

National School Lunch Program (NSLP) FIVE-DAY LUNCH MEAL PATTERN ¹

School Year 2018-19 (Effective July 1, 2018)

Food Components	GRADES K-5		GRADES 6-8		GRADES 9-12	
	Daily	Weekly ²	Daily	Weekly ²	Daily	Weekly ²
Fluid Milk (cups) ³ <i>Low-fat (1%) milk (unflavored or flavored) or fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored)</i>	1	5	1	5	1	5
Fruits (cups) ⁴ <i>Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits</i>	½	2 ½	½	2 ½	1	5
Vegetables (cups) ⁵ <i>Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetables</i>	¾	3 ¾	¾	3 ¾	1	5
Dark Green ^{5, 6}	0	½	0	½	0	½
Red/Orange ^{5, 7}	0	¾	0	¾	0	1 ¼
Beans/Peas (Legumes) ^{5, 8}	0	½	0	½	0	½
Starchy ^{5, 9}	0	½	0	½	0	½
Other ^{5, 10}	0	½	0	½	0	¾
Additional vegetables to reach total ^{5, 11}	0	1	0	1	0	1 ½
Grains (ounce equivalents) ¹² <i>All grains must be whole grain-rich</i>	1	8-9	1	8-10	2	10-12
Meats and Meat Alternates (ounce equivalents) ¹³	1	8-10	1	9-10	2	10-12
DIETARY SPECIFICATIONS (NUTRITION STANDARDS) <i>Daily amount based on the average for a five-day week</i>						
Calories ^{14, 15}	550-650		600-700		750-850	
Saturated Fat (percentage of total calories) ¹⁵	< 10		< 10		< 10	
Sodium (milligrams)	≤ 1,230		≤ 1,360		≤ 1,420	
Trans Fat (grams) ¹⁵	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving					

◀ See page 2 for important menu planning notes ▶

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NSLP FIVE-DAY LUNCH MEAL PATTERN ¹, continued

School Year 2018-19 (Effective July 1, 2018)

Menu Planning Notes

- ¹ Lunch must include the minimum serving of all five components. Meals may include larger amounts of any component if the weekly menu meets the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, sodium, and trans fat. Use the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the requirements. For information on crediting processed foods, see *Child Nutrition (CN) Labeling Program, Product Formulation Statements, Accepting Processed Product Documentation, and Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the NSLP and SBP*.
- ² A week equals five days. Schools that regularly operate for six or seven days must increase the weekly requirements by 20 percent for each additional day. Schools that regularly operate for less than five days must decrease the weekly requirements by 20 percent for each day less than five days. For more information, see *Menu Planning for Shorter and Longer Weeks*.
- ³ Schools must offer at least two different varieties of low-fat (1%) milk (unflavored or flavored) or fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored). Whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk cannot be served.
- ⁴ The fruits component includes fresh fruit, frozen fruit, dried fruit, and canned fruit in light syrup, water, or juice. Fruit credits based on volume, except dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruits component. Fruit juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice and cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings. The juice limit includes all sources of juice, e.g., 100 percent juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, pureed fruits in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100 percent juice. Serving whole fruits instead of juice is recommended. For more information, see *Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP* and *Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.
- ⁵ Vegetables credit based on volume, except raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served (e.g., 1 cup equals ½ cup of vegetables) and tomato paste and puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted (see the FBG). Vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice and cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings. Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice. For more information, see *Crediting Juice for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP, Crediting Smoothies for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP, and Vegetable Subgroups*.
- ⁶ Examples of the dark green subgroup include bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, mesclun, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, spinach, turnip greens, and watercress.
- ⁷ Examples of the red/orange subgroup include acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, pumpkin, tomatoes, tomato juice, and sweet potatoes.
- ⁸ Examples of the beans and peas (legumes) subgroup include black beans, black-eyed peas (mature, dry), garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soy beans, split peas, and white beans. Note: Green peas, green lima beans, and green (string) beans are not legumes and are not in this subgroup.
- ⁹ Examples of the starchy subgroup include black-eyed peas (not dry), corn, cassava, green bananas, green peas, green lima beans, parsnips, plantains, taro, water chestnuts, and white potatoes.
- ¹⁰ The "other" subgroup includes all other vegetables such as artichokes, asparagus, avocado, beets, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, green peppers, iceberg lettuce, mushrooms, okra, onions, turnips, wax beans, and zucchini. The "other" vegetables requirement may be met with any additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) subgroups, but not the starchy subgroup.
- ¹¹ Any vegetable subgroup may be offered as additional vegetables to meet the total weekly vegetable requirements.
- ¹² All grains must be whole grain-rich (WGR). WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains, any remaining grains are enriched, and any noncreditable grains are less than 2 percent (¼ ounce equivalent) of the product formula. All grains must provide the ounce equivalent serving sizes in *Whole Grain-rich Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*. Menus are not required to comply with the maximums for grains, but must meet the minimums and stay within the weekly calorie range. The weekly maximum provides a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. Up to 2 ounce equivalents per week may be a grain-based dessert if menus meet the weekly dietary specifications. For more information, see *Whole Grain-rich Criteria for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP, Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP* and *Crediting Breakfast Cereals for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP*.
- ¹³ The serving size refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish as served, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. A 1-ounce equivalent equals 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended); 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese (low-fat recommended); ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes); ½ large egg; 2 tablespoons of nut butters; 1 ounce of nuts or seeds; ¼ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein; ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and 1 ounce of alternate protein products (APP). APP must meet the USDA requirements in [appendix A](#) of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210). Allowable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. Nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than 50 percent of the meat/meat alternates requirement, and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the minimum daily serving. Menus are not required to comply with the maximum for meat/meat alternates, but must meet the minimum and stay within the weekly calorie range. The weekly maximum provides a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. For more information, see *Crediting Deli Meats in the NSLP and SBP, Crediting Legumes in the NSLP and SBP, Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the NSLP and SBP, Crediting Tofu and Tofu Products in the NSLP and SBP, and Requirements for APP*.
- ¹⁴ The average daily amount of calories for a five-day school week must be at least the minimum value, but no more than the maximum value.
- ¹⁵ Meals may include discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) if the weekly menu meets the dietary specifications.



For more information, review the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Menu Planning Guide for School Meals](#) and visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in School Nutrition Programs](#) webpages, or contact the [school nutrition programs staff](#) in the CSDE Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103.