

# A Healthy Change in School Lunches!

## Parental Guide to Frequently Asked Questions

### Q: I heard there is a new law about school lunch, is that true?

A: Yes, in December 2010 the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act (HHFKA) was signed into law. The act is the result of several months of debate and negotiations in the U.S. congress and was passed and signed into law. The bill has many provisions that impact school lunch, school breakfast, Woman Infants and Children services (WIC), as well as other federal nutrition programs. A large portion of the bill focuses on school lunch and breakfast programs.

**This new law took effect on July 1, 2012 for school lunches.**

### Q: What changes will we see in our school lunches?

A: All schools may see some change in the food offered. Students at all levels are required to take at least a ½ cup of fruit or vegetables with every meal. Fruits and vegetables are now separate groups, and vegetables are regulated with a weekly color sub-group “must serve” requirement. Each color has its own serving size and must be available on every serving line.

### Q: How will this affect my child’s lunch?

A: Your child will begin to see different items and/or different ingredients used in the preparation of his/her meal. For example, if your elementary aged child likes to eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches every day for lunch they will only be able eat PB&J, 4 out of the 5 days because the child will be over on the number of grains they can have for the week.

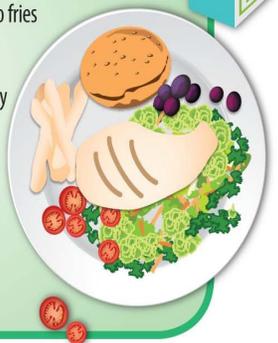
### Lunch gets a makeover

- Meals will include fruits and vegetables every day of the week.
- Bread, pasta, tortillas and rice will be whole grain.
- Milk will be low fat or fat free.
- Calorie content of meals will be based on the age of children being served: 650 calories for grades K-5; 700 calories for grades 6-8 and 850 calories for grades 9-12.
- Meals will contain less saturated fat, trans fats and sodium.
- Students who buy lunch can choose from a variety of healthy options.
- Students receiving free and reduced lunches will not be affected by any price changes that come from offering higher quality food. Those paying full price may see a slight increase.

### What’s on your tray

New school lunch standards are making foods such as tater tots and canned veggies so “old school.” Here’s what’s “in” at the school cafeteria:

- Oven-baked sweet potato fries
- Fresh kiwi halves
- Raw veggies (such as baby carrots, broccoli, cherry tomatoes) with low-fat ranch for dipping
- Chef salad with low-fat mozzarella cheese, grilled chicken and a whole-wheat roll
- 1% and fat-free milk; water



### Q: What if I pack my child’s lunch?

A: Lunches from home are not affected.

### Q: What will a meal include?

A: The 5 meal components are: meat/meat alternative, grains, fruit, vegetable, and milk. A meal can consist of up to 5 components, but must have a minimum of 3 as long as ½ cup of fruit or vegetable is chosen.

For example, a meal could be chicken nuggets, a whole grain roll, a ½ cup of fruit, a ½ cup of vegetables, and milk. Students must take a minimum of 3 components and up to a maximum of 5 components, and must always take at least ½ cup fruit or vegetable.

### Q: What happens if my child doesn’t take all of their required components?

A: If a student does not take their required minimum of 1/2 cup serving of a fruit or vegetable the lunch will not be counted as reimbursable and the student will be **charged ala carte for their lunch**. This is a mandatory regulation with no exceptions.

**Please visit our website at [scbores.org](http://scbores.org) for updates.**

**Q: What are the other improvements expected in school meals?**

A: There are several changes expected in school meals. Over the next few years, changes to school breakfast and lunch programs will be phased in.

