

Crediting Foods in **CACFP**



Department
of Health

Child and
Adult Care
Food Program

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Table of Contents



- Purpose of this Guide..... 2
- Eat Well Play Hard..... 3
- Meal Pattern Requirements and Recommendations..... 4
- Child Nutrition (CN) Label 6
- Milk..... 7
- Vegetables/Fruits 12
- Grains/Breads 20
- Meat/Meat Alternates 32
- Infant Foods..... 40
- Water 48
- Appendix A: Sample Menus..... 49
- Appendix B: Recipe Analysis 50
- Appendix C: Meat Alternates for Vegetarian Menu Planning 51
- Appendix D: Choking Prevention 52
- Appendix E: Milk Substitutes 53
- Appendix F: How to Identify Whole Grains..... 54
- Index 55

Purpose of this Guide



Crediting Foods in CACFP is a guide to help you determine if a food counts toward the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) Meal Pattern requirements.

Creditable foods are those that may be counted toward meeting the requirements for a reimbursable meal. Foods are creditable based on the following:

- nutrient content
- function of the food in a meal
- CACFP Meal Pattern requirements
- Food and Drug Administration and United States Department of Agriculture standards and policy decisions

Non-creditable foods are those that do not count toward the meal pattern requirements. However, these foods may supply additional nutrients and add color, taste and texture to meals.

A meal is reimbursable only if it contains creditable foods for each required component in the amounts outlined in the CACFP Meal Patterns.

This guide has a section for each meal pattern component:

- milk
- vegetables/fruits
- grains/bread
- meat/meat alternates

Each section has answers to commonly asked questions and a list of foods that are counted or often questioned for that component.

To help you make the healthiest choices for the children in your care, each food component list has three sections:

- **Recommended** – These are healthy food choices that meet CACFP Meal Pattern requirements. Serve these foods often.
- **Not Recommended but Allowed** – These are less healthy food choices that meet CACFP Meal Pattern requirements. Serve these foods only occasionally.
- **Not Allowed** – These foods do not count toward CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

This guide does not include every food that may be served. For further information, check the United States Department of Agriculture's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. It is available at the following website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>. This guide will help you decide how much food to prepare to meet CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

If you have any further questions, please call **1-800-942-3858** or visit www.health.ny.gov/CACFP.



Eat Well Play Hard



Eat Well Play Hard

CACFP encourages New York State child care programs to get children and adults to Eat Well and Play Hard. From the foods and beverages you choose to serve, to the amount of time you allot for physical activity, you have a tremendous influence on the health and well-being of children in care. Create a culture of health by improving the nutrition, mealtime and physical activity environments for children in care. Improve the likelihood that children will make healthy food choices and choose physically active lifestyles by incorporating these helpful tips into child care routines.

Facilitate a Positive Mealtime Environment

An important part of promoting the health of children is providing healthy food served in a pleasant, enjoyable environment. Support healthy eating for everyone.

- Encourage but don't force children to try new foods.
- Let children decide how much to eat.
- Allow children to serve themselves if they are able.
- Reinforce healthy eating every day by using positive verbal and nonverbal messages regarding food.
- Encourage adults to sit with children during meals and snacks while they eat and drink the same foods and beverages as children.
- Make drinking water available indoors and outdoors and clearly visible at all times.
- Never use food as punishment or reward.

Help Kids Be Active and Move More

Childhood is a critical period for developing movement skills, learning healthy habits, and establishing a firm foundation for lifelong health and well-being. Adult caregivers of preschool-aged children should encourage active play that includes a variety of activity types.

- Ensure preschool classroom schedules include two hours or more of indoor and outdoor active playtime (at least one hour of structured adult-led play and one hour of unstructured play) for every full day in care.
- Use active playtime as a reward, but never for punishment.
- Make sure positive verbal and nonverbal messages about physical activity are reinforced daily.
- Limit screen time to no more than 30 minutes each week for preschool children.



Support Healthy Food Choices

Healthy eating is important at every age. The benefits of healthy eating add up over time, bite by bite.

- Offer three or more different colors of fruits and vegetables on the menu each week so children are eating a rainbow of colors.
- Serve fruit (not juice) during snack two or more times per week.
- Plan to serve vegetables during snack two or more times per week.

Healthy Eating Habits Start Early

Child care providers have an important role in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding. Become a Breastfeeding-Friendly Child Care Center or Breastfeeding-Friendly Day Care Home. Contact CACFP for information or visit our website at www.health.ny.gov/CACFP.

Meal Pattern Requirements and Recommendations



Food Group	Requirements	Recommendations
Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children 1-year-old: unflavored whole milk. • Children 2-18 years and adults: unflavored low-fat (1%) or unflavored fat-free (skim) milk. • Flavored milk served to children 6 years and older and adults must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%). • The menu must specify the type of milk served (i.e., whole, low-fat or 1%, and fat-free or skim) and if it is flavored. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve only unflavored milk to all participants. • If flavored milk is served to children 6 years and older, or adults, check the Nutrition Facts Label to limit sugar to 22 grams or less per cup (8 ounces).
Vegetables/Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One vegetable and one fruit, or two different vegetables must be served at lunch and supper to children 1-year-old and older and adults. • Juice is limited to one serving per day for children 1-year-old and older and adults. • Only 100% juice may be offered. • Juice must not be served to infants before age 1. • When developmentally ready, a vegetable or fruit, or both, must be served at meals and snack for infants 6 months of age to their first birthday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve a variety of vegetables and fruits. • Serve vegetables and fruits as snacks. • Each week, provide at least one serving of dark green, red and orange vegetables. • One or more servings of vegetables/fruits per day should be high in Vitamin C. • Three or more servings of vegetables/fruits per week should be high in Vitamin A. • Three or more servings of vegetables/fruits per week should be fresh.

Meal Pattern Requirements and Recommendations



Food Group	Requirements	Recommendations
Grains/ Bread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich. • Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugar per ounce. • Grain-based desserts no longer count toward the grain component. • Breakfast cereals may be served as a grain at snack for infants 6 months of age to their first birthday. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide at least two servings of whole grains per day. • All breads and cereals served should be whole grain.
Meat/ Meat Alternates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the grains component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week. • Tofu can be served as a meat alternate. • Yogurt can be plain, flavored, sweetened or unsweetened. • Yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces. • For infants 6 months of age to their first birthday, cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, and whole eggs are allowable meat alternates. • Cheese foods and cheese spreads are not allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve only lean meats, nuts, and legumes. • Meat/meat alternates should be prepared without added fat. • Limit serving processed meats (e.g., hot dogs, corn dogs, chicken nuggets, fried chicken, fish sticks, Vienna sausages, or deli meat) to no more than one serving per week. • Serve only natural cheeses and choose low-fat or reduced-fat varieties.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drinking water must be offered to children throughout the day and made available upon request. • Water is not counted as a component. • Food and beverage must not be used as a punishment or reward. • Frying food on-site is not allowed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support mothers who choose to breastfeed their infants. Encourage mothers to supply breast milk for their infants while in day care. • Offer a quiet, private area that is comfortable and sanitary for mothers who come to the center or day care home to breastfeed. • Incorporate seasonal and locally produced foods. • Limit purchase of pre-fried foods to no more than once 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).

Child Nutrition (CN) Label

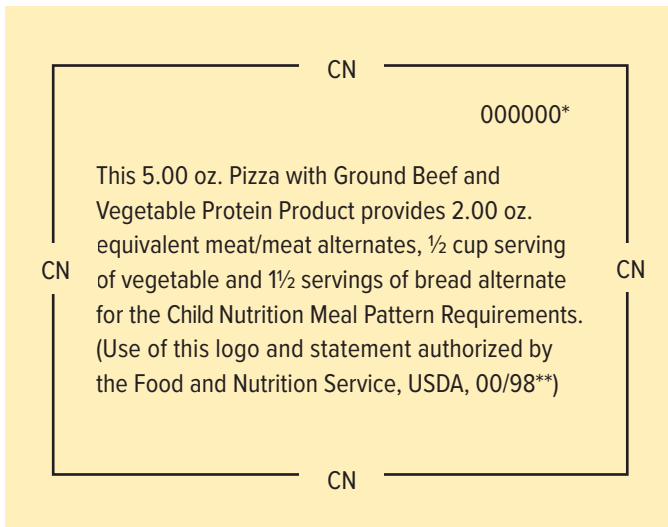


This voluntary federal labeling program for the Child Nutrition Programs allows manufacturers to state on the food label how the product contributes to meal pattern requirements. Products eligible for CN labels include commercially-prepared foods that contribute significantly to one or more meal components. If served in the amount stated on the label, all CN-labeled foods are creditable.

How to Identify a CN Label

A CN label will always contain the following:

- the CN logo which is a distinct border
- USDA/FNS authorization
- the month and year of approval
- the serving size required to meet meal pattern requirements.



For a detailed explanation on CN Labeling, see the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling-program>.





Milk Requirements

To be creditable, milk must be pasteurized and meet state and local standards for fluid milk. All milk should contain Vitamin A and Vitamin D at levels specified in FDA regulation 21 CFR 131.110. Milk is an excellent source of calcium, phosphorus, protein, Vitamin A and Vitamin D.

Milk is not creditable when used in the preparation of products such as hot cereals, soups, puddings or other foods.

If a child cannot consume fluid milk, parents or guardians may request, in writing, milk substitutes. The written request must identify the medical or other special dietary need that restricts the child's diet. Milk substitutes must be nutritionally equivalent to milk and meet the nutritional standards for fortification of calcium, protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin D and other nutrients to levels found in cow's milk. Refer to Appendix E: Milk Substitutes.

At breakfast or snack, fluid milk can be served as a beverage, on cereal or both.

At lunch and supper, fluid milk must be served as a beverage.

At snack, if fluid milk is served, juice cannot be counted as the other component. Two beverages cannot be served at one snack.

Child Meal Pattern Requirements

- Fluid milk must be served for breakfast, lunch and supper.
- One-year-olds must be served whole milk.
- Children 2-18 years must be served fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk.
- Unflavored milk must be served to children 1-5 years.
- If flavored milk is served to children 6 years old and older, it must be fat-free or 1%.
- The menu must specify the type of milk served and if it is flavored.



Adult Meal Pattern Requirements

- Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk must be served at least once per day at meal or snack. Six ounces (or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup) of yogurt may be served in place of one cup of milk at other meals. At supper, neither milk nor yogurt are required.
- Yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces.
- Unflavored milk is recommended. If flavored milk is served, it must be fat-free or 1%.
- The menu must specify the type of milk served and if it is flavored.



Questions and Answers about Milk

Q: Can milk used in puddings, sauces and soups count toward the milk requirement?

A: No. Milk used in the preparation of foods is not creditable.

Q: If a child cannot have milk, may I serve soymilk instead?

A: Yes, soymilk may be served to children or adults with medical or special dietary needs as long as it is nutritionally comparable to milk. Milk substitutes must meet the standards listed in Appendix E, but they are not required to be low-fat or fat-free when served to children 2 years old and older and adults. Parents or guardians must request milk substitutes in writing (no medical statement is needed). However, a medical statement is required for milk substitutes that do not meet the nutrition standards outlined in Appendix E. Lactose-reduced milk does not require a written request from parents or guardians.

Q: Can milk be purchased directly from a farm?

A: Yes, as long as it is pasteurized fluid milk, which meets state and local health standards. Also, it must include vitamin A and vitamin D levels consistent with state and local standards.

Q: Can flavored milk be served?

A: Yes, but flavored milk can only be served to adults and children 6 years and older and it must be fat-free (skim) or 1%. If served, it is recommended that flavored milk contain 22 grams of sugar or less per cup (8 ounces).

Q: Why is dry milk mixed with water not creditable?

A: USDA only allows use of dry milk in emergency situations when the center is unable to obtain a supply of fluid milk on a continuing basis (7 CFR 226.20(f)).

Q: Can smoothies be offered to meet the milk components?

A: Yes. Milk used in smoothies may be credited toward the milk requirement when prepared by program operators. If yogurt is used, it may be credited as a meat alternate (not as a substitute for milk). If vegetables and fruits are used, they are credited as juice. Please note that juice is limited to one serving per day for children 1-year-old and older and adults.

Q: What type of milk must be used when making smoothies?

A: The type of milk used must be consistent with the age group being served.

Q: How do store bought smoothies count toward meal pattern requirements?

A: Store bought smoothies may only be credited as juice toward the vegetable or fruit component. They cannot count toward the milk component because it is impossible to determine the amount of milk used.



Milk



RECOMMENDED AS MILK

Food Item	Comments
Acidified Milk	For adults and children 2 years old and older, must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%). Acidified milk is made by souring fluid milk with an acidifying agent. Examples: acidified kefir milk and acidified acidophilus milk.
Buttermilk, Cultured	For adults and children 2 years old and older, must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%). Must be cultured and meet state and local standards. See: Cultured Milk.
Cultured Milk	For adults and children 2 years old and older, must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%). Cultured milk is produced by adding selected micro-organisms to fluid milk under controlled conditions to produce a product with specific flavor and/or consistency. Examples: cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk and cultured acidophilus milk.
Fat-free Milk (Non-fat, Skim)	Not creditable for children less than 2 years of age. See: Milk, Fluid.
Lactose-reduced Milk, Lactose-free Milk	Children or adults who cannot digest the lactose in milk may benefit from lactose-reduced or lactose-free milk. See: Milk, Fluid.
Low-fat Milk (1%)	Not creditable for children under 2 years of age. See: Milk, Fluid.
Milk Substitutes	Milk Substitutes must be nutritionally equivalent to milk and meet the nutritional standards for fortification of calcium, protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin D and other nutrients to levels found in cow's milk. Parents or guardians must request milk substitutes in writing.
Milk, Fluid (Unflavored)	Type of milk required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 to 24 months old: Whole • 2 years old and older: Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%)
Smoothies, Homemade	Milk may be credited toward the milk requirement. The type of milk used must be consistent with the age group being served. Vegetables and fruits may be credited as juice. Yogurt may be credited as a meat alternate. Grains cannot be credited. Store bought smoothies may only credit as juice toward the vegetable and fruit components.
Soybean or Soymilk	See: Milk Substitutes.
Ultra High Temperature (UHT) Milk	UHT is Grade A pasteurized milk that has been heated to about 280°F. See: Milk, Fluid.
Whole Milk	Required for children 12 to 24 months old. Not creditable for adults and children 2 years old or older. See: Milk, Fluid.



