

National School Lunch Program

5-Day Meal Pattern

Lunches served under the National School Lunch Program must meet the following meal pattern requirements.

Serve Only				Offer Versus Serve		
• Must prepare all 5 components in required amounts. • At POS: Students must take all 5 components in the minimum required amounts.				• Must prepare all five components in the required amounts. • At POS: Students must take at least 3 components in minimum required amounts, one of which must be at least ½ cup fruit or vegetable.		
Component Specifications: Daily and Weekly Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week						
Grades		K-5	6-8	K-8	9-12	Additional Information
Fruit (cups)	Weekly (daily)	2 (1/2)			5 (1)	All fruit juice must be 100% full-strength, and no more than half of the weekly fruit offerings may be in the form of juice. Dried fruit credits as double its volume (e.g., ¼ cup dried fruit credits as ½ cup fruit).
	Serve Only: minimum amount required at POS	½			1	
	OVS: minimum amount to count at POS	½			½	
Total Vegetable (cups)	Weekly (daily)	3 ¾ (3/4)			5 (1)	All vegetable juice must be 100% full-strength, and no more than half of the weekly vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice.
	Serve Only: minimum amount required at POS	¾			1	
	OVS: minimum amount to count at POS	½			½	
Vegetable Subgroups (cups)		Minimum Weekly Amounts				
Dark Green		½			½	Minimum creditable amount to count towards a subgroup is 1/8 cup. Leafy greens credit as half their volume (e.g., 1 cup leafy greens credits as ½ cup vegetable).
Red/Orange		¾			1 ¼	
Beans, Peas, and Lentils		½			½	
Starchy		½			½	
Other		½			¾	
To meet weekly requirement, vegetables from ANY subgroup		1			1 ½	
Whole Grain-Rich Grains (oz eq)	Weekly (daily) amounts *Not required to meet weekly maximum	8-9* (1)	8-10* (1)	8-9* (1)	10-12* (2)	At least 80% of the weekly grains offered must be whole grain-rich.
	Serve Only and OVS: Minimum to count as a component at POS	1	1	1	2	No more than 2 oz eq of the weekly grain offerings may be grain-based desserts.
Meat/Meat Alternate (oz eq)	Weekly (daily) amounts *Not required to meet weekly maximum	8-10* (1)	9-10* (1)	9-10* (1)	10-12* (2)	
	Serve Only and OVS: Minimum to count as a component at POS	1	1	1	2	
Fluid Milk (cups)	Weekly (daily)	5 (1)				May be whole, reduced-fat (2%), low-fat (1%), fat-free, lactose-free, or a nutritionally equivalent nondairy fluid milk substitute. May be flavored or unflavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.

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Dietary Specifications

Lunches served under the National School Lunch Program must meet the following dietary specifications.

Dietary specifications are based on average daily amounts and are unaffected by varying week lengths (average over the length of the week, whether consisting of 3 to 7 days).

Dietary Specifications				
Grades	K-5	6-8	K-8	9-12
Minimum - Maximum Calories (kcal)	550-650 kcal	600-700 kcal	600-650 kcal	750-850 kcal
Saturated Fat (% of calories)	< 10% (excluding saturated fat from milk used to meet the fluid milk component requirements)			
Sodium Interim Target 1A (mg) <i>Ends June 30, 2027</i>	≤ 1,110 mg	≤ 1,225 mg	≤ 1,110 mg	≤ 1,280 mg
Sodium Limit <i>Effective July 1, 2027</i>	≤ 935 mg	≤ 1,035 mg	≤ 935 mg	≤ 1,035 mg
Added Sugar <i>Effective July 1, 2027</i>	< 10%			
Trans Fat	0 g			

Specifications: Added Sugar (Product-Based Limits)	
Product	Added Sugar Limit <i>Effective July 1, 2025</i>
Breakfast Cereals	≤ 6 g of added sugars per dry oz
Flavored Milk	≤ 10 g of added sugars per 8 fl oz
Yogurt	≤ 12 g of added sugars per 6 oz (2 g of added sugars per oz)