

USDA Meal Pattern Nutrition Updates for SY 2025–2026

Back to School Workshop 2025



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



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Objectives

1. **Review** the USDA meal pattern food components.
2. **Identify** the new USDA meal pattern nutritional requirements for school breakfast and lunch programs.
3. **Explain** the flexibilities provided under the final rule.
4. **Evaluate** products for added sugar limits to ensure compliance for school year 2025 – 2026.
5. **Discuss** changes to the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP).



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BREAKFAST Meal Pattern Chart

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Components	Amount of Food ¹ per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ²	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ²	0	0	0
Dark Green Subgroup	0	0	0
Red/Orange Subgroup	0	0	0
Beans, Peas, and Lentils Subgroup	0	0	0
Starchy Subgroup	0	0	0
Other Vegetables Subgroup	0	0	0
Grains or Meats/Meat Alternates (oz. eq) ³	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)
Fluid Milk (cups) ⁴	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)



LUNCH Meal Pattern Chart

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Components	Amount of Food ¹ per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ²	2 ½ (½)	2 ½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ²	3 ¾ (¾)	3 ¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark Green Subgroup ³	½	½	½
Red/Orange Subgroup ³	¾	¾	1 ¼
Beans, Peas, and Lentils Subgroup ³	½	½	½
Starchy Subgroup ³	½	½	½
Other Vegetables Subgroup ^{3 4}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables from Any Subgroup to Reach Total	1	1	1 ½
Grains (oz. eq.) ⁵	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz. eq.) ⁶	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid Milk (cups) ⁷	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)



Nutrition Requirements

This section is based on the USDA Summary of Provisions in the Child Nutrition Programs: *Meal Patterns Consistent With the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* Final Rule



What are the changes in the final rule for school meals?

- **Product-Based Limits to be implemented by school year 2025-26**
- **Weekly dietary limits to be implemented by school years 2027-28**

In this session, we will focus specifically on the product-based limits.



As it Relates to Added Sugar...



To be Implemented for School Year 2025-26:

- **Breakfast cereals** may have no more than **6 grams of added sugars** per dry ounce.
- **Yogurt** may have no more than **12 grams of added sugars** per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).
- **Flavored milk** may have no more than **10 grams of added sugars** per 8 fluid ounces.
- **Flavored milk sold as a competitive food** for middle and high schools, **15 grams of added sugars** per 12 fluid ounces.



To be implemented for school year 2027-28:

- Product based limits & dietary specifications limiting added sugars to less than **10% of calories across the week.**





GOOD SOURCE OF
VITAMIN D

Trix

NATURALLY FRUIT FLAVORED SWEETENED
CORN & RICE CEREAL WITH OTHER NATURAL FLAVORS

COLORS
AND SHAPES
MAY VARY

25% LESS SUGAR

25% LESS SUGAR
THAN ORIGINAL TRIX™.
NO REDUCTION IN CALORIES.

SUGAR CONTENT HAS
BEEN REDUCED FROM 8g
TO 6g PER SERVING.

Nutrition Facts

Serving size
1 bowl (28g)

Calories **110**
per serving

Amount per serving	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 1.5g	2%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	3%

Amount per serving	% Daily Value*
Total Carbohydrate 23g	8%
Dietary Fiber 2g	3%
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 6g Added Sugars	12%
Protein 2g	

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Vitamin D 2mcg 10% • Calcium 90mg 6% • Iron 2.2mg 10% • Potassium 60mg 12%
Vitamin A 6% • Vitamin C 6% • Thiamin 10% • Riboflavin 6% • Niacin 6% • Vitamin B₆ 10%
Folate 10% (30mcg folic acid) • Vitamin B₁₂ 10% • Phosphorus 6% • Magnesium 0% • Zinc 10%

Ingredients: Whole Grain Corn, Rice Flour, Sugar, Corn Syrup, Canola and/or Sunflower Oil, Color (vegetable and fruit juice, annatto extract, turmeric extract), Salt, Trisodium Phosphate, Natural Flavor, Citric Acid, Malic Acid, Rosemary Extract. **Vitamins and Minerals:** Calcium Carbonate, Tricalcium Phosphate, Vitamin C (sodium ascorbate), Iron and Zinc (mineral nutrients), A B Vitamin (niacinamide), Vitamin B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), Vitamin B₁ (thiamin mononitrate), Vitamin A (palmitate), Vitamin B₂ (riboflavin), A B Vitamin (folic acid), Vitamin B₁₂, Vitamin D₃.