NOT RECOMMENDED BUT ALLOWED AS MILK

The foods listed below are creditable for adults and children 6 years old and older but are not recommended. These foods are high in added sugar.

Food Item	Comments
Chocolate Milk or Cocoa Milk	See: Flavored Milk.
Eggnog-flavored Milk	See: Flavored Milk.
Flavored Milk	Creditable for adults and children 6 years or older. Must be made with fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk. Limit due to the high sugar content. As a best practice, it is recommended that flavored milk contain 22 grams of sugar or less per cup (8 ounces).
Hot Chocolate/Hot Cocoa	See: Flavored Milk.





NOT ALLOWED AS MILK

The foods listed below are not creditable.
These foods do not count toward the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

Almond Milks

Certified Raw Milk

Cheeses – Allowed As a Meat Alternate

Coconut Milks

Creams

Cream Sauces

Cream Soups

Custards

Evaporated Milks

Frozen Yogurt

Goat's Milk – Medical Exception Only

Half and Half

Ice Cream/Ice Milks

Imitation Milks

Non-fat Dry Milk, Reconstituted – Allowed In Emergencies Only with USDA Approval

Pudding Pops

Puddings

Reduced-fat Milks (2%) – Medical Exception Only

Rice Milks

Sherbets

Sour Cream

Yogurt – Allowed As a Meat Alternate; May Be Counted As Milk for Adults Only

Vegetables/Fruits



Vegetables and Fruits Requirements

The CACFP Meal Pattern requires vegetables and/or fruits to be served for breakfast, lunch and supper. Vegetables and fruits may also be served as components for snack. The combined vegetable and fruit component has been separated into two groups for lunch, supper and snack. Refer to the CACFP Meal Pattern for serving size requirements.

- Breakfast must include a serving of vegetable or fruit or both.
- Lunch and supper must include a serving of a vegetable and fruit OR two servings of different vegetables.
- At snack, two different components must be served. Offering a vegetable and fruit counts as two different components. However, offering two different items from the same component does not count as a reimbursable snack. For example, sliced apples and celery sticks would count as a reimbursable snack, but orange juice and apple slices would not.
- Beans may be counted as a vegetable or a meat alternate. However, one serving of dried peas or beans cannot be counted as a vegetable and a meat alternate in the same meal.
- The minimum creditable amount for vegetables and fruits is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup. Small amounts (less than $\frac{1}{8}$ cup) used as garnishes or in soups, stews, sandwiches and salads may not be counted to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement.
- Only one serving of 100% juice may be served per day to children 1-year-old and older and adults. Beverages that have Vitamin C added and state 100% Vitamin C on the label may or may not be 100% juice.
- A snack cannot consist of only two beverages (Example: juice and milk).
- Home-canned products are not allowed because of food safety concerns.

Vegetables and Fruits Recommendations

Vegetables and fruits are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals and fiber. CACFP recommends that:

- Vegetables and fruits should be fresh, frozen or canned and prepared with no added sugar, salt or fat.
- Vegetables and fruits are served at snack.
- At least one serving of dark green, red and orange vegetables are served each week.
- One or more servings of vegetables/fruits per day should be high in Vitamin C.
- Three or more servings of vegetables/fruits per week should be high in Vitamin A.
- Three or more servings of vegetables/fruits per week should be fresh.
- Local and seasonal vegetables/fruits are offered whenever possible.

Adding vegetables and fruits to meals is an excellent way to enhance flavors, add color and offer opportunities to try new foods. While small amounts (less than $\frac{1}{8}$ cup) of vegetables and fruits are not creditable toward meeting meal pattern requirements, CACFP encourages you to include various vegetables and fruits whenever possible:

- Chopped onion, celery or carrots in soups, stews or casseroles
- Pureed pumpkin mixed with yogurt
- Sliced tomato in grilled cheese sandwiches
- Lettuce on sandwiches
- Lemon juice on fish or salads



Vegetables/Fruits



Vegetables and Fruits High in Important Nutrients

Vegetables and fruits are excellent sources of vitamins, minerals and fiber. CACFP recommends that:

- **VITAMIN C** – serve at least one of these foods every day

- **VITAMIN A** – serve at least one of these foods three times a week

- **IRON** – serve these foods often

- **CALCIUM** – serve these foods daily

VEGETABLES

Food Item	Vitamin C	Vitamin A	Iron	Calcium
Asparagus	●	●		
Broccoli	●	●		●
Brussels Sprouts	●			
Cabbage	●			
Carrots		●		
Cauliflower	●			
Dark, Leafy Greens:				
Beet Greens		●	●	●
Chard		●	●	
Collards	●	●	●	●
Dandelion Greens				●
Kale	●	●	●	●
Mustard Greens		●	●	
Spinach	●	●	●	●
Turnip Greens	●	●	●	
Mixed Vegetables		●		
Okra	●			
Parsnips			●	
Peas and Carrots		●		
Peas, Green			●	
Peppers	●			
Potatoes, Sweet	●	●		
Potatoes, White	●			
Pumpkin		●		
Squash, Winter		●	●	
Tomatoes/Tomato Juice	●	●		
Turnips	●			
Vegetable Juice	●			

FRUITS

Food Item	Vitamin C	Vitamin A	Iron	Calcium
Apricots		●		
Cantaloupe	●	●		
Dried Fruits (Apples, Apricots, Dates, Figs, Peaches, Prunes or Raisins)			●	
Grapefruit/ Grapefruit Juice	●			
Nectarines		●		
Oranges/Orange Juice	●			
Plums		●		
Prunes		●		
Raspberries	●			
Strawberries	●			
Tangerines	●			

Vegetables/Fruits



Questions and Answers about Vegetables and Fruits

Q: If one serving of mixed vegetables is offered at lunch, does it meet the meal pattern requirement for serving two vegetables?

A: No. Mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail and similar combinations only count as one vegetable or fruit.

Q: Does the sauce on pizza count as a vegetable?

A: No. There is not enough sauce on a serving of pizza to count as a vegetable.

Q: How are vegetables, fruits and other foods counted in mixed dishes such as beef stew or chili?

A: Mixed dishes vary greatly on how they may be credited. Up to three food components can be counted if the recipe includes enough of each ingredient to be considered as a serving. For example, a serving of beef stew for a 3-5-year-old needs to include at least 1½ ounces of meat and a ¼ cup vegetables.

For canned or frozen beef stew, the label will not tell you how much meat, carrots or potatoes are in each serving. Therefore, the stew would not meet the vegetable or meat components unless the item has a Child Nutrition (CN) label.

Q: Can canned pumpkin be added to tomato sauce and be counted toward the vegetable component?

A: Yes, pureed vegetables and fruits may contribute toward meal pattern requirements as long as the dish also provides an adequate amount (⅓ cup) of recognizable, creditable vegetables and fruits. In this example, canned pumpkin could be counted toward the vegetable component because tomato sauce is recognizable.

Q: Are foods like coleslaw or potato salad creditable?

A: Yes, but only the actual amounts of the vegetable and fruit ingredients can be counted toward the vegetable and fruit meal pattern requirement. Other ingredients such as mayonnaise, pasta or nuts cannot be counted in the serving size.

Q: Are dried vegetables and fruits creditable?

A: Yes. The serving size for dried vegetables and fruits is half that of fresh or canned. For example, if a ½ cup of fruit is required, ¼ cup of raisins may be served. Please be aware that dried fruits might pose a choking hazard to young children (See: Appendix D).

Q: How do leafy greens count toward the vegetable component?

A: One cup of leafy greens (i.e., lettuce, raw spinach, etc.) counts as ½ cup of vegetables.



Vegetables/Fruits



RECOMMENDED AS VEGETABLES/FRUITS	
Food Item	Comments
Apple Cider	Must be pasteurized. No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.
Applesauce, Unsweetened	
Beans, Canned or Dry	Examples include: black beans, black-eyed peas, cannellini beans, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, northern beans, pigeon beans, pinto beans, soy beans or split peas. A serving of beans may count as a vegetable or as a meat alternate, not both.
Berries	Examples include: blackberries, blueberries, raspberries or strawberries.
Coleslaw	
Cranberry Juice Blend	Cranberry juice in a blend with another 100% juice is creditable. Cranberry juice cocktail is not creditable. No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.
Frozen Fruit Juice Bars	Must be 100% fruit and/or fruit juice.
Fruits, Canned in 100% Juice or Water	
Fruits, Dried	Examples include: apricots, cranberries, dates, figs, prunes or raisins. The serving size for dried fruit is half that of fresh or canned. Example: for a ½ cup vegetables/fruits requirement, ¼ cup of raisins may be served. Not recommended for children under four years old due to the risk of choking.
Fruits, Fresh	Examples include: apples, apricots, bananas, berries (all types), clementines, grapes, grapefruit, guava, kiwi, kumquats, mangos, melons (all types), oranges, papayas, passion fruit, peaches, pears, persimmons, pineapples, plantains, pomegranates, plums, star fruit or tangerines. Three or more servings of fresh fruits are recommended per week.
Fruits, Frozen, Unsweetened	
Greens	Examples include: broccolini, collard greens, endive, escarole, kale, mustard greens, spinach, Swiss chard or turnip greens.
Hominy	¼ cup serving = ¼ cup vegetables
Juice Blends	Must be blends of 100% vegetables/fruits juices. No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.
Pasta, 100% Vegetable or Legume Flour	Legume pasta may be used to fulfill either the vegetable OR meat/meat alternate component, but not both at the same meal. Vegetable pasta does not have to be served with another recognizable vegetable to be creditable. ½ cup cooked pasta = ½ cup vegetable.
Potatoes	Examples include: sweet, yellow or white. Boiled, mashed or baked are recommended.
Potato Pancakes	
Salsa, Fresh	At least ⅓ cup must be served.

Vegetables/Fruits



RECOMMENDED AS VEGETABLES/FRUITS	
Food Item	Comments
Smoothies, Homemade	Examples include: smoothies prepared with milk and/or yogurt, vegetables and/or fruits. Grains (i.e., cereal, granola or oatmeal) can be added but they will not be credited when served in a smoothie. If smoothies are prepared with milk, the type of milk used must be consistent with CACFP guidelines for each age group being served. Vegetables and fruits used in smoothies may be credited as juice. No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.
Soups, Homemade	Calculate quantities of vegetables in the recipe to determine that enough vegetable is provided by the soup. An 1/8 cup of each vegetable must be served to be counted as a serving. Example: An 1/8 cup of carrots per serving, not 1/8 cup carrots, onions and celery. For split pea, bean or lentil soup, see Meat/Meat Alternates section.
Spaghetti Sauce	At least 1/8 cup must be served.
Sprouts – Alfalfa, Bean	Sprouts should be cooked. Food-borne illness caused by eating uncooked sprouts is possible.
Tomato Paste	One tablespoon counts as 1/4 cup vegetable.
Tomato Sauce	At least 1/8 cup must be served.
Vegetable Juices	No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.
Vegetable Juice Blends	Must be blends of 100% vegetable juices. Recommend low-sodium or no added salt. No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.
Vegetables, Canned	Recommend low-sodium or no added salt.
Vegetables, Fresh	Examples include: artichokes, avocado, bamboo shoots, beans (all types), beets, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, corn, cucumbers, eggplant, greens (all types), jicama, kohlrabi, lettuce (all types), mushrooms, okra, parsnips, peas, peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, radishes, rhubarb, spinach, sprouts (all types), squash (all types), sweet potatoes, tomatillos, tomatoes, turnips, watercress or yams. Three or more servings of fresh vegetables are recommended per week.
Vegetables, Frozen, Plain	Avoid serving vegetables in butter or cheese sauce.
Water Chestnuts	

Vegetables/Fruits



NOT RECOMMENDED BUT ALLOWED AS VEGETABLES/FRUITS

The foods listed below are creditable but are not recommended.
These foods are high in added sugar and/or fat and salt.

Food Item	Comments
Coconut – Fresh, Frozen, Dried and Coconut Water Labeled As 100% Juice	Coconut is high in fat, especially saturated fat. Dried sweetened coconut is also high in added sugar. Fresh/frozen: ¼ cup serving = ¼ cup fruit; Dried: ¼ cup serving = ½ cup fruit; 100% juice ¼ cup = ¼ cup fruit
Cranberry Sauces	Only sauces with crushed or whole berries are creditable. Limit due to high added sugar content.
French Fries	Limit due to high fat content.
Fruits, Canned in Syrup	Limit due to high added sugar content.
Fruit Cobblers/Fruit Crisps	Limit due to high added sugar content. Must contain at least ⅓ cup of fruit per serving.
Fruits, Frozen, Sweetened	Limit due to high added sugar content.
Fruit Pies	Limit due to high added sugar content. Must contain at least ⅓ cup of fruit per serving.
Fruit Sauces, Homemade	Only the fruit portion of the sauce is creditable. Limit due to high added sugar content. Must contain at least ⅓ cup of fruit per serving.
Gerber® Mini Fruits	
Gerber® Mini Vegetables	
Hash Brown Potatoes	Limit due to high fat and salt content.
Potato Skins	Limit due to high fat content.
Salsa, Commercial	Limit due to high salt content. At least ⅓ cup must be served.
Soups, Canned, Condensed (1 Part Soup to 1 Part Water) or Dehydrated Mix	Examples include: minestrone, tomato, tomato rice, vegetable, vegetable beef or vegetable chicken. Limit due to high salt content. A 1 cup reconstituted serving counts as ¼ cup vegetable.
Soups, Canned, Ready-to-Serve	Examples include: minestrone, tomato, tomato rice, vegetable, vegetable beef or vegetable chicken. Limit due to high salt content. A 1 cup serving counts as ¼ cup vegetable.
Tater Tots®	Limit due to high fat and salt content.

