

# UPDATED CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM MEAL PATTERNS:

# CHILD AND ADULT MEALS



USDA recently revised the CACFP meal patterns to ensure children and adults have access to healthy, balanced meals throughout the day. Under the updated child and adult meal patterns, meals served will include a greater variety of vegetables and fruit, more whole grains, and less added sugar and saturated fat. The changes made to the meal patterns are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, scientific recommendations from the National Academy of Medicine, and stakeholder input. CACFP centers and day care homes must comply with the updated meal patterns by October 1, 2017.

## Updated Child and Adult Meal Patterns



### Greater Variety of Vegetables and Fruits

- The combined fruit and vegetable component is now a separate vegetable component and a separate fruit component; and
- Juice is limited to once per day.



### More Whole Grains

- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich;
- Grain-based desserts no longer count towards the grain component; and
- Ounce equivalents (oz eq) are used to determine the amount of creditable grains (starting October 1, 2019).



### More Protein Options

- Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week; and
- Tofu counts as a meat alternate.



### Age Appropriate Meals

- A new age group to address the needs of older children 13 through 18 years old.



### Less Added Sugar

- Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces; and
- Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce.



### Making Every Sip Count

- Unflavored whole milk must be served to 1 year olds; unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk must be served to children 2 through 5 years old; and unflavored low-fat, unflavored fat-free, or flavored fat-free milk must be served to children 6 years old and older and adults;
- Non-dairy milk substitutes that are nutritionally equivalent to milk may be served in place of milk to children or adults with medical or special dietary needs; and
- Yogurt may be served in place of milk once per day for adults only.



### Additional Improvements

- Extends offer versus serve to at-risk afterschool programs; and
- Frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods on-site.

### Breakfast Meal Patterns

	Ages 1-2		Ages 3-5		Ages 6-12 & 13-18		Adults	
	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated
<b>Milk</b>	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
<b>Vegetables, fruit, or both</b>	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
<b>Grains</b>	½ serving	½ oz eq*	½ serving	½ oz eq*	1 serving	½ oz eq*	2 servings	2 oz eq*

\*Meat and meat alternates may be used to substitute the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week.  
Oz eq = ounce equivalents

### Lunch and Supper Meal Patterns

	Ages 1-2		Ages 3-5		Ages 6-12 & 13-18		Adults	
	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated
<b>Milk</b>	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup*
<b>Meat and meat alternatives</b>	1 oz	1 oz	1 ½ oz	1 ½ oz	2 oz	2 oz	2 oz	2 oz
<b>Vegetables</b>	¼ cup	⅛ cup	½ cup	¼ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	1 cup	½ cup
<b>Fruits</b>		⅛ cup		¼ cup		¼ cup		½ cup
<b>Grains</b>	½ serving	½ oz eq*	½ serving	½ oz eq*	1 serving	½ oz eq	2 servings	2 oz eq

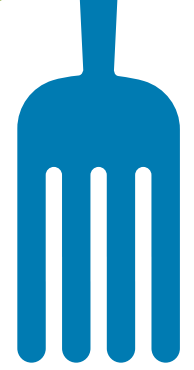
\*A serving of milk is not required at supper meals for adults  
Oz eq = ounce equivalents

### Snack Meal Pattern

	Ages 1-2		Ages 3-5		Ages 6-12 & 13-18		Adults	
	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated	Previous	Updated
<b>Milk</b>	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
<b>Meat and meat alternatives</b>	½ oz	½ oz	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz	1 oz	1 oz	1 oz
<b>Vegetables</b>	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	½ cup
<b>Fruit</b>		½ cup		½ cup		¾ cup		½ cup
<b>Grains</b>	½ serving	½ oz eq	½ serving	½ oz eq	1 serving	1oz eq	1 servings	1 oz eq

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack.  
Oz eq = ounce equivalents

Note: All serving sizes are minimum quantities of the food components that are required to be served.



# CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM: BEST PRACTICES

The updated CACFP meal patterns lay the foundation for a healthy eating pattern for children and adults in care. USDA also developed optional best practices that build on the meal patterns and highlight areas where centers and day care homes may take additional steps to further improve the nutritional quality of the meals they serve. The best practices reflect recommendations from the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the National Academy of Medicine to further help increase participants' consumption of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains, and reduce the consumption of added sugars and saturated fats.

## CACFP Best Practices

USDA highly encourages centers and day care homes to implement these best practices in order to ensure children and adults are getting the optimal benefit from the meals they receive while in care:



### Infants

- Support mothers who choose to breastfeed their infants by encouraging mothers to supply breastmilk for their infants while in day care and offer a quiet, private area that is comfortable and sanitary for mothers who come to the center or day care home to breastfeed.



### Vegetables and Fruit

- Make at least 1 of the 2 required components of a snack a vegetable or a fruit.
- Serve a variety of fruits and choose whole fruits (fresh, canned, dried, or frozen) more often than juice.
- Provide at least one serving each of dark green vegetables, red and orange vegetables, beans and peas (legumes), starchy vegetables, and other vegetables once per week.



### Grains

- Provide at least two servings of whole grain-rich grains per day.



### Meat and Meat Alternates

- Serve only lean meats, nuts, and legumes.
- Limit serving processed meats to no more than one serving per week.
- Serve only natural cheeses and choose low-fat or reduced fat-cheeses.



### Milk

- Serve only unflavored milk to all participants. If flavored milk is served to children 6 years old and older, or adults, use the Nutrition Facts Label to select and serve flavored milk that contains no more than 22 grams of sugar per 8 fluid ounces, or the flavored milk with the lowest amount of sugar if flavored milk within this sugar limit is not available.
- Serve water as a beverage when serving yogurt in place of milk for adults.

## Additional Best Practices

- Incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods into meals.
- Limit serving purchased pre-fried foods to no more than one serving per week.
- Avoid serving non-creditable foods that are sources of added sugars, such as sweet toppings (e.g., honey, jam, syrup), mix-in ingredients sold with yogurt (e.g., honey, candy, or cookie pieces), and sugar sweetened beverages (e.g., fruit drinks or sodas).
- Adult day care centers should offer and make water available to adults upon their request, throughout the day.

## Resources

Find useful tips and strategies to help you incorporate the best practices into your every day meal service:

- **Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children:** Child care providers can use these tips to incorporate key recommendations and best practices into their menus and daily schedules.
- **Feeding Infants:** This guide presents information on infant development, nutrition for infants, breastfeeding and formula feeding, feeding solid foods, sanitary food preparation, safe food handling, and much more!
- **Healthy Meals Resource System:** CACFP centers and day care homes will find more menu planning tools, recipe ideas, and additional tips and ideas to help implement the updated meal patterns and best practices, such as hosting taste tests to help introduce and get children excited about new foods and menus.
- **Team Nutrition Resource Library:** Visit the Team Nutrition Resource Library for free nutrition education materials to further reinforce and complement the nutrition messages taught by serving healthful foods.
- **MyPlate:** Resources found on the MyPlate website can help CACFP centers and day care homes identify healthier options to ensure menu choices contain the most nutrients children need to grow.
- **ICN Education and Training Resources:** The Institute of Child Nutrition's resources provide education and training opportunities to help provide nutritious meals in CACFP homes and day care settings.