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1 BOWL = 1 OZ EQ GRAIN COMMENTS? SAVE ENTIRE PACKAGE AND CONTACT US ONLINE. WWW.GENERALMILLSFOODSERVICE.COM

110
CALORIES
PER BOWL

12g

WHOLE GRAIN PER SERVING
AT LEAST 48g RECOMMENDED DAILY

NET WT 1 OZ (28g)

Cereal
6g added sugar per
dry ounce



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Container

Calories 80

		% DV
Total Fat	0.5g	1%
Saturated Fat	0g	0%
Trans Fat	0g	
Cholesterol	<5mg	1%
Sodium	65mg	3%
Total Carbohydrate	15g	5%
Dietary Fiber	0g	0%
Total Sugars	9g	
Incl. Added Sugars	5g	10%
Sugar Alcohol	0g	
Protein	4g	



Yogurt

2g added sugar per ounce





**Chocolate Fat Free
Milk**
**10g added sugar per
8 ounces**



More on Milk

- **Fat-free and Low-fat milk, flavored or unflavored**
 - 2 options at each meal service
 - Must have unflavored
- **Ala carte**
 - Fat-Free or Low-fat, only
 - Up to 12 Fl. Oz. For Middle/High School
- **Updates to ND legislation:**
 - HB1132



Are there any changes with Whole Grains?

→ At least 80% of the weekly grains offered in school lunch and breakfast must be whole grain rich.



A vertical decorative bar on the left side of the slide, featuring a light blue background with white icons of various food items: a beet, a whisk, a bowl with flames, a carrot, a cookie, and two lemon slices.

Official Whole Grain-Rich Definition:

- Whole grain-rich is the term designated by FNS to indicate that the grain content of a product is between 50-100% whole grain with any remaining grains being enriched.



What are the Requirements Related to Fats in School Foods?

The amount of saturated fats cannot exceed 10% of the total calories as an average throughout the week.

Artificial trans fats are not allowed to be used in the U.S. food supply.



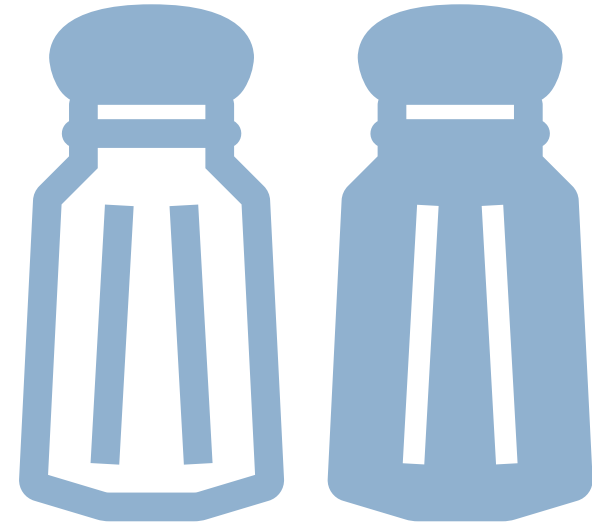
Artificial Trans Fats

Removing dietary specification prohibiting artificial trans fats, due to U.S. food supply effectively eliminating artificial trans fats from foods made or sold in the U.S.