Vegetables/Fruits



NOT ALLOWED AS VEGETABLES/FRUITS

The foods listed below are not creditable.
These foods do not count toward the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

Apple Butters

Banana Breads (Allowed as Grains/Bread component). See Vegetable/Fruit Breads in this list.

Banana Chips

Barbecue Sauces

Cakes, Containing Fruit

Catsup (Ketchup)

Chili Sauces

Chocolate-covered Fruits

Corn Chips

Cranberry Juice Cocktail

Cranberry Sauces, Jellied

Cream Soups

Fig Cookies

Fruit-flavored Beverages – Ades, Juice Drinks (Bottled, Canned or Powdered Mix)

Fruit Gushers®

Fruit Punch (Bottled, Canned or Powdered Mix)

Fruit Snacks (Roll-ups, Wrinkles or Gummy Bears)

Jell-O® Salad with Fruit or Juice

Lemonades, Limeades

Ice Cream, Fruit-flavored

Jams, Jellies or Preserves

Kool-Aid®

Lemon Pie Fillings

Vegetables/Fruits



NOT ALLOWED AS VEGETABLES/FRUITS

The foods listed below are not creditable.
These foods do not count toward the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

Nectars – Apricot, Pear or Peach

Olives

Onion Rings

Onions

Pestos

Pickles

Popsicles® or Other Frozen Fruit-flavored Pops

Pop-Tarts® or Other Toaster Pastries with Fruit

Posole

Potato Chips

Puffs, Fruit and Vegetable

Sherbets/Sorbets

Syrups, Fruit-flavored

V-8 Splash®

Vegetable/Fruit Breads or Muffins – Apple, Banana, Blueberry, Carrot, Pumpkin or Zucchini

Vegetables in Butter or Cheese Sauces

Yogurt-covered Fruits

Yogurt, Fruited – Allowed As a Meat Alternate

Grains/Breads



Grains/Breads Requirements

The CACFP Meal Pattern requires grains and/or breads to be served at breakfast, lunch and supper. A grains/breads component may also be served as one of the two components of a snack. Grains/breads are good sources of B vitamins, minerals and fiber. Refer to the CACFP Meal Pattern for serving sizes.

- All grains/breads must be whole grain or enriched.
- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich.
 - Whole grain-rich foods contain 100% whole grains, or at least 50% whole grains and the remaining grain in the food are enriched.
 - Menus must specify when whole grain-rich foods are offered (i.e., whole wheat breads, whole grain-rich English muffins, brown rice or oatmeal).
- The grain/bread must be recognizable as part of the dish (such as a dinner roll, spaghetti, rice or taco shells). Items such as breadcrumbs in meatloaf do not qualify as meeting the Grains/Breads requirement.
- Instead of serving grains at breakfast, meat/meat alternates may be served a maximum of three times per week.
- Cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce (21.2 grams of sugar per 100 grams).

Grain-Based Desserts

- Grain-based desserts are not creditable.
- Grain-based desserts include cookies, sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, toaster pastries, cakes and brownies.
- Refer to the Not Allowed As Grains/Bread Chart.

Grains/Breads Recommendations

CACFP recommends that all breads and cereals served should be whole grain. Offer a variety of whole grain options to allow children the opportunity to try new foods.

Using Ounce Equivalents for the Grains/Breads Charts

Grains are an important part of meals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). To make sure children and adults get enough grains at CACFP meals and snacks, required amounts are listed in the meal pattern as ounce equivalents (oz. eq.). Ounce equivalents tell you the amount of grain in a portion of food.

Using the Grains/Breads Charts:

The serving size column in the Recommended or Not Recommended But Allowed Grains/Breads Chart(s) will tell you how much of a grain item you need to serve to meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements.

If the grain item you want to serve is:

- Smaller than the item listed on the Grains/Breads Charts, or
- Lighter in weight than the item listed on the Grains/Breads Charts, or
- Not included in the Grains/Breads Chart

Then you will need to use another way to tell how much to serve in order to meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. You could:

- Enter information from the Nutrition Facts label into the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Program's (FBG) Exhibit A Grains Tool*.*
- Use the *FBG Recipe Analysis Workbook (RAW)** to determine the ounce equivalents per serving for standardized recipes.

*Available at <https://foodbuyingguide.fns.usda.gov>.



Grains/Breads



Questions and Answers about Grains/Breads

Q: How do we identify whole grain-rich foods?

A: Whole grain-rich foods can be identified in a variety of ways:

1. The easiest way is to read the ingredient list.
 - Look for items that list a whole grain as the first ingredient (such as whole wheat, oat flour or brown rice).
 - It is also allowable if water is listed as the first ingredient and a whole grain is listed as the second ingredient.
2. Refer to the list of whole grains found in Appendix F.
3. Providers can also look for one of the following whole grain claims found on packaging labels:
 - “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers.”
 - “Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol, may help reduce the risk of heart disease.”
4. For foods prepared homemade by a provider, the recipe can be used to determine if whole grains are the main grain ingredient.

Q: Can providers choose which meals to include a whole grain?

A: Yes. Providers may choose which meal (or snack) to serve a whole grain-rich item.

Q: Are corn products whole grains?

A: Corn products must specifically state whole grain cornmeal or whole-corn flour.

Q: Are homemade granola bars allowed?

A: No. Homemade and store bought granola bars cannot count toward the grain component because they are considered grain-based desserts.

Q: Are pancakes and waffles considered grain-based desserts?

A: No. Pancakes and waffles are not considered to be grain-based dessert.

Q: Can batter and breadcrumb coating on a fish filet be counted as a Grains/Breads component?

A: Batters and breading may be counted as part of the main dish. Crediting is based on the amount of whole grain, bran, germ and/or enriched meal or flour in the recipe. Because it may be difficult to determine the amount of batter/breading on store bought products, CN labeling is required to count this as a Grains/Breads component.



Grains/Breads



LOW-SUGAR CEREALS*

Cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugar per ounce (28 grams). The cereals in this chart contain 6 grams of sugar or less. In addition, CACFP recommends serving whole grain cereals. Whole grain cereals are marked with a ✓ in the *Whole-Grain* column. WIC-approved cereals are also creditable in CACFP.

Low-Sugar Cereals	Whole-Grain	Low-Sugar Cereals	Whole-Grain
All Bran® Original	✓	Kellogg's® Corn Flakes	
All-Bran® Complete Wheat Flakes	✓	Kellogg's® Mini-Wheats Unfrosted Bite Size	✓
Cheerios® Multi Grain	✓	King Vitaman®	
Cheerios® Original	✓	Kix®	✓
Chex® Corn	✓	Kix® Honey	✓
Chex® Rice	✓	Life®	✓
Chex® Wheat	✓	Malt-O-Meal® Creamy Hot Wheat	
Cream of Rice®		Malt-O-Meal® Crispy Rice	
Cream of Wheat® Healthy Grain Original	✓	Malt-O-Meal® Honey and Oat Blenders	
Cream of Wheat® Original		Malt-O-Meal® Honey and Oat Blenders with Almonds	
Cream of Wheat® Whole Grain	✓	Malt-O-Meal® Original Hot Cereal	
Crispix®		Post® Bran Flakes	✓
Fiber One®	✓	Post® Shredded Wheat Original	✓
Fiber One® Honey Clusters	✓	Post® Shredded Wheat Spoon Size Original	✓
GOLEAN® Original		Post® Shredded Wheat Spoon Size Wheat 'n Bran	✓
Grape-Nuts®	✓	Product 19®	
Grape-Nuts® Flakes	✓	Quaker® Instant Oatmeal, Original	✓
Heart to Heart® Honey Toasted Oat	✓	Quaker® Old Fashioned Quaker Oats	✓
Heart to Heart® Warm Cinnamon Oat	✓	Quaker® Puffed Rice	
Honey Bunches of Oats® Honey Roasted		Quaker® Puffed Wheat	
Honey Bunches of Oats® with Almonds		Quaker® Quick Oats	✓
Honey Bunches of Oats® with Cinnamon Bunches		Quaker® Whole Hearts Original	✓
Honey Bunches of Oats® with Pecan Bunches		Rice Krispies®	
Kashi® 7 Whole Grain Flakes	✓	Rice Krispies® Gluten Free	✓
Kashi® 7 Whole Grain Honey Puffs	✓	Special K® Original	
Kashi® 7 Whole Grain Nuggets	✓	Special K® Protein Plus	
Kashi® 7 Whole Grain Puffs	✓	Total®	
		Wheaties®	✓

*The above information was obtained from the product websites. Please double-check the package nutrition label upon purchase.

Grains/Breads



RECOMMENDED AS GRAINS/BREADS

Food Item	Whole-Grain	Comments	Serving Size
			Ages 1-5: Serve at least ½ oz. eq. Ages 6-18: Serve at least 1 oz. eq.
Bagels		Whole wheat variety is whole-grain.	At least 56 grams Ages 1-5: ¼ bagel Ages 6-18: ½ bagel
Bagels, Mini		Whole wheat variety is whole-grain.	At least 28 grams Ages 1-5: ½ bagel Ages 6-18: 1 bagel
Barley	✓	Hulled barley is whole-grain. Pearl barley is not whole-grain. See: Grains, Cooked.	
Biscuits			At least 28 grams Ages 1-5: ½ biscuit Ages 6-18: 1 biscuit
Bran		Examples include: oat bran or wheat bran.	If bran is used in a recipe: Ages 1-5: 3 tablespoons Ages 6-18: ¼ cup
Breads, Enriched		Examples include: French, Italian, potato, raisin or white.	At least 28 grams Ages 1-5: ½ slice Ages 6-18: 1 slice
Breads, Whole-grain	✓	Examples include: multi-grain, pumpernickel, rye or whole-wheat.	At least 28 grams Ages 1-5: ½ slice Ages 6-18: 1 slice
Bread Sticks			At least 7¾ inches Ages 1-5: 2 sticks Ages 6-18: 3 sticks
Bread Stuffings/Dressings, Homemade		Homemade stuffings may be credited based on the amount of whole-grain or enriched bread in the recipe.	
Bulgur or Cracked Wheat	✓	See: Grains, Cooked.	
Buns, Hamburger and Hot Dog			At least 28 grams Ages 1-5: ½ bun Ages 6-18: 1 bun
Cereals, Cooked			Ages 1-5: ¼ cup cooked Ages 6-18: ½ cup cooked

Grains/Breads



RECOMMENDED AS GRAINS/BREADS

Food Item	Whole-Grain	Comments	Serving Size Ages 1-5: Serve at least ½ oz. eq. Ages 6-18: Serve at least 1 oz. eq.
Cereals, Dry, Ready to Eat, Less than 6 g Sugar Per Serving			Flakes or rounds Ages 1-5: ½ cup Ages 6-18: 1 cup Puffed cereals Ages 1-5: ¾ cup Ages 6-18: 1¼ cup Granola Ages 1-5: ⅛ cup Ages 6-18: ¼ cup
Club Crackers®			Ages 1-5: 4 crackers Ages 6-18: 7 crackers
Congee, Plain		May be credited based on the amount of rice in a serving.	
Cornbreads			At least 2 x 2½ inches Ages 1-5: ½ piece Ages 6-18: 1 piece
Corn Masa, Masa Harina, Corn Flour, and Cornmeal	✓	Ingredients labeled as corn masa or masa harina do not require additional documentation to count toward the whole grain-rich (WGR) requirements. However, some products made with corn flour or cornmeal may require a product formulation statement (PFS) to count toward the WGR requirement.	
Corn Meal, Enriched or Whole-grain, Cooked	✓	See: Grains, Cooked.	
Corn Muffins			At least 34 grams Ages 1-5: ½ muffin Ages 6-18: 1 muffin
Couscous		See: Grains, Cooked.	
Crackers		See: Club Crackers, Goldfish®, Melba Toast®, Oyster Crackers, Ritz® Crackers, RyKrisp®, Saltines, Sociables®, Triscuit®, Wasa Crispbread® or Wheat Thins®.	

Grains/Breads



RECOMMENDED AS GRAINS/BREADS

Food Item	Whole-Grain	Comments	Serving Size Ages 1-5: Serve at least ½ oz. eq. Ages 6-18: Serve at least 1 oz. eq.
Crepes, Homemade		May be credited based on the amount of whole-grain or enriched flour in the recipe.	
Dressings, Bread-type, Homemade		See: Bread Stuffings/Dressings, Homemade.	
Dumplings, Homemade		Homemade dumplings may be credited based on the amount of whole-grain or enriched flour in the recipe.	
Egg Roll Skins			
English Muffins			At least 56 grams Ages 1-5: ¼ English Muffin Ages 6-18: ½ English Muffin
French Breads		See: Breads.	
French Toast, Homemade		See: Breads.	
Germ			If germ is used in a recipe: Ages 1-5: 3 tablespoons Ages 6-18: ¼ cup
Goldfish®			At least ¾" x ½" Ages 1-5: ¼ cup (21 crackers) Ages 6-18: ½ cup (41 crackers)
Grains, Cooked			Ages 1-5: ¼ cup cooked Ages 6-18: ½ cup cooked
Grits, Corn, Enriched or Whole-grain		Ground corn kernels that are boiled with water or milk.	Ages 1-5: ¼ cup cooked Ages 6-18: ½ cup cooked
Grits, Made from Hominy	✓		Ages 1-5: ¼ cup cooked Ages 6-18: ½ cup cooked
Italian Breads		See: Breads.	
Kasha	✓	Also called buckwheat groats. See: Grains, Cooked.	

