



Delicious &
Nutritious!

Your Guide to the Lunch Line

How to Choose a School Lunch in Middle School

What is the
school meals
program?



What are the Goals of the National School Lunch Program?

- Improve the health and nutrition of children by providing meals that meet federal nutrition standards.
 - Ensure that all children have access to nutritious lunches,
 - Support student learning and academic success by helping reduce hunger during the school day.
 - Promote healthy eating habits through balanced meals that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and milk.
 - Support American agriculture by providing schools with USDA Foods and encouraging the use of domestic agricultural products.
- Olentangy Schools participates in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
 - As a program sponsor, Olentangy Schools must serve lunches that meet federal meal pattern requirements and make them available at free or reduced prices to all eligible students.
 - In return, the USDA provides reimbursement for each qualifying meal served, as well as domestic food products known as USDA Foods to the district.

It must
include a fruit
or vegetable!

What Makes Up a School Lunch?

5 Possible
Components

5.

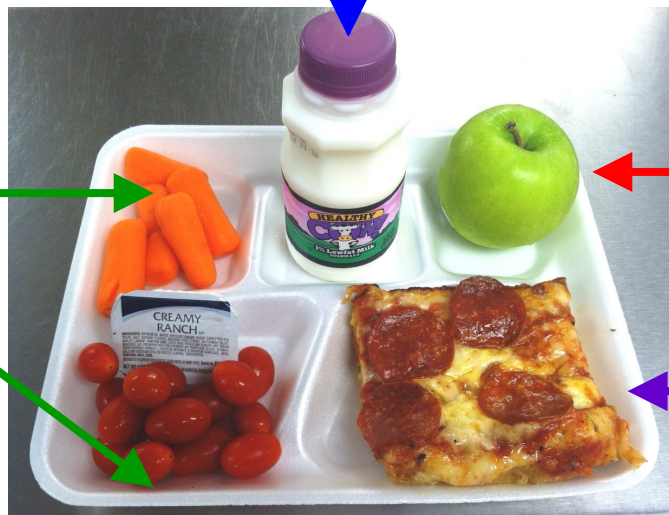
Milk

4.

Vegetable
*Allowed
up to 2

3.

Fruit



1.

2.

Entrée

Comprised of
Meat or Meat Alternate
& Grain

- 1. Meat or Meat Alternate (included within the entrée)
- 2. Grain (included within the entrée)
- 3. Fruit
- 4. Vegetable *Allowed up to 2 servings
- 5. Milk

The 5 Meal
Components

Did You Know?

Middle 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 vegetables in a meal for the same price!

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



1. Meat /Meat Alternate 2. Grain
3. Fruit



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



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



1. Fruit 2. Vegetable 3. Milk

All of these are considered a school lunch!

Why Choose a School Lunch?

Benefits for Students:

- School lunches help students learn how to build a balanced meal, a lifelong skill that supports healthy eating and overall well-being.
- Research shows that when a child's nutritional needs are met, they are more attentive in class, have better attendance, and experience fewer disciplinary issues.
- USDA research also indicates that children who participate in the National School Lunch Program generally have healthier diets than those who do not.



Benefits for Parents:

- School lunch provides parents with a convenient and affordable way to ensure their children receive a nutritious, balanced meal each day.
- The value of a school lunch extends well beyond its purchase price. If each meal component were purchased separately, the total cost would be approximately \$5.50. However, when purchased as a reimbursable school meal, the same lunch is available for just \$2.75.
- For a student who purchases lunch every school day, this represents a savings of \$13.75 per week—more than \$470 over the course of a school year. School lunch offers families both exceptional value and the confidence that their child is receiving a meal that meets federal nutrition standards.

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.

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Fax: (202) 690-7442; or

Email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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