### **Whole Grains**

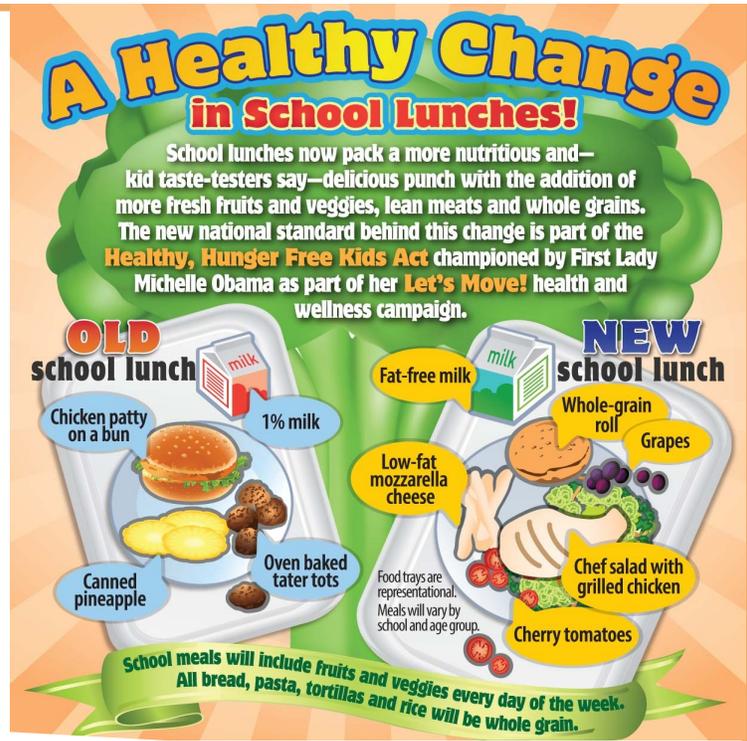
One of the most significant changes includes the inclusion of whole grain on the menus in the place of refined grains. Bread, pizza crust, rolls and buns will now need to be “whole grain rich”. Beginning July 1, 2012 at least half of the grains served must be whole grain rich. In two years, the requirement will increase to 100% of grains served.

### **Fruits and Vegetables**

Another major change will be the inclusion of more “Nutrient dense” fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables will now make up a larger portion of the meals served on a daily basis. In addition to a larger portion of fruits and vegetables, lunch meals will now allow up to 2 cups of fruits and vegetables to be served as part of a meal. It also sets minimums on how much fruits and/or vegetables must be taken by students. For most students, that minimum will be a ½ cup of total fruits and vegetables. “Nutrient dense” items include the sub-groups “dark green” and “red/orange” vegetables. Examples of those vegetables are: broccoli, kale, mustard greens, acorn squash, pumpkin, sweet potatoes. These items are example of some of the types of foods school menus will now include.

### **Sodium**

For the first time, the new law sets standards for sodium in school lunch and breakfast menus. A sodium reduction is required to be phased in over a 10 year period. During that period, total sodium must be reduced by more than 50%.



**Q: Do snacks need to be removed from schools?**

A: No, but they do recommend that they should consist primarily of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.

**Q: It sounds like food will be more expensive, where will the money come from to pay for this?**

A: HHFKA authorizes additional federal support for school lunches up to an additional \$0.06 per meal served. These new funds are intended to offset the increased costs associated with the new law and buying more fresh fruit, vegetables and whole grain foods. However, the USDA expects most schools will need to increase prices between \$0.17 and \$0.24 per meal once the law is fully implemented.

**Q: In our district—what is the price increase?**

A: At the present moment, prices will not increase during the 2012-13 school year, but in the future you can expect to see an increase at some point in the upcoming years.

**Q: If my child receives free and reduced lunch, how will this new regulation effect them?**

A: Although meal prices will likely rise nationwide to meet these new standards, students who receive free and reduced lunches will not see a price increase for their lunches.

**Q: What if I have questions?**

A: Please feel free to contact Dawn Boyes, Food Service Director, Sullivan County BOCES. She can be reached at dawn.boyes@scboces.org or (845) 295-4154.

**17%**  
of U.S. children and teenagers are obese according to the Centers for Disease Control. Less-active lifestyles and less-than-healthy food choices are two major contributors.