Grains/Breads



RECOMMENDED AS GRAINS/BREADS

Food Item	Whole-Grain	Comments	Serving Size Ages 1-5: Serve at least ½ oz. eq. Ages 6-18: Serve at least 1 oz. eq.
Lefse		Lefse is unleavened bread made mostly from potatoes and flour. Lefse is creditable based on the amount of whole-grain or enriched flour in the recipe.	
Macaroni, All Shapes		Whole wheat variety is whole-grain. See: Pasta, All Shapes.	Ages 1-5: ¼ cup cooked Ages 6-18: ½ cup cooked
Matzo			Ages 1-5: ½ large Ages 6-18: 1 large
Melba Toasts			At least 3½" x 1½" Ages 1-5: 2 pieces Ages 6-18: 5 pieces
Millet	✓	Small round seeds with nutty flavor. See: Grains, Cooked. Seeds that are high in protein and cooked like grains.	
Noodles		See: Pasta, All Shapes.	
Oatmeals	✓		Ages 1-5: ¼ cup cooked Ages 6-18: ½ cup cooked
Oyster Crackers			Ages 1-5: ¼ cup Ages 6-18: ½ cup
Pancakes			At least 34 grams Ages 1-5: ½ pancake Ages 6-18: 1 pancake
Pasta, All Shapes		Whole wheat variety is whole-grain.	Ages 1-5: ¼ cup Ages 6-18: ½ cup
Pita Breads		Whole wheat variety is whole-grain.	At least 56 grams Ages 1-5: ¼ pita Ages 6-18: ½ pita
Pizza Crust			

Grains/Breads



RECOMMENDED AS GRAINS/BREADS

Food Item	Whole-Grain	Comments	Serving Size Ages 1-5: Serve at least ½ oz. eq. Ages 6-18: Serve at least 1 oz. eq.
Polenta, Enriched or Whole-grain		Boiled cornmeal. It may be eaten as a hot dish or cooled and made into a loaf, which is then baked, grilled or pan-fried.	
Popcorn, Plain and Air-popped	✓	Not Recommend for children under four years old due to the risk of choking.	Ages 1-5: 1½ cups Ages 6-18: 3 cups
Popovers, Homemade		May be credited based on the amount of whole-grain or enriched flour in the recipe.	
Porridge	✓	See: Oatmeal.	
Pumpernickel Bread	✓	See: Breads.	
Pretzels, Hard, Unsalted, Mini-twists		May be a choking hazard for young children.	At least 1¼" x 1½" Ages 1-5: ⅓ cup (7 mini-twists) Ages 6-18: ⅔ cup (14 mini-twists)
Pretzels, Hard, Unsalted, Stick		May be a choking hazard for young children.	At least 2½" long Ages 1-5: 16 sticks Ages 6-18: 31 sticks
Pretzels, Soft, Unsalted			At least 56 grams Ages 1-5: ¼ pretzel Ages 6-18: ½ pretzel
Quinoa	✓	See: Grains, Cooked. Seeds that are high in protein and cooked like grains.	
Raisin Breads		See: Bread.	
Ravioli		See: Pasta, All Shapes. Only the pasta portion is creditable.	
Rice, White, Brown or Red		Brown rice and red rice are whole-grain. See: Grains, Cooked.	
Rice Cakes	✓	If brown rice is the first ingredient, it is whole-grain.	At least 8 grams Ages 1-5: 1½ cakes Ages 6-18: 3 cakes
Rice Cakes, Mini	✓	If brown rice is the first ingredient, it is whole-grain.	At least 1¾" across Ages 1-5: 7 cakes Ages 6-18: 13 cakes

Grains/Breads



RECOMMENDED AS GRAINS/BREADS

Food Item	Whole-Grain	Comments	Serving Size Ages 1-5: Serve at least ½ oz. eq. Ages 6-18: Serve at least 1 oz. eq.
Ritz® Crackers			Ages 1-5: 4 crackers Ages 6-18: 7 crackers
Rolls, All Types			At least 28 grams Ages 1-5: ½ roll Ages 6-18: 1 roll
RyKrisp®	✓		Ages 1-5: 5 crackers Ages 6-18: 10 crackers
Saltines			At least 2" x 2" Ages 1-5: 4 crackers Ages 6-18: 8 crackers
Sociables®			Ages 1-5: 4 crackers Ages 6-18: 8 crackers
Stuffings, Bread, Homemade		See: Bread Stuffings/ Dressings, Homemade.	
Tortillas, Corn or Flour		If whole wheat or whole corn is the first ingredient, it is whole-grain.	Tortillas, Soft, Corn (~5 ½") Ages 1-5: ¾ tortilla Ages 6-18: 1 ¼ tortilla Tortillas, Soft, Flour (~6") Ages 1-5: ½ tortilla Ages 6-18: 1 tortilla Tortillas, Soft, Flour (~8") Ages 1-5: ¼ tortilla Ages 6-18: ½ tortilla
Triscuit®	✓		At least 1½" x 1½" Ages 1-5: 3 crackers Ages 6-18: 5 crackers
Waffles, Commercially-prepared (Eggo®)			At least 34 grams Ages 1-5: ½ waffle Ages 6-18: 1 waffle
Wasa Crispbread®	✓		Ages 1-5: 1 large Ages 6-18: 2 large
Wheat Berries		Whole, unprocessed wheat kernels.	
Wheat Thins®	✓		At least 1¼" x 1¼" Ages 1-5: 6 crackers Ages 6-18: 12 crackers
Wild Rice	✓	See: Grains, Cooked.	
Won Ton Wrappers			

Grains/Breads



NOT RECOMMENDED BUT ALLOWED AS GRAINS/BREADS

The foods listed below are creditable but are not recommended.
These foods are high in fat, salt and/or sugar.

Food Item	Comments	Serving Size Ages 1-5: Serve at least ½ oz. eq. Ages 6-18: Serve at least 1 oz. eq.
Animal Crackers		At least 1½" x 1" Ages 1-5: 8 crackers Ages 6-18: 15 crackers
Banana Breads	See: Quick Breads.	
Batter-type Coatings	Batters and breading may be served as part of the main dish of a meal. May be credited based on the amount of whole-grain or enriched flour in the recipe.	
Boston Brown Breads	See: Quick Breads.	
Bread-type Coatings	See: Batter-type Coatings.	
Carrot Bread	See: Quick Breads.	
Cheez-It®/Cheese Nips®		At least 1" x 1" square Ages 1-5: 10 crackers Ages 6-18: 20 crackers
Chow Mein Noodles		Ages 1-5: ¼ cup Ages 6-18: ½ cup
Corn-dog Batters	See: Batter-type Coatings.	
Crackers	See: Animal Crackers, Cheez-It®/Cheese Nips® or Graham Crackers.	
Croissants		At least 34 grams Ages 1-5: ½ croissant Ages 6-18: 1 croissant
Croutons		Ages 1-5: ¼ cup Ages 6-18: ½ cup
French Toast Sticks		At least 18 grams Ages 1-5: 2 sticks Ages 6-18: 4 sticks
Fried Breads, Plain, Not Sugared	May be credited based on the amount of whole-grain or enriched flour in the recipe.	
Graham Crackers		At least 5" x 2½" Ages 1-5: 1 cracker Ages 6-18: 2 crackers

Grains/Breads



NOT RECOMMENDED BUT ALLOWED AS GRAINS/BREADS

The foods listed below are creditable but are not recommended.
These foods are high in fat, salt and/or sugar.

Food Item	Comments	Serving Size Ages 1-5: Serve at least ½ oz. eq. Ages 6-18: Serve at least 1 oz. eq.
Hushpuppies, Homemade	May be credited based on the amount of whole-grain or enriched flour in the recipe.	
Muffins, All Types		At least 55 grams Ages 1-5: ½ muffin Ages 6-18: 1 muffin
Party Mix	May be credited based on the amount of dry cereal or grain in a serving. May be high in salt.	
Pie Crusts, Meat/Meat Alternate Pies		Ages 1-5: ¼ of a single crust 9-inch pie Ages 6-18: ½ of a single crust 9-inch pie
Popcorn, with Added Toppings that Contribute Fat, Salt or Sugar	Whole-grain. Not recommended for children under four years old due to the risk of choking.	Ages 1-5: 1½ cups Ages 6-18: 3 cups
Puff Pastry		
Pumpkin Breads	See: Quick Breads.	
Quick Breads		At least 55 grams Ages 1-5: ½ slice Ages 6-18: 1 slice
Scones, Savory		At least 4 ounces Ages 1-5: ¼ large Ages 6-18: ½ large
Squash Breads	See: Quick Breads.	
Taco or Tostada Shells, Hard		At least 14 grams Ages 1-5: 1 shell Ages 6-18: 2 shells
Teddy Grahams®		At least 1" x ½" Ages 1-5: ¼ cup (12 crackers) Ages 6-18: ½ cup (24 crackers)
Trail Mix	May be credited based on the amount of dry cereal or grain in a serving. May be high in salt and added sugar.	
Zucchini Breads	See: Quick Breads.	

Grains/Breads



NOT ALLOWED AS GRAINS/BREADS

The foods listed below are not creditable.
These foods do not count toward the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

Arrowroot Biscuits	Lorna Doone®
Bagel Chips	Nachos
Bread Puddings	Nilla Wafers
Brownies, Plain, Frosted or with Fillers Such As Cream Cheese or Nuts	Nut or Seed Meal Flour
Cakes, Unfrosted or Frosted	Oatmeals, Instant Flavored
Cereal Fruit Bars	Oatmeal Raisin Cookies
Cereals, Dry, Ready to Eat, More Than 6 Grams Sugar Per Serving	Pastries, Frosted or Unfrosted
Cheese Puffs (Cheetos®, Cheez Doodles®)	Pie Crusts, Dessert and Fruit Pies
Chips	Pita Chips
Chips Ahoy®	Popcorn Cakes
Cinnamon Rolls	Potatoes (Creditable as a Vegetable)
Coffeecakes, Homemade or Commercial	Pop Tarts®
Cookies, Plain	Potato Chips
Cookies with Nuts, Raisins, Chocolate Pieces or Fruit	Potato Pancakes (May Be Creditable as a Vegetable)
Corn (Creditable as a Vegetable)	Pound Cakes
Corn Chips (Doritos®, Fritos®, Tostitos®)	Pretzel Chips
Corn Starch	Rice Cereal Bars, Homemade
Cream Puff Shells	Rice Krispies Treats
Cupcakes, Unfrosted or Frosted	Rice Puddings
Danish Pastries	Scones, Sweet
Doughnuts	Shoe-string Potatoes
Fig Newtons	Sticky Buns
Gingerbread	Sun Chips®
Gingersnaps	Sweet Rolls
Grain Fruit Bars	Taco Chips
Granola Bars	Teddy Soft Bakes
Ice Cream Cones	Toaster Pastries
Ice Cream Sandwich Wafers	Turnovers, Sweet
	Tortilla Chips, Corn or Wheat (Doritos®, Fritos®, Sun Chips®, Tostitos®)

Meat/Meat Alternates



Meat/Meat Alternates Requirements

The CACFP Meal Pattern requires a meat or meat alternate to be served at lunch and supper. A meat/meat alternate may also be served as one of the two components of a snack. In addition, meat/meat alternates may be substituted for grains at breakfast up to three times per week. Refer to the CACFP Meal Patterns for serving size requirements.

- Meat includes lean red meat, poultry or fish that has been inspected and approved by the appropriate State or Federal agency. Meat is an excellent source of high-quality protein, iron and zinc. Examples of meat alternates that are creditable include: cheeses, yogurts, cottage cheeses, eggs, commercially-prepared tofu, cooked dried beans, nuts and seeds and their butters (except for acorn, chestnut or coconut).
- Tofu that is incorporated into drinks (such as smoothies), or added to dishes to improve texture (such as baked desserts), may not be credited towards the meal pattern requirement.
- Yogurt can be plain, flavored, sweetened or unsweetened; but it cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounces. Yogurt is a good source of protein and calcium.
- Examples of legumes include: black beans, garbanzo beans, kidney beans, or pinto beans, and may be counted as a meat alternate. They are an excellent source of protein, dietary fiber, iron and do not have cholesterol.
- Nuts and seeds may fulfill no more than one-half of the meat alternate requirement for lunch and supper. Nuts and seeds may fulfill the entire meat alternate requirement for snack.
- A menu item must provide a minimum of ¼ ounce of cooked, lean meat or the equivalent to meet any part of the meat/meat alternates requirement.

- Frankfurters, bologna, knockwurst or Vienna sausages must be 100% meat or contain alternate protein products (APPs) as the only binder or extender. However, due to the high salt and fat content, these meats are not recommended.
- Processed meats with binders and extenders such as starchy vegetable flour, dried milk, calcium-reduced skim milk and cereal are not allowed.
- Natural cheeses may count as all or part of the meat alternate requirement.
- Cheese items labeled ‘cheese products’ or ‘imitation cheese’ may not be counted as the meat alternate.
- Cheese foods and cheese spreads (Velveeta®, Cheez Whiz® or pimento cheese) may not be counted as the meat alternate.

