to Dietary Specifications for School Year 2024-25

- Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans
 - April 25, 2024

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Final Rule Changes to Dietary Specifications for School Year 2024-25

- Eliminated trans fat standard as of July 1, 2024

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/04/25/2024-08098/child-nutrition-programs-meal-patterns-consistent-with-the-2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-for>

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Final Rule Changes to Dietary Specifications for School Year 2027-28

- Beginning July 1, 2027
- New weekly limit for added sugars
 - < 10 percent of calories

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Transitional Standards for Two School Years

- 2024-25
July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025
- 2025-26
July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026

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Dietary Specifications for Lunch

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Dietary Specifications for Lunch: School Year 2024-25

Nutrients	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Grades K-8 Option
Calories	550-650	600-700	750-850	600-650
Saturated fat	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%
Sodium (milligrams) *	≤ 1,110	≤ 1,225	≤ 1,280	≤ 1,110

* Target 1A through June 30, 2027

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Dietary Specifications for Breakfast

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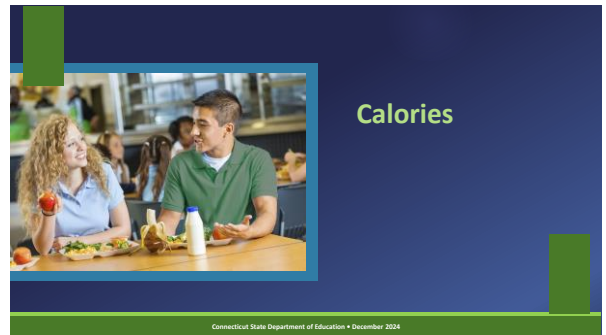
Dietary Specifications for Breakfast

Nutrients	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Optional: Grades K-8	Optional: Grades K-12	Optional: Grades 6-12
Calories	350-500	400-550	450-600	400-500	450-500	450-550
Saturated fat	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%
Sodium (milligrams) *	≤ 540	≤ 600	≤ 640	≤ 540	≤ 540	≤ 600

* Target 1 through June 30, 2027

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Minimum and Maximum Calories

Grades	Breakfast	Lunch
K-5	350-500	550-650
6-8	400-550	600-700
9-12	450-600	750-850
K-8 option	400-500	600-650
K-12 option (breakfast only)	450-500	NA
6-12 option (breakfast only)	450-550	NA

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Minimum and Maximum Calories

Grades	Breakfast	Lunch
K-5	350-500	550-650
6-8	400-550	600-700
9-12	450-600	750-850
K-8 option	400-500	600-650
K-12 option (breakfast only)	450-500	NA
6-12 option (breakfast only)	450-550	NA

Smaller calorie range for optional grade groups

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Minimum and Maximum Calories

Grades	Breakfast	Lunch
K-5	350-500	550-650
6-8	400-550	600-700
9-12	450-600	750-850
K-8 option	400-500	600-650
K-12 option (breakfast only)	450-500	NA
6-12 option (breakfast only)	450-550	NA

Smaller calorie range for optional grade groups

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- ### Minimum and Maximum Calories
- Serve nutrient-dense menus
 - More fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
 - Avoid foods high in fats and added sugars
-
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CSDE Resource

Weekly Calorie Ranges for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12




https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/calorie_ranges_nslp_sbp.pdf

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Strategies for Meeting Calorie Ranges

- Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
 - Section 2



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_dietary_specifications_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf

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Saturated Fat

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Limit for Saturated Fat

- Same for all grade groups and meals
- < 10% of calories



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Sources of Saturated Fat

- Animal foods (except fish)
- Tropical oils



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Reducing Saturated Fat

- Careful purchasing
 - Compare nutrition labels
 - Write specifications
 - Limit frequency




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More Strategies for Reducing Saturated Fat

- Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
 - Section 4




https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_dietary_specifications_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf

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Sodium




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Transitional Limits for Sodium

- Change SY 2027-28 (July 1, 2027)
 - Encourage reintroduction of lower sodium foods and meals
 - Provide additional time for food industry to develop and test lower sodium products that are palatable to students
- Implement gradual reduction of sodium at lunch and breakfast prior to deadline



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Weekly Sodium Limit (Milligrams) for Lunch

Grades	Current sodium limit (Target 1A) through June 30, 2027	Sodium limit by July 1, 2027
K-5	≤ 1,110 mg	≤ 935 mg
6-8	≤ 1,225 mg	≤ 1,035 mg
9-12	≤ 1280 mg	≤ 1,080 mg
K-8 option	≤ 1,110 mg	≤ 935 mg

15% ↓

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Weekly Sodium Limit (Milligrams) for Breakfast

Grades	Current sodium limit (Target 1) through June 30, 2027	Sodium limit by July 1, 2027
K-5	≤ 540 mg	≤ 485mg
6-8	≤ 600 mg	≤ 535mg
9-12	≤ 640 mg	≤ 570 mg
K-8 option	≤ 540 mg	≤ 485mg
6-12 option	≤ 600 mg	≤ 570 mg
K-12 option	≤ 540 mg	≤ 485mg

10% ↓

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Example: Weekly Sodium Limit at Breakfast

Grades	Current sodium limit (Target 1) through June 30, 2027
K-5	≤ 540 mg
6-8	≤ 600 mg
9-12	≤ 640 mg
K-8 option	≤ 540 mg
6-12 option	≤ 600 mg
K-12 option	≤ 540 mg


100 mg less than grades 9-12

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Sodium Limits for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12




https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/sodium_limits_nslp_sbp.pdf

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Reducing Sodium in School Meals

- Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12
 - Section 5



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_dietary_specifications_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf

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Resources



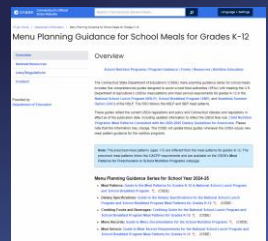
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Menu Planning Guidance for School Meals for Grades K-12

- Meal Patterns
- Dietary Specifications
- Crediting Foods and Beverages
- Menu Documentation
- Meal Service



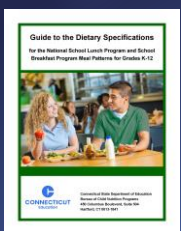
<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning-guide-for-school-meals>

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Guide to the Dietary Specifications for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 (CSDE)



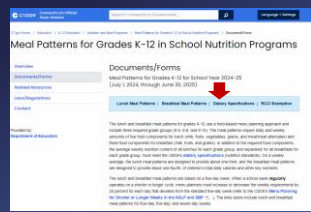
https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/mpg/guide_dietary_specifications_nslp_sbp_k12.pdf

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Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs




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

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Resources for the School Meal Patterns for Grades K-12



https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/nslp/mealpattern/resources_school_meal_patterns_grades_k-12.pdf

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Questions?

- Contact CSDE's school nutrition programs staff

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cnstaff/countysign.pdf>

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Thanks for participating!



<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-pattern-training-materials>

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2. fax: (833) 256-1665 or (202) 690-7442; or
3. email: program.intake@usda.gov

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