



# Your Guide to the Lunch Line

Delicious & Nutritious!

## How to Choose a Reimbursable Lunch in Elementary School

What is a Reimbursable Lunch?



### What are the Goals of the National School Lunch Program?

- Safeguard the health & well being of the nation's children
- Encourage domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural foods
- Give children an understanding of the relationship between proper eating habits & good health

- The National School Lunch Program allows schools to receive money & foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal served.
- To receive these benefits schools must serve lunches meeting Federal requirements regarding nutrient content and portion sizes.
- A complete meal, meeting these requirements, allows a school to receive benefits and is referred to as a "reimbursable lunch"

It must include a fruit or vegetable!

# What Makes Up a Reimbursable Lunch?

5 Possible Components

5. Milk

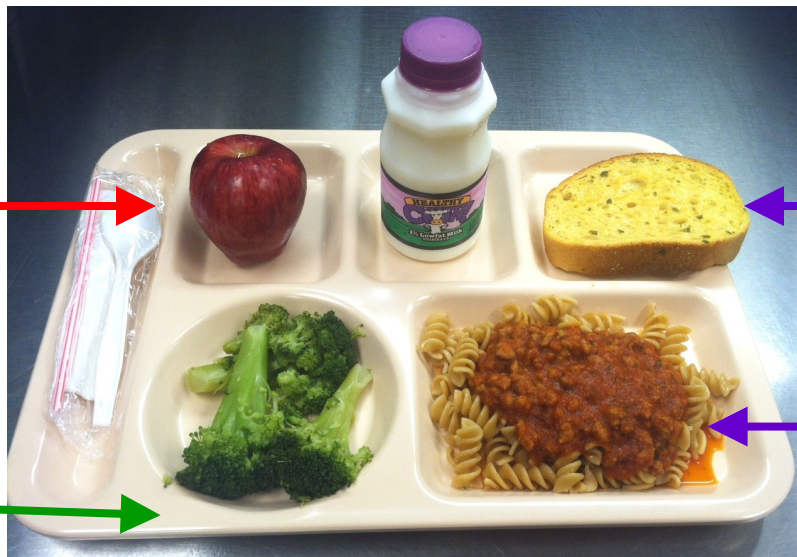
3.

Fruit

4.

Vegetable

\*Allowed up to 2 servings



1.

2.

Entrée

Comprised of:

- Meat or Meat Alternate
- Grain (bread & pasta count as the grain here)

1. Meat or Meat Alternate (included within the entrée)
2. Grain (included within the entrée)
3. Fruit
4. Vegetable
5. Milk

The 5 Meal Components

### Did You Know?

Elementary school students must take at least 1 serving of a fruit **or** vegetable. However, they may take up to 1 serving of fruit **and** 2 servings of vegetable in a meal for the same price!

A student needs 3 out of 5 components in order for a meal to be reimbursable. 1 of these 3 components must be a fruit or vegetable.



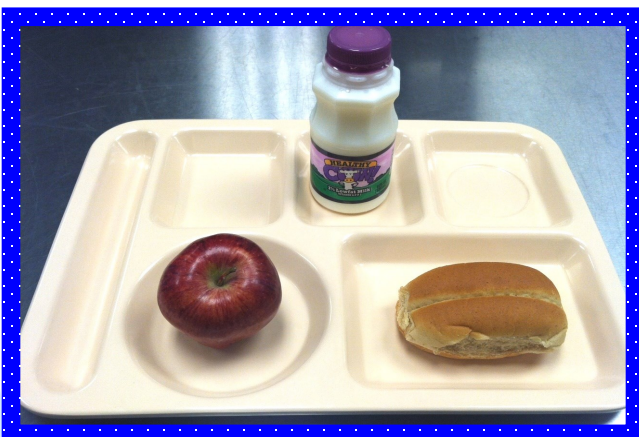
- 1. Fruit
- 2. Vegetable
- 3. Milk



- 1. Meat Alternate
- 2. Grain
- 3. Fruit
- 4. Vegetable
- 5. Milk



- 1. Meat
- 2. Grain
- 3. Fruit
- 4. Vegetable
- 5. Milk



- 1. Grain
- 2. Fruit
- 3. Milk

All of these are considered a reimbursable lunch!

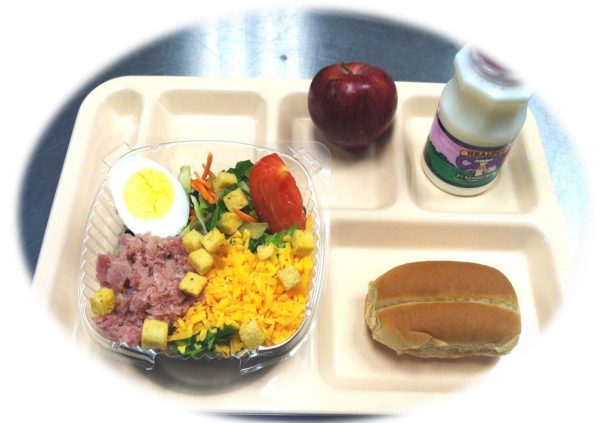
# Why Choose a Reimbursable Meal?

## Benefits for Students:

- Students learn how to build a balanced meal, a lifelong skill important for healthy living.
- Research shows when a child's nutritional needs are met, the child is more attentive in class, has better attendance, & fewer disciplinary problems.
- USDA research shows children who participate in National School Lunch Programs eat healthier compared to those who do not participate.
- School districts participating in the National School Lunch Program are required to have a wellness policy which addresses obesity, promotes healthy eating, and encourages physical activity among students.

## Benefits for the School:

- The National School Lunch Program provides cash reimbursements, on a per meal basis, to schools providing free & reduced price lunches to eligible children.
- Schools receive USDA commodity foods for each lunch served.



## Benefits for Parents:

- School lunch offers parents a convenient way to provide a nutritious lunch for their children at the lowest possible price.
- If all the components of the meal were purchased separately, it would cost \$5.00, but when purchased as a reimbursable meal it is available for \$2.50. This will save you \$2.50 per week. That is over \$400 saved over the whole school year!

## Grains

- Grains are made up of carbohydrates, which are an important energy source for the nervous system & red blood cells.
- Soluble fibers, found in grains, have been shown to lower cholesterol levels & blood glucose levels. This reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease & diabetes.
- Insoluble fibers, found in grains allow foods to move through the intestine faster. This can lower the risk of constipation, diverticular disease, & colon cancer.
- Repeated studies have shown whole grains can reduce the risk of stroke, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, as well as improve weight management.

## Milk

- Milk is a great source of calcium, which is needed for lifelong healthy bones and teeth.
- Calcium is important for young people because 90% of bone mass is developed by age 17.

# The Fantastic Five!

## The 5 Components of a Meal Help Build a Strong Body & Mind

## Fruits & Vegetables

- Fruits & vegetables provide essential vitamins & minerals, & other nutrients that are important for growth.
- Fruits & vegetables are a good source of fiber which promotes healthy digestion & may help prevent colon cancer.
- Most fruits & vegetables are naturally low in fat & calories & keep you feeling full longer.
- Eating fruits & vegetable has been shown to reduce the risk of certain chronic disease. These diseases include stroke, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, & heart disease.



## Meat

- Meat is a valuable source of protein. Proteins provide structural support to vital body tissues and structures.
- Proteins also support the immune system.
- Meat & soy are the only foods that contain all 9 essential amino acids the body needs.



# References

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<http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/what-are-the-health-benefits>

<http://www.nichd.nih.gov/milk/prob/bone.cfm>



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