Meat/Meat Alternates Recommendations

- Meats (chicken, turkey, beef, pork, lamb or fish) should be lean or low-fat.
- Canned beans should not contain added fat.
- No more than one serving of processed or high-fat meats should be served per week. This includes hot dogs, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, fried chicken, Vienna sausages, corn dogs or cold cuts.
- Serve only natural cheeses and choose low-fat or reduced-fat cheeses.
- Meat/meat alternates should be prepared using small amounts of oil, if needed.
 - Monounsaturated fats lower cholesterol. Good sources are olive oil, canola oil and peanut oil.
 - Polyunsaturated fats improve blood fats. Good sources are sunflower oil, safflower oil and vegetable oil.
 - Saturated fats and trans fats increase cholesterol. Limit margarine, shortening, animal fat and butter.

Meat/Meat Alternates



Meat/Meat Alternates High in Important Nutrients

Meat/Meat Alternates are excellent sources of iron and calcium.

MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES

Food Item	Iron	Calcium
Almonds		●
Brazil Nuts		●
Dried Beans and Peas	●	
Eggs	●	
Meat	●	
Peanut Butter	●	
Shellfish	●	
Sunflower Seeds		●
Tofu	●	●
Turkey	●	
Tuna	●	



Meat/Meat Alternates



Questions and Answers about Meat/Meat Alternates

Q: Can pizza be credited as a meat alternate?

A: Yes, if it is CN-labeled. All CN-labeled foods are creditable. If it is homemade, it must contain the required amount of meat/meat alternates per serving to be creditable.

Q: We have children who cannot eat certain meats because of religious reasons. How do we claim these children on the food program?

A: Substitute a creditable meat alternate. See: Can vegetarian meals be served?

Q: Is American cheese creditable?

A: Only if the label states pasteurized process cheese. Labels stating 'imitation cheese' and 'cheese product' are not creditable.

Q: Can vegetarian meals be served?

A: Yes. The meals must meet CACFP Meal Pattern requirements. Examples of meat alternates that are creditable include: natural and processed cottage cheese, yogurt, eggs, tofu, cooked dried beans, nut and seed butters or any combination of the above. See: Appendix C.

Q: Is yogurt creditable?

A: Yes, yogurt is creditable as a meat alternate. Yogurt can be plain, flavored, sweetened or unsweetened but it cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 ounce serving or 15.3 grams of sugar per 4 ounce serving. Four ounces of either fruited or non-fruited yogurt is equal to one ounce of the meat alternate. The fruit in yogurt cannot be credited toward the fruit component.



Meat/Meat Alternates



RECOMMENDED AS MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES

Food Item	Comments
Beans, Canned or Dry	A ¼ cup serving equals 1 oz. serving of meat alternate. Canned green or yellow beans count as a vegetable, not as a meat alternate.
Beef, Lean	Trim visible fat and broil rather than fry. Choose ground beef that is at least 90% lean.
Cheese, American	Creditable only if the label states pasteurized process cheese. Labels stating 'imitation cheese' and 'cheese product' are not creditable. A 1 oz. serving of pasteurized process cheese equals a 1 oz. serving of meat alternate.
Cheese, Natural, Reduced Fat	Examples include: Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, Mozzarella, Muenster, Provolone or Swiss. A 1 oz. serving of natural cheese equals a 1 oz. serving of meat alternate. Limit to one serving per week due to the high fat and salt content.
Chicken	Broil or bake chicken without skin. Choose ground chicken that is at least 90% lean.
Cottage Cheese, Fat-free or Low-fat	A ¼ cup serving equals 1 oz. serving of meat alternate.
Eggs	Cooked eggs are a good source of protein. ½ large egg equals 1 oz. of meat alternate. Raw eggs are not allowed.
Fish	Broil or bake fish.
Falafel	The volume of beans or other meat alternate in each serving may count toward the requirement. A ¼ cup serving equals 1 oz. serving of meat alternate.
Farmer's Cheese	See: Cottage Cheese.
Gefilte Fish, Homemade	Gefilte fish may be credited based on the amount of fish in each serving.
Gefilte Fish, Commercial	Since this item is generally 50% fish, 4 oz. of gefilte fish equals 2 oz. of fish.
Hummus	A spread made of mashed garbanzo beans/chickpeas. The volume of beans or other meat alternate in each serving may count toward the requirement. A ¼ cup serving equals 1 oz. serving of meat alternate.
Lamb	Trim lamb of all visible fat and bake or broil.
Lentils	See: Beans, Canned or Dry.
Meat Sauces, Homemade	Homemade only. Must supply the required serving size of meat in each portion.
Nuts	Nuts may be credited as one serving of meat alternate for snack; and one-half serving of meat alternate at lunch or supper. Do not serve nuts to children less than 4 years of age due to choking hazard.
Nut and Seed Butters	CACFP recommends serving nut and seed butters in combination with other meat/meat alternates since the serving size of nut and seed butters alone may be too large for children.
Pasta, 100% Legume Flour	Legume pasta may be used to fulfill either the vegetable OR meat/meat alternate component, but not both at the same meal. Must be served with another recognizable meat/meat alternate to be creditable. ¼ cup cooked pasta = 1 oz. meat alternate.
Peanut Butter	See: Nut and Seed Butters.
Peas, Dry	See: Beans, Canned or Dry.
Pork, Lean	Trim pork of all visible fat and bake or broil.
Quiches	The egg and cheese portion is creditable as a meat alternate.

Meat/Meat Alternates



RECOMMENDED AS MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES

Food Item	Comments
Refried Beans	Choose canned refried beans that are lower in fat or a low-fat homemade recipe. A ¼ cup serving equals 1 oz. serving of meat alternate.
Ricotta Cheese, Fat-free or Part Skim	A ¼ cup serving equals 1 oz. serving of meat alternate.
Seeds	See: Nuts.
Seafood/Shellfish	Must be fully cooked; only the edible fish portion is creditable.
Soups, Bean	Examples include: split pea soup, navy bean soup or lentil soup. ½ cup counts as ¼ cup of beans or 1 oz. of meat alternate.
Soups, Homemade	Soups that contain meat, fish, poultry or other meat alternates are creditable as a source of meat/meat alternates if required minimum amount of ¼ oz. of meat/meat alternates per serving can be identified.
Soups, Commercially Prepared	Examples include: bean, lentil or split pea. ½ cup equals 1 oz. of meat alternate for reconstituted canned. For homemade, use amounts of split pea, beans or lentils in recipe to calculate creditable portion.
Soy Butters	Soy butters made from 100% soy nuts are a creditable portion. It is a good alternate to peanut butter for those who are allergic to peanuts. CACFP recommends serving soy butter in combination with other meat/meat alternates since the serving size of soy butter alone may be too large for children.
Surimi	Refer to a Child Nutrition (CN) Label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS). If a CN Label or PFS is not available, 3 oz. of surimi is equivalent to 1 oz. of meat/meat alternate.
Tahini	A paste made from ground sesame seeds. See: Nut and Seed Butters.
Tempeh	Plain tempeh is creditable only when it contains the following allowable ingredients: soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh, vinegar, seasonings or herbs. Please note that these products may have added sodium and fat. 1 oz. plain tempeh = 1 oz. meat alternate. Tempeh mixed with other food components is creditable only when supported by a CN Label or PFS.
Tofu	Tofu is made from soybeans. Creditable as a meat alternate. However, tofu that is added into drinks (such as smoothies) or dishes to improve texture (such as baked desserts) may not be credited toward the meal pattern requirement.
Tuna, Canned	Choose low-sodium tuna, packed in water.
Turkey, Lean	Broil or bake turkey without skin. Choose ground turkey that is at least 90% lean.
Yogurt, Sticks or Tubes	Creditable for meals and snacks when it contains no more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 oz. Two tubes (or 4 oz.) of yogurt equals 1 oz. of meat alternate.
Yogurt	Creditable for meals and snacks. Can be plain, flavored, sweetened or unsweetened but cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 oz. 4 oz. of yogurt equals 1 oz. of meat alternate.

Meat/Meat Alternates



NOT RECOMMENDED BUT ALLOWED AS MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES

The foods listed below are creditable but are not recommended. Processed meat should not be served more than once per week due to the high fat and salt content.

Food Item	Comments
Canadian Bacon	1 lb. (16 oz.) will yield 11 one oz. servings of cooked meat.
Canned or Frozen Foods	Examples include: beef stew, burritos, chili, meat stew, pizza, pot pies or ravioli. These items count only if CN-labeled. Check the CN label for correct serving size. Processed combination foods such as these are usually higher in fat and salt than homemade foods.
Cheese, Natural, Regular	Examples include: American, Brick, Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack, Mozzarella, Muenster, Provolone or Swiss. A 1 oz. serving of natural cheese equals a 1 oz. serving of meat alternate. Due to its high fat content, cheese is not recommended more than once per week unless it is low-fat.
Chicken Nuggets	Only the chicken is creditable. If CN-labeled, check the label to find the correct serving size. If it does not have a CN label, 2 oz. of chicken nuggets equals 1 oz. of meat. Chicken nuggets count toward the meat/meat alternate and grain components of the meal when the portion is doubled.
Chicken Wings	Must serve 6 oz. cooked weight to provide 1.5 oz. of meat.
Corn Dogs, Frankfurters, Hot Dogs	Must be 100% meat or contain alternate protein products (APPs) as the only binder or extender. High in salt and fat.
Corned Beef	
Deviled Eggs	High in cholesterol and fat. Rather than preparing with mayonnaise, try a lower fat variety of the spread. See: Eggs.
Fish Sticks/Fish Nuggets/Fish Cakes	See: Chicken Nuggets.
Frankfurters, Meat and Poultry	See: Corn Dogs.
Hot Dogs	See: Corn Dogs.
Jamaican Beef Patties	Only the beef is creditable. Creditable only when supported by a CN Label or PFS. High in salt and fat.
Kidneys	Kidneys are high in cholesterol and fat.
Liver	Liver is high in cholesterol and fat.
Liverwurst	Cannot contain binders or extenders.

Meat/Meat Alternates



NOT RECOMMENDED BUT ALLOWED AS MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES

The foods listed below are creditable but are not recommended. Processed meat should not be served more than once per week due to the high fat and salt content.

Food Item	Comments
Luncheon Meats	Cannot contain byproducts, cereal or extenders.
Macaroni and Cheese, Homemade	The cheese used in the homemade recipe may count toward the meat alternate requirement.
Pizza, Homemade	Homemade pizza may be credited based on the amount of meat/meat alternates in each serving.
Pot Pies, Homemade	Homemade pot pies may be credited based on the amount of meat/meat alternates in each serving.
Pressed/Potted Meat Products	Must be 100% meat or contain alternate protein products (APPs) as the only binder or extender. High in salt and fat.
Ricotta Cheeses, Whole Milk	A ¼ cup serving equals 1 oz. serving of meat alternate.
Sausages, Bulk, Link or Patty including Polish and Vienna	Cannot contain meat byproducts or poultry byproducts, cereals, binders or extenders. Cannot contain more than 50% trimmable fat.
Shelf-stable Dried and Semi-dried Meats, Poultry, and Seafood	Creditable only when supported by a CN Label or PFS. These products are high in added sodium and may also be high in fat.
Tripe	Low quality protein.
Turkey Bacon	Creditable only when supported by a CN Label or PFS. High in sodium and fat.
Turkey Wings	Must serve 5 oz. cooked weight to provide 1.5 oz. of turkey meat.

Meat/Meat Alternates



NOT ALLOWED AS MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES

The foods listed below are not creditable.
These foods do not count toward the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

Acorns	Parmesan Cheeses
Bacon/Imitation Bacon	Pepperoni
Cheese Foods/Cheese Spreads (Velveeta, Cheese Whiz, Pimento Cheese)	Pig Feet, Neck Bones or Tails
Cheese Products (Some American Cheese)	Pizza, Commercial Dough portion may count as a grains/bread component. (See: Canned or Frozen Food.)
Chestnuts	Pot Pies, Commercial (See: Canned or Frozen Food.)
Chitterlings	Ravioli (See: Canned or Frozen Food.)
Cream Cheeses and Neufchatel Cheeses	Romano Cheeses
Fish, Home-caught	Salt Pork
Ham Hocks	Scrapple
Home-slaughtered and Any Non-USDA-inspected Meats	Soups, Commercially Prepared (Other than Split Pea, Bean or Lentil)
Imitation Cheeses	Soy Burgers or Other Soy Products (See: Appendix C.)
Imitation Frankfurters	Wild Game/Fowl
Macaroni and Cheese, Boxed	Yogurt Products (Frozen Yogurt, Drinkable Yogurt, Yogurt Bars, Yogurt-covered Fruits or Nuts)
Oxtails	

Infant Foods



CACFP requires all participating day care homes and child care centers to offer meals to all infants enrolled in care if the child is in care during the meal service period. Breast milk or iron-fortified formula (or a combination of both) must be included in all meals and snacks served to infants up to one year of age. Breast milk is the optimal choice and it is recommended that breast milk be served through the infant's first birthday. For infants consuming formula, child care facilities must offer at least one iron-fortified formula that would satisfy the needs of one or more infants in care.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life and continued breastfeeding through 12 months and beyond. Childcare facilities play an important role in promoting breastfeeding. They can:

- encourage mothers to supply breast milk for their infants
- offer a quiet, private area for mothers who come to the day care to breastfeed

To further support breastfeeding, reimbursement for meals is allowed when a breastfeeding mother comes to the day care home or center and directly breastfeeds her infant.

Infants are categorized into two age groups: 0 through 5 months and 6 months to their first birthday. Breast milk and/or infant formula are served to infants 0 through 5 months old. The introduction of solid foods can begin around 6 months of age if the infant is developmentally ready. The decision to feed specific foods should always be made with the infant's parent or guardian.

The CACFP Infant Meal Pattern uses ranges for portion sizes (e.g., 0-2 tablespoons of vegetables) to allow for flexibility in the types and amounts of foods that must be served to infants when claimed for reimbursement.

- An amount showing 0 tablespoons (Tbsp.) means that the item is optional if the infant is not developmentally ready for that food
- It also means that less than 1 Tbsp. can be served

Solid foods are only required for infants 6 months to their first birthday when they are developmentally ready to accept them. Feeding on demand is recommended as some babies may have small appetites. The amounts listed in the meal pattern are the minimum portions. Infants may need to eat every two hours, or more frequently, and they may eat less than the amount offered. Foods served should be of appropriate texture and consistency.

CACFP will reimburse for meals and snacks containing only breast milk or iron-fortified formula, whether supplied by the caregiver or the parent. Once a parent requests their infant be fed solid foods, the parent may only supply one component of a reimbursable meal. This may be either the breast milk/formula or a solid food.



Requirements

- Parents may request that caregivers continue feeding their infant breast milk after their first birthday. Breast milk is an allowable milk substitute for children of any age in CACFP.
- For infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breast milk or formula per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount may be offered. Additional breast milk or formula must be offered at a later time if the infant is still hungry.
- A vegetable or fruit, or both, must be served at all meals, including snacks for infants 6 months to their first birthday when they are developmentally ready to accept them.
- All vegetables and fruits must be pureed, mashed or chopped to appropriate consistency depending on individual development needs.
- At snack only, ready-to-eat breakfast cereals may be served as a grain for infants 6 months to their first birthday when developmentally ready. Breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce.
- Iron-fortified infant cereals may be served in place of breads/crackers/breakfast cereals at snack, depending on individual development needs and eating habits.
- Cheeses, cottage cheese, yogurt and whole eggs are allowable meat alternates for infants 6 months and older.
- Cow's milk must not be served before age 1 based on recommendations from the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Juices must not be served before age 1.
- Whole milk may be served beginning at 1 year of age.
- CACFP allows a 1-month transition period for children 12 months through 13 months old to ease the transition from infant formula or breast milk to whole milk. A medical statement is not needed during this transition period.

Infant Foods



Cautions

- Never prop a bottle or give a bottle to an infant during naptime. This can cause choking, tooth decay and ear infections.
- NYS Office of Children and Family Services regulations do not allow heating bottles and solid foods in a microwave oven. Uneven heating can occur and burn the infant's mouth.

Food Substitution Note

When an exception to the meal pattern is necessary (such as serving low-iron fortified formula), a statement from a recognized medical authority must be kept on file by the provider/center. It must state the required food substitution(s). Only then is the meal/snack eligible for reimbursement.

For More Information

For more information on infant development, nutrition for infants and safe food handling, please check USDA's *Feeding Infants in the Child and Adult Care Food Program* at the following website: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/feeding-infants-child-and-adult-care-food-program>.

CACFP Breastfeeding Friendly Designation

Protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding is an important part of public health. The Child and Adult Care Food Program invites you to join a national effort to support breastfeeding mothers and infants. If you would like your child care center or day care home to be designated as Breastfeeding Friendly, please contact CACFP at 1-800-942-3858 or go to <https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/cacfp/breastfeedingspon.htm>.



Infant Foods



ACCEPTABLE AND RECOMMENDED FOOD ITEMS FOR INFANTS, 6 MONTHS TO FIRST BIRTHDAY

The items below must be prepared in a form that is suitable for an infant to consume safely as a finger food, reducing the chances of choking. For example:

- Cut soft tortilla into small thin strips
- Mash soft, ripe vegetables and fruits (such as avocados, bananas and peaches)
- Cook and mash apples, pears, green beans or sweet potatoes

GRAINS/BREADS

Breads (French, Italian, Rye, White, Whole Wheat)

Biscuits

Crackers (Animal Crackers, Graham Crackers Made without Honey [Even In Baked Goods, Honey Could Contain Harmful Spores Which Could Cause a Serious Illness in Infants], Matzo Crackers, Saltines)

Iron-fortified Infant Cereals

English Muffins

Pita Breads (Wheat, White, Whole Wheat)

Rolls (Potato, Wheat, White, Whole Wheat)

Soft Tortillas (Corn, Wheat)

Teething Biscuits

Toasted Oat Cereals, Plain (Cheerios®)

Zwieback

FRUITS

Applesauce

Bananas

Melons

Peaches

Pears

Plums

VEGETABLES

Avocados

Beets

Carrots

Green Beans

Peas

Spinach

Squash

Sweet Potatoes

Turnips

MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATES

Cheeses

Cottage Cheeses

Dried Beans, Peas or Lentils

Eggs (Whole)

Lean Meats, Poultry or Fish

Infant Foods



RECOMMENDED AS INFANT FOODS

Food Item	Comments
Beans, Canned or Dried	Cooked, dried or canned beans count as a meat alternate for developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. Dried or canned beans should be prepared to the appropriate texture (mashed or pureed) for infants. Examples include: kidney, pinto, navy and black beans. Green or yellow beans count as vegetables, not as a meat alternate.
Breads	SNACK ONLY for developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. Must be whole grain-rich or enriched. Examples include: bagels, French, Italian, rye, white or whole wheat breads.
Breast Milk	Warm on stove or under warm running water. Never heat in a microwave.
Cereals, Iron-fortified Infant	Infant's first cereal. Select plain iron-fortified infant cereals such as rice, barley, oatmeal and mixed cereals. May be served at breakfast, lunch, supper and snack.
Cereals, Ready to Eat	SNACK ONLY. Counts as a grain/bread. Ready-to-eat cereals may be served at snack to developmentally ready infants around 6 months of age and older. Cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce. Examples include: Cheerios, Kix, Puffed Rice.
Cheeses	Counts as a meat/meat alternate. May be served to developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. Examples include: natural cheeses such as Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack or Mozzarella.
Cottage Cheeses	Counts as a meat/meat alternate. May be served to developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older.
Crackers	SNACK ONLY for developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. Counts as a grain/bread. Examples include: Club Crackers, Goldfish, Matzo, Melba Toast, Oyster Crackers, Ritz Crackers, RyKrisp, Saltines, Sociables, Wasa or Crispbread. Should not contain seeds, nuts, or whole grain kernels to reduce the risk of choking.
Eggs (Whole)	Counts as a meat/meat alternate. May be served to developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. All eggs should be properly refrigerated, washed with water, then cooked thoroughly (no runny, soft eggs) to avoid Salmonella.
Fish	Counts as a meat/meat alternate. Examples include haddock or cod. Examine fish closely and remove bones. Serve only after it has been introduced with no problems, around 6 months of age and older. Avoid shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tilefish due to possible high levels of mercury.
Fruits	A vegetable or fruit, or both, must be served at breakfast, lunch, supper and snack for developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. Commercially-prepared infant fruits must have fruit listed as the first ingredient on the label. Fruits may need to be cut, mashed, pureed, and/or cooked to reduce the risk of choking in infants.

Infant Foods



RECOMMENDED AS INFANT FOODS

Food Item	Comments
Grains	May be served to developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. Some examples include bread, crackers, and ready-to-eat cereals.
Infant Foods, Commercially-prepared	See: Vegetables, Fruits, or Meats
Infant Foods, Homemade	Avoid adding salt, fat, sugar and other seasonings.
Infant Formulas (Includes Soy-based)	Must meet the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) definition for iron-fortified infant formulas. The label must state “with iron” or “iron-fortified.” The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that during the first year of life, the only acceptable alternative to breast milk is iron-fortified infant formula and that low-iron formulas should not be used. A medical statement is required in order to serve formula that does not meet the FDA definition of iron-fortified.
Meats	May be served at breakfast, lunch or supper to developmentally ready infants around 6 months of age and older. Select plain, lean meat, fish and poultry. Commercially-prepared infant meat must have a meat listed as the first ingredient on the label.
Soy Formulas	See: Infant Formula.
Teething Biscuits	SNACK ONLY for developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. Counts as a grain/bread.
Vegetables	A vegetable or fruit, or both, must be served at breakfast, lunch, supper and snack for developmentally ready infants 6 months of age and older. Fresh, frozen or canned vegetables must be prepared (cooked, if necessary). Commercially-prepared infant vegetables must have a vegetable listed as the first ingredient on the label. Raw vegetables may cause choking in infants.
Yogurt	Counts as a meat/meat alternate. May be served at breakfast, lunch or supper to developmentally ready infants around 6 months of age and older. Cannot contain more than 23 grams of sugar per 6 oz.

Infant Foods



NOT ALLOWED AS INFANT FOODS

The foods listed below are not creditable.
These foods do not count toward the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

Food Item	Comments
Buttermilk	Should not be given to infants.
Cheese Foods	Cheese foods are high in sodium and low in nutrients.
Cheese Spreads	Cheese spreads are high in sodium and low in nutrients.
Chicken Nuggets	Includes commercially-prepared breaded or battered chicken products.
Chocolate	May cause allergic reactions.
Combination Dinners, Commercially-prepared Infant Food	See: Infant Foods, Commercially-prepared Combination Dinner.
Cookies, Cakes	Grain-based desserts are not creditable for infants.
Creams	
Desserts, Infant Food	See: Infant Food, Dessert.
Dry Milk, Reconstituted	
Evaporated Milks	Medical exception: Must have a signed statement from a recognized medical authority on file.
Fish Sticks	Includes commercially-prepared breaded or battered fish or seafood products.
Fruit Juices	No juices before age 1.
Half and Half	
Honeys	Honeys (including honey cooked or baked in products such as honey graham crackers) should not be served to infants less than 1 year of age. Honey is sometimes contaminated with <i>Clostridium botulism</i> spores. If an infant ingests these spores, they can produce a toxin that may cause a severe food-borne illness called infant botulism.
Hot Dogs	May cause choking. Not intended for infants.
Infant Cereals, Dry, with Fruit	It is difficult to determine the amount of cereal and the amount of fruit.
Infant Cereals, in Jars, with or without Fruit	

Infant Foods



NOT ALLOWED AS INFANT FOODS

The foods listed below are not creditable.
These foods do not count toward the CACFP Meal Pattern requirements.

Food Item	Comments
Infant Foods, Commercially-prepared Combination Dinner	Examples include: meat/vegetable dinners, meat dinners or dehydrated dinners. The amount of meats, fruits or vegetables cannot be determined. Often, water is the first ingredient.
Infant Foods, Dessert	Examples include: infant puddings, infant custards, infant cobblers or infant fruit desserts. Not 100% fruit. Often high in sugar, fat and low in nutrients.
Infant Foods, Home-canned	Not creditable due to the risk of food-borne illness.
Infant Foods, Pudding	High in sugar and fat, and low in nutrients.
Infant Formulas, Follow-up	Medical Exception: May be served to infants 6 months of age and older only with a signed statement from a recognized medical authority on file.
Infant Formulas, Low-iron (Includes Soy-based)	Only iron-fortified formula is creditable. Medical Exception: Must have a signed statement from a recognized medical authority on file.
Infant Formulas, Manufactured Outside of the United States	
Meat Sticks	May cause choking. Not intended for infants.
Milk, Whole, Reduced-fat (2%), Low-fat (1%) or Fat-free (Skim)	The American Academy of Pediatrics does not recommend cow's milk to infants under 1 year of age. Cow's milk can place stress on an infant's kidneys, cause allergic reactions and cause blood loss through the intestines, leading to iron deficiency anemia. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends infants consume breast milk and/or iron-fortified infant formula during the first year of life. Medical Exception: Must have a signed statement from a recognized medical authority on file.
Nuts	May cause choking. Not intended for infants.
Peanut Butter or Other Nut and Seed Butters	May cause choking. Not intended for infants.
Puddings, Infant Food	See: Infant Foods, Pudding.
Puffs, Fruit and Vegetable	Includes Gerber Graduates Lil' Crunchies, Gerber Graduates Wagon Wheels, and similar infant snack products
Sausages	May cause choking. Not intended for infants.
Shellfish	Shellfish may cause a severe allergic reaction in some infants.
Vegetables/Fruits Juice Blends	See: Fruit Juice.
Vegetable Juice	See: Fruit Juice.

Infant Foods



Infant Foods Questions and Answers

Q: What is the best way to introduce solid foods?

A: The introduction of solid foods can begin around 6 months of age if the infant is developmentally ready. Introduce solid foods gradually, offering one food at a time over the span of a few days. The decision to feed specific foods should always be made with the infant's parent or guardian.

Q: How do we know if an infant is developmentally ready to eat solid foods?

A: Infants who are developmentally ready for solid foods will show the following signs:

- Sit in a chair with good head control
- Open their mouth for food
- Move food from a spoon into their throat
- Double their birth weight

Q: Can solid foods be served to infants younger than 6 months of age?

A: Yes, meals containing solid foods are reimbursable when the infant is developmentally ready to accept them, including infants younger than 6 months of age. A written note from a parent or guardian stating his or her infant may be served solid foods is recommended as a best practice.

Q: If an infant does not finish the required minimum serving of breast milk or formula offered, is the meal still reimbursable?

A: Yes, as long as the infant is offered the required minimum serving of breast milk or formula, the meal is reimbursable. For infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breast milk or formula per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount may be offered. Additional breast milk or formula must be offered at a later time if the infant is still hungry. Infants do not eat on a strict schedule and should not be force fed. Instead, infants should be fed at times that are consistent with their usual eating habits. It is common for infants who consume breast milk to eat small amounts at each feeding.

Q: Can parents or guardians supply any food for their infant?

A: Yes, but parents or guardians may supply only one of the components in a reimbursable meal.

Q: How do we handle a parent who supplies breast milk/formula and also wants to bring in infant food?

A: Parents have the right to choose what foods are given to their children. Centers and daycare home providers may only claim a meal or snack for reimbursement when only one component is supplied by the parent/guardian. In situations where the parent/guardian chooses to provide more than one component, the center/daycare home provider should exclude the meal or snack from reimbursement.

Q: If a doctor prescribes cow's milk for an infant younger than 12 months of age, is the meal reimbursable?

A: Yes, cow's milk may be served as a substitute for breast milk and/or infant formula and be part of a reimbursable meal, if:

- The request is supported by a medical statement signed by a licensed physician or a State licensed medical professional who is authorized to write medical prescriptions
- The medical statement explains the need for the substitution
- The medical statement is kept on file by the center or day care home

Q: Is there a whole grain-rich requirement for infants?

A: No, the requirement to serve at least one whole grain-rich food per day is only required under the CACFP child and adult meal patterns.

Q: Are soy yogurts allowed in the infant meal pattern?

A: No. Soy yogurts are only allowed as a meat alternate in the child and adult meal patterns.

Water



Water Requirements

All CACFP-participating programs must offer and make drinking water available to children throughout the day.

Water can help children stay hydrated, and it is a healthy alternative to sugar-sweetened beverages. Child care centers and day care homes can make water available to children in a variety of ways, including:

- putting cups next to the faucet
- placing pitchers and cups on a counter or table
- serving water with snacks
- providing water when it is requested

A good time to offer water more frequently might be during or after physical activity, on hot summer days, or cold winter months when the air is drier because of indoor heating.

While drinking water must be made available to children during meal times, it does not have to be served alongside the meal. Water is not part of the reimbursable meal and may not be served instead of milk.

There are no water requirements for adults. However, adult day care centers are encouraged to ensure drinking water is offered and made available to adult participants throughout the day.



Appendix A: Sample Menus



BREAKFAST	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk
Vegetable or Fruit	Diced Apples	Blueberries	Peaches	Raspberries	Roasted Sweet Potato Hash
Grains/Bread	Oatmeal	Whole Wheat Bagel	Waffles	Wheat Chex (WGR)	
Meat/Meat Alternate		Egg Omelet			Scrambled Egg
LUNCH/SUPPER	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk	1% or Fat-free Milk
Vegetable	Green Beans	Garden Salad	Mashed Potatoes	Butternut Squash	Sautéed Carrots
Fruit or Vegetable	Plum	Cantaloupe	Cherries	Fresh Pear Slices	Kidney Beans
Grains/Bread	Whole Wheat Bread (WGR)	Brown Rice (WGR)	Whole Wheat Roll (WGR)	Barley Casserole	Whole Corn Tortilla (WGR)
Meat/Meat Alternate	Hot Turkey Sandwich	Cod Fillet	Chicken Breast	Roast Beef	Tofu Chili
SNACK	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Milk					
Vegetable		Broccoli & Cauliflower Florets		Cucumber Slices	Celery Sticks
Fruit	Strawberries				
Grains/Bread			Pretzel Rods	Whole Grain Crackers (WGR)	
Meat/Meat Alternate	Low-fat Vanilla Yogurt	Cottage Cheese Ranch Dip	Cheddar Cheese Cubes		Tuna Salad

Appendix B: Recipe Analysis



CACFP sponsors must ensure that all meals served meet the CACFP meal pattern requirements. All recipes used must document that they provide a sufficient amount of the meal pattern component(s) credited. USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs is a valuable tool to determine the contribution foods make toward the meal pattern requirements.

For homemade dishes, an appropriate standardized recipe should be used to ensure that enough of each planned CACFP meal pattern component is provided. For example, to meet the meat/meat alternates and grains/bread requirements for children ages 3-5 years, a macaroni and cheese casserole recipe must document that each serving provides 1½ ounces of cheese and ¼ cup cooked pasta.

Macaroni and Cheese

From "Meals Without Squeals" by Christine Berman, MPH, RD & Jack Fromer

Ingredients:

8 oz. dry macaroni or other pasta	½ tsp. dry mustard
2 cups low-fat milk	¼ tsp. paprika
1½ tsp. starch	12 oz. sharp Cheddar cheese, grated
¾ tsp. salt	2 scallions, green part only, thinly sliced (optional)
¼ tsp. pepper	

SAMPLE

Steps:

1. Cook macaroni. While macaroni is cooking, combine milk and dry ingredients in a jar and shake very well.
2. When macaroni is tender, drain it and return to pan.
3. Add milk mixture and stir gently over medium heat until sauce thickens.
4. Add cheese and optional scallions or chives, stir until melted, and serve.

Steps

1. List CACFP components in the recipe.
2. Look in the USDA Food Buying Guide to determine the number of servings from each component. Use the serving size appropriate for the age of the children in your care.
3. The number of servings will be determined by the most limiting component. In the example below, the cheese is the most limiting component.
4. A recipe may have to be modified to increase the amount of meat/meat alternates in the recipe to reduce the total size of the serving for young children.

Comments

1. The milk used in this recipe cannot be credited to any food component. Milk is required at meals as a beverage.
2. The scallions do not contribute the minimum of ⅛ cup per serving, so are not considered as a component.
3. To determine the portion size, measure the total volume and divide by 8 for 1½ oz. servings of cheese (3-5 year olds) or by 6 for 2 oz. servings of cheese (6 years and older).
4. The most limiting component of this recipe is the cheese. The total number of servings in the recipe is determined by the number of servings of cheese.

Sample Recipe Analysis

Component Ingredients	Elbow Macaroni	Sharp Cheddar Cheese
Amount	8 oz. (dry)	12 oz.
Meat/ Meat Alternates	None	8 (1½ oz. servings) or 6 (2 oz. servings)
Vegetables/Fruits	None	None
Grains/Bread	19* grains oz. eq. or 9 grains oz. eq.	None

Meal Components in this Recipe

YIELD:

3-5 year olds: 8 servings;
each serving = 1 meat alternate and 2 grains/bread
6 years and older: 6 servings;
each serving = 1 meat alternate and 1.5 grains/bread

*Food Buying Guide

Appendix C: Meat Alternates for Vegetarian Menu Planning

- Meat alternates include cheeses, eggs, cooked dried beans, nuts, seeds and nut and seed butters.
- Nuts and seeds may fulfill only ½ of the meat alternate requirement at lunch and supper.
- An additional meat alternate must be served with nuts and seeds at lunch and supper.
- Nuts, seeds and nut butters may fulfill the entire meat alternate requirement at snack.
- Dried beans may be credited as a meat alternate, or as a vegetable/fruit, but not as both in the same meal.
- Tofu is creditable. Most soy burgers and veggie burgers are not creditable.



Adapted from Making Nutrition Count for Children, USDA

Appendix D: Choking Prevention



Young children, ages 1 to 3, are at risk of choking on food. They remain at risk until they can chew and swallow better, by about age 4.

Always watch children during meals and snacks to make sure they:

- Sit quietly.
- Eat slowly.
- Chew food well before swallowing.
- Take only one bite at a time.
- Finish swallowing before leaving the table.

Prepare foods so that they are easy to chew:

- Cut food into small pieces or thin slices.
- Cut round foods, like hot dogs, lengthwise into thin strips.
- Remove all bones from fish, chicken and meats.
- Cook food such as carrots or celery until slightly soft. Then cut into sticks.
- Remove seeds and pits from fruit.
- Spread peanut butter thinly.

Foods That May Cause Choking

Firm, smooth, or slippery foods like:

- Hot dog rounds
- Carrot rounds
- Hard candy
- Large pieces of fruit
- Granola
- Peanuts
- Whole grapes
- Cherries with pits
- Cherry tomatoes

Small, dry or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow, like:

- Popcorn
- Small pieces of raw carrot, celery or other raw hard vegetables
- Nuts and seeds
- Potato and corn chips
- Pretzels

Sticky or tough foods that do not break apart easily, like:

- Spoonfuls or chunks of peanut butter or other nut or seed butters
- Chunks of meat
- Marshmallows
- Raisins and other dried fruit

Choking Hazards

< 6 months of age

No cereal in bottles

0-1 year olds

Do not serve:

- Nuts (including peanut butter)
- Chips, pretzels, popcorn
- Raw carrots
- Tossed salad
- Raw fruits and vegetables, unless modified into ¼-inch bite-sized pieces BEFORE serving
- Large chunks or stringy meat, unless modified into ¼-inch bite-sized pieces BEFORE serving



¼ inch

1-3 year olds

Do not serve:

- Hot dogs or sausage rounds
- Whole grapes
- Whole cherry or grape tomatoes
- Nuts
- Popcorn
- Raw carrot rounds
- Raw vegetables, unless modified into ½-inch bite-sized pieces BEFORE serving
- Dried fruit, including raisins
- Marshmallows
- Large chunks or stringy meats, unless modified into ½-inch bite-sized pieces BEFORE serving



½ inch

Classroom Staff Responsibilities

- Infants should be fed solid foods only while they are sitting up.
- Always supervise children while they are eating.
- Insist that children eat calmly and while they are sitting down.
- Encourage children to chew their food well.
- Make sure that the foods served are appropriate in size for their chewing and swallowing abilities.

Food Service Responsibilities

- No bones or skin
- Remove pits from fruits before it goes to the classroom

Appendix E: Milk Substitutes



- CACFP regulations require that each child’s breakfast, lunch and supper include milk. Children and adults who cannot drink cow’s milk due to medical or other special dietary needs may be served milk substitutes in place of milk.
- Milk substitutes must have the same nutrients found in cow’s milk, as outlined in the chart below.

Nutrient	Per 8-Ounce Cup
Calcium	276 mg*
Protein	8 g*
Vitamin A	500 IU*
Vitamin D	100 IU*
Magnesium	24 mg*
Phosphorus	222 mg*
Potassium	349 mg*
Riboflavin	0.44 mg*
Vitamin B-12	1.1 mcg*

*mg = milligrams; g = grams; IU = international units; mcg = micrograms

- The following milk substitutes below meet required nutritional standards for approved milk substitutions:

Products						
Product Name	8th Continent Soy milk	Silk Soy milk	Sunrich Naturals Soy milk	Westsoy Organic Plus Soy milk	Pearl Organic Smart Soy milk	Great Value Soy milk
Flavors	Original and Vanilla	Original	Plain and Vanilla	Plain and Vanilla	Original, Creamy Vanilla and Chocolate	Original

*Please note: Product information was obtained from manufacturer websites. Please double check the package nutrition label upon purchase.

- Milk substitutes served to children 1 through 5 years old must be unflavored.
- Milk substitutes are not required to be low-fat or fat-free when served to children 2 years old and older and adults.
- Parents or guardians may request milk substitutes, in writing, without providing a medical statement.
- A medical statement is only required for milk substitutes that do not meet the nutritional standards of cow’s milk. Medical statements must be signed by a State recognized medical authority.

Appendix F: How to Identify Whole Grains



Grains Basics

Grains are divided into two groups: whole grains and refined grains.

- Whole grains contain all parts of the grain (bran, germ and endosperm) and supply the most nutrients, including fiber, B vitamins and minerals.
- Refined grains are missing one or more of their three key parts (bran, germ or endosperm), and they have less protein, fiber and vitamins. Most refined grains are also enriched. This means that some vitamins and minerals are added back after processing.

Whole Grains	Refined (Not Whole Grains)
Amaranth	All-purpose Flours
Bromated Whole-Wheat Flours	Bread Flours
Brown Rices	Bromated Flours
Brown Rice Flours	Cake Flours
Buckwheat	Corn Flours
Buckwheat Flours	Corn Grits
Corn Masa/Masa Harina	Corn Meals
Cracked Wheats or Bulgur	Durum Flours
Crushed Wheats	Enriched Flours
Graham Flours	Enriched Rices
Millet or Millet Flakes	Enriched Self-rising Flours
Oats (Including Old-fashioned, Quick-cooking, and Instant Oatmeal)	Enriched Wheat Flours
Oat Flours	Farina
Quinoa	Instantized Flours
Teff	Long-grain White Rices
Triticale	Pearl or Pearled Barley
Wheat Berries	Phosphated Flours
Wheat Flours	Rice Flours
Whole-wheat Flours	Self-rising Flours
Whole-durum Wheat Flours	Self-rising Wheat Flours
Whole-wheat Pastas	Unbleached Flours
Whole-grain Barley	White Flours
Whole-grain Corn Meals	Whole Flours
Whole-grain Corn Flours	
Whole Rye or Rye Berries	
Wild Rice	

Serve whole grains whenever possible. Purchase, prepare and serve foods that contain a whole grain as the first ingredient in the ingredient list.

Index



A							
Acidified Milk	9	Cheese Spreads	5, 32, 39, 45	Doritos®	31	Gingersnaps	31
Acorns	39	Cheetos®	31	Doughnuts	20, 31	Gingerbread	31
Almond Milk	11	Cheez Doodles®	31	Dressings	23, 25, 28	Goat's Milk	11
Alternate Protein Products	32	Cheez-It®	29	Dried Beans	32, 33, 34, 42, 43, 51	Goldfish®	25, 43
Animal Crackers	29, 42	Chestnuts	32, 39	Dried Fruits	13, 14, 15, 52	Graham Crackers	29, 42, 45
Apple Butters	18	Chicken	5, 17, 32, 35, 37, 45, 49, 52	Dried Vegetables	14	Grain Fruit Bars	31
Apple Cider	15	Chicken Nuggets	5, 32, 37, 45	Dumplings	25	Grains	2, 5, 9, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 37, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 47, 49, 50, 54
Applesauces	15, 42	Chicken Wings	37			Grains/Breads Section	20-31
Arrowroot Biscuits	31	Chili	14, 37, 49	E		Grains/Breads Section	20-31
		Chili Sauces	18	Eat Well Play Hard	3	Grains/Breads Section	20-31
B		Chips	19, 31, 52	Eggs	5, 32, 33, 34, 35, 37, 40, 42, 43, 49, 51	Not Allowed as Grains/Breads	31
Bacon	37, 38, 39	Chips Ahoy®	31	Egg Roll Skins	25	Grains/Breads Section	20-31
Bagel Chips	31	Chitterling	39	Eggnog-flavored Milk	10	Not Recommended but	
Bagels	23, 43, 49	Chocolate	10, 18, 31, 45, 53	English Muffins	20, 25, 42	Allowed as Grains/Breads	29-30
Banana Breads	18, 29	Chocolate Milk	10	Evaporated Milk	11, 45	Grains/Breads Section	
Banana Chips	18	Chow Mein Noodles	29			Recommended as	
Barbecue Sauces	18	Cinnamon Rolls	31	F		Grains/Breads	23-28
Barley	23, 43, 49, 54	Club Crackers®	24, 43	Falafel	35	Granola Bars	20, 21, 31
Batter-type Coatings	29	CN Label	6, 14, 21, 34, 36, 37, 38	Farmer's Cheese	35	Greens	13, 14, 15, 16
Beans	12, 15, 16, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 42, 43, 49, 51	Cocoa Milk	10	Fat-free Milk	4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 46, 49	Grits	25, 54
Beef	6, 14, 32, 35, 37, 49	Coconut	17, 32	Fig Cookies	18	H	
Beef Stew	14, 37	Coconut Milk	11	Fig Newtons®	31	Half and Half	11, 45
Berries	13, 15, 17, 49	Coffeecakes	31	Fish	5, 12, 21, 32, 35, 36, 37, 39, 42, 43, 44, 45, 52	Ham Hocks	39
Biscuits	23, 31, 42, 44	Coleslaw	14, 15	Fish Cakes	37	Hash Brown Potatoes	17
Bologna	32	Congee	24	Fish Nuggets	37	Home-slaughtered Meats	39
Boston Brown Breads	29	Cookies	5, 18, 20, 31, 45	Fish Sticks	5, 32, 37, 45	Hominy	15, 25
Bran	21, 22, 23, 54	Corn	16, 21, 31	Flavored Milk	4, 7, 8, 10	Honey	5, 42, 45
Breads	2, 5, 6, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 49, 50, 54	Corn Chips	18, 31, 52	Food Buying Guide	2, 20, 50	Hot Chocolate	10
Bread Puddings	31	Corn Dogs	5, 29, 32, 37	Frankfurters	32, 37, 39	Hot Cocoa	10
Bread Sticks	23	Corn Meal	24, 54	French Breads	23, 25, 42, 43	Hot Dogs	5, 32, 37, 45, 52
Bread Stuffings/Dressings	23, 25, 28	Corn Muffins	24	French Fries	17	Hummus	35
Breadcrumbs	20, 21	Corn Starch	31	French Toast	25	Hushpuppies	30
Bread-type Coatings	25, 29	Cornbreads	24	French Toast Sticks	29		
Breast Milk	5, 40, 43, 44, 46, 47	Corn-dog Batters	29	Fried Breads	29	I	
Brownies	20, 31	Corn Masa/Masa Harina	24, 54	Fritos®	31	Ice Cream	11, 18, 31
Bulgur	23, 54	Corned Beef	37	Frozen Fruit Juice Bars	15	Ice Cream Cones	31
Buns, Hamburger and Hot Dog	23, 30	Cottage Cheeses	5, 32, 34, 36, 40, 42, 43, 49	Frozen Yogurt	11, 39	Ice Cream Sandwich Wafers	31
Burritos	37	Couscous	24	Fruits	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 31, 34, 39, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52	Ice Milks	11
Buttermilk	9, 45	Cracked Wheats	23, 54	Fruit Breads	18, 19	Imitation Bacon	39
		Crackers	24, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 40, 42, 43, 44, 49	Fruit Cobbblers	17	Imitation Cheeses	32, 34, 35, 39
C		Cranberry Juice Blend	15	Fruit Cocktail	14	Imitation Frankfurters	39
Cakes	18, 20, 31, 45	Cranberry Juice Cocktail	18	Fruit Crisps	17	Imitation Milk	11
Canadian Bacon	37	Cranberry Sauces	17, 18	Fruit Gushers®	18	Infant Cereals	40, 42, 43, 45
Canned or Frozen Foods	14, 37, 39	Creams	11, 45	Fruit Juices	45	Infant Foods	42, 43, 44
Carrot Bread	29	Cream Cheeses	31, 39	Fruit Juice Blends	15, 46	Infant Foods Section	40-47
Catsup (Ketchup)	18	Cream Puff Shells	31	Fruit Muffins	19	Infant Foods Section	40-47
Cereals	5, 7, 16, 20, 22, 23, 24, 30, 31, 32, 38, 40, 42, 43, 44, 45, 52	Cream Sauces	11	Fruit Pies	17, 31	Not Allowed as Infant Foods	45-46
Cereal Fruit Bars	31	Cream Soups	11, 18	Fruit Punch	18	Infant Foods Section	40-47
Cheerios®	22, 42, 43	Crepes	25	Fruit Sauces	17	Recommended as Infant Foods	42-44
Cheeses	5, 11, 12, 16, 19, 29, 31, 32, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 42, 43, 45, 49, 50, 51	Croissants	29	Fruit Snacks	18	Infant Formulas	40, 44, 46, 47
Cheese Foods	5, 32, 39, 45	Croutons	29	Fruit-flavored Beverages	18	Italian Breads	23, 25, 42, 43
Cheese Nips®	29	Cultured Milk	9			J	
Cheese Products	32, 34, 35, 39	Cupcakes	31	Gefilte Fish	35	Jams	5, 18
Cheese Puffs	31	Custards	11, 46	Gerber® Mini Fruits	17	Jamaican Beef Patties	37
		D		Gerber® Mini Vegetables	17	Jell-O® Salad	18
		Danish Pastries	31	Germ	21, 25, 54	Jellies	18
		Developmentally Ready	4, 40, 43, 44, 47			Juice Blends	15, 16, 17, 46
		Deviled Eggs	37				

K		Nut or Seed Meal Flours	31	R		Toaster Pastries	19, 20, 31
Kasha	25	Nuts	5, 14, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 39, 46, 51, 52	Raisins	13, 14, 15, 31, 52	Tofu	5, 32, 33, 34, 36, 49, 51
Kidneys	37			Raisin Breads	23, 27	Tomato Paste	16
Kidney Beans	15, 32, 43, 46, 49	O		Ravioli	27, 37, 39	Tomato Sauce	14, 16
Knockwurst	32	Oatmeal	16, 20, 22, 26, 27, 31, 43, 49, 54	Reduced-fat (2%) Milk	11, 46	Tortillas	28, 42, 49
Kool Aid®	18	Oatmeal Raisin Cookies	31	Refried Beans	36	Tortilla Chips	31
		Olives	19	Rice	17, 20, 21, 22, 24, 27, 28, 43, 49, 54	Tostitos®	31
L		Onions	12, 16, 19	Rice Cakes	27	Trail Mix	30
Lactose-free Milk	9	Onion Rings	19	Rice Cereal Bars	31	Tripe	38
Lactose-reduced Milk	8, 9	Oxtails	39	Rice Krispies® Treats	31	Triscuit®	24, 28
Lamb	32, 35	Oyster Crackers	24, 26, 43	Rice Milk	11	Tuna	33, 36, 49
Lefse	26			Rice Puddings	31	Turkey	32, 33, 36, 38, 49
Legumes	5, 15, 32, 35, 36	P		Ricotta Cheeses	36, 38	Turkey Bacon	38
Lemon Pie Fillings	18	Pancakes	21, 26	Ritz® Crackers	24, 28, 43	Turkey Wings	38
Lemonades	18	Parmesan Cheeses	39	Rolls	20, 28, 31, 42, 49	Turnovers	31
Lentils	15, 16, 35, 36, 39, 42	Party Mix	30	Romano Cheeses	39		
Limeades	18	Pasta	14, 15, 26, 27, 35, 50, 54	RyKrisp®	24, 28, 43	U	
Liver	37	Pastries	19, 20, 31			Ultra High Temperature (UHT) Milks	9
Liverwurst	37	Peanut Butter	33, 35, 36, 46, 52	S			
Lorna Doone®	31	Peas	12, 13, 15, 16, 33, 35, 42	Salsa	15, 17	V	
Low-fat (1%) Milk	4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 46, 49	Pestos	19	Salt Pork	39	V-8 Splash®	19
Low-Sugar Cereals	22	Pickles	19	Saltines	24, 28, 42, 43	Vegetable Breads	19
Luncheon Meats	38	Pie Crusts	30, 31	Sausages	38, 46, 52	Vegetable Juice	13, 16, 46
		Pig Feet	39	Scones	30, 31	Vegetable Juice Blends	16, 46
M		Pig Neck Bones	39	Scrapple	39	Vegetable Muffins	19
Macaroni	26, 50	Pig Tails	39	Seafood	36, 38, 45	Vegetables	2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 31, 32, 35, 40, 42, 43, 44, 46, 49, 50, 51, 52
Macaroni and Cheese	38, 39, 50	Pimento Cheese	32, 39	Seeds	26, 27, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 43, 46, 51, 52,	Vegetables/Fruits Section	12-19
Matzo	26, 43, 42	Pita Breads	26, 42	Shelf-stable Dried and Semi-dried Meats, Poultry, and Seafood	38	Vegetables/Fruits Section Not Allowed as Vegetables/Fruits	18-19
Meal Pattern Requirements and Recommendations	4, 5	Pita Chips	31	Shellfish	33, 36, 46	Vegetables/Fruits Section Not Recommended but Allowed as Vegetables/Fruits	17
Meat Sauces	35	Pizza	6, 34, 37, 38, 39	Sherbets	11, 19	Vegetables/Fruits Section Recommended as Vegetables/Fruits	15-16
Meat Sticks	46	Pizza Crust	26	Shoe-string Potatoes	31	Vegetarian	34, 51
Meat/Meat Alternates Section	32-39	Pizza Sauce (Sauce on Pizza)	14	Skim Milk	4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 32, 46	Velveeta®	32, 39
Meat/Meat Alternates Section Not Allowed as		Polenta	27	Smoothies	8, 9, 16, 32, 36	Vienna Sausages	5, 32, 38
Meat/Meat Alternates	39	Pop-Tarts®	19, 31	Sociables®	24, 28, 43		
Meat/Meat Alternates Section Not Recommended but Allowed as Meat/Meat Alternates	37-38	Popcorn	27, 30, 52	Soups	7, 8, 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, 36, 39		
Meat/Meat Alternates Section Recommended as		Popcorn Cakes	31	Sour Cream	11		
Meat/Meat Alternates	35-36	Popovers	27	Soy Burgers	39, 51		
Melba Toast	24, 26, 43	Popsicles®	19	Soy Butters	36	W	
Milk	2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 25, 32, 38, 40, 43, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53	Pork	32, 35	Soy Butters	36	Waffles	21, 28, 49
Milk Section	7-11	Porridge	27	Soy Milk	8, 9, 53	Wasa Crispbread®	24, 28, 43
Milk Section Not Allowed as Milk	11	Posole	19	Soy Products	39	Water	3, 5, 8, 15, 17, 21, 25, 36, 43, 46, 48
Milk Section Not Recommended but Allowed as Milk	10	Pot Pies	37, 38, 39	Soy Yogurt	47	Water Chestnuts	16
Milk Section	9	Potato Chips	19, 31, 52	Soybean Milk	9	Wheat Berries	28, 54
Recommended as Milk	9	Potato Pancakes	15, 31	Spaghetti	20	Wheat Thins®	24, 28
Milk, Fluid	9	Potato Salad	14	Spaghetti Sauce	16	Whole Grains	5, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 47, 49, 54
Milk Substitutes	7, 8, 9, 40, 53	Potato Skins	17	Sprouts	16	Whole Grain Rich	5, 20, 21, 24, 43, 47
Millet	26, 54	Potatoes	13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 26, 31, 49	Squash Breads	30	Whole Milk	4, 7, 9, 38, 40
Mixed Vegetables	13, 14	Potted Meat Products	38	Sticky Buns	31	Wild Fowl	39
Muffins	19, 24, 30	Pound Cake	31	Stuffings	23, 25, 28	Wild Game	39
		Preserves	18	Sun Chips®	31	Wild Rice	28, 54
N		Pressed Meat Products	38	Surimi	36	Won Ton Wrappers	28
Nachos	31	Pretzels	27, 31, 49, 52	Sweet Rolls	20, 31		
Nectars	19	Pretzel Chips	31	Syrups	5, 19		
Neufchatel Cheeses	39	Puddings	7, 8, 11, 31, 46			Y	
Nilla Wafers®	31	Pudding Pops	11	Taco Chips	31	Yogurt	5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 16, 19, 32, 34, 36, 39, 40, 44, 47, 49
Non USDA-inspected Meats	39	Puff Pastry	30	Taco Shells	20, 30	Yogurt-covered Fruits	19, 39
Non-fat Dry Milk	11	Puffs	19, 22, 24, 43, 46	Tahini	36		
Non-fat Milk	9	Pumpnickel Bread	23, 27	Tater Tots®	17	Z	
Noodles	26, 29	Pumpkin Bread	19, 30	Teddy Grahams	30	Zucchini Breads	19, 30
Nut and Seed Butters	34, 35, 36, 46, 51			Teddy Soft Bakes®	31	Zwieback	42
		Q		Teething Biscuits	42, 44		
		Quiches	35	Tempeh	36		
		Quick Breads	29, 30				
		Quinoa	27, 54				

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