Gradual Changes to Sodium Requirements

Maintain Current Requirements Until 2027



Sodium

School Breakfast Program Sodium Limits

Age/Grade Group	Current Sodium Limit: In place through June 30, 2027	Sodium Limit: Must be implemented by July 1, 2027
Grades K-5	≤ 540 mg	≤ 485 mg
Grades 6-8	≤ 600 mg	≤ 535 mg
Grades 9-12	≤ 640 mg	≤ 570 mg

National School Lunch Program Sodium Limits

Age/Grade Group	Current Sodium Limit: In place through June 30, 2027	Sodium Limit: Must be implemented by July 1, 2027
Grades K-5	$\leq 1,110$ mg	≤ 935 mg
Grades 6-8	$\leq 1,225$ mg	$\leq 1,035$ mg
Grades 9-12	$\leq 1,280$ mg	$\leq 1,080$ mg

Menu Planning Flexibilities



What are the Changes to Meat/Meat Alternates at Breakfast

Schools may offer grains, meats/meat alternates or a combination of both, to meet the combined component requirement based on oz equivalent.

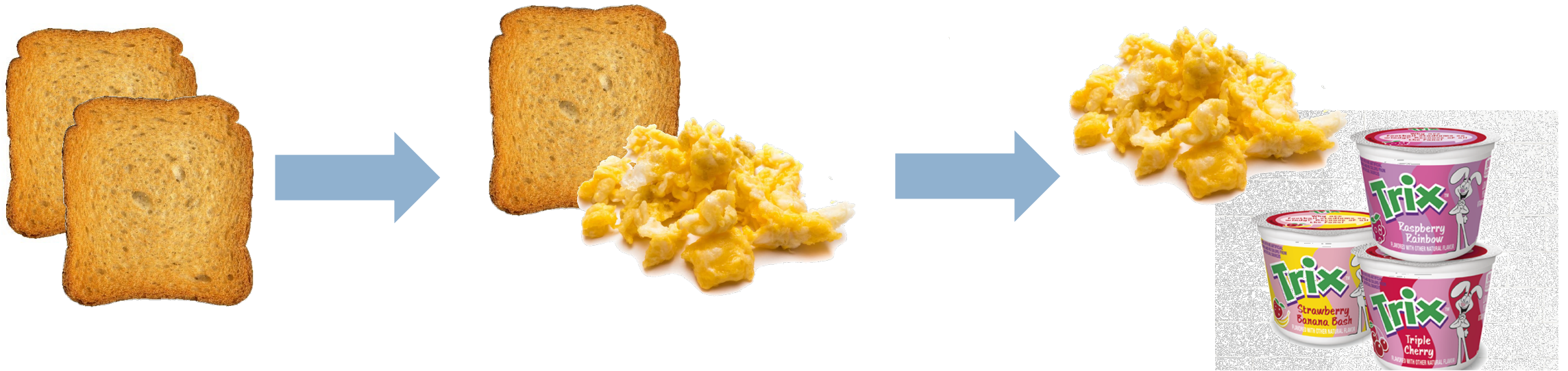


	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Meal Components	Amount of Food ¹ per Week (minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ²	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ²	0	0	0
Dark Green Subgroup	0	0	0
Red/Orange Subgroup	0	0	0
Beans, Peas, and Lentils Subgroup	0	0	0
Starchy Subgroup	0	0	0
Other Vegetables Subgroup	0	0	0
Grains or Meats/Meat Alternates (oz. eq) ³	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)
Fluid Milk (cups) ⁴	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Dietary Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week⁵			
Minimum-Maximum Calories (kcal)	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated Fat (% of total calories)	<10	<10	<10
Added Sugars (% of total calories)	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Limit: In place through June 30, 2027	≤540 mg	≤600 mg	≤640 mg
Sodium Limit: Must be implemented by July 1, 2027	≤485 mg	≤535 mg	≤570 mg

Breakfast Meal Pattern Chart



It all works!



Common Creditable Meat Alternates* (oz eq)



Bean soup (Ready-to-Serve)

- Check the "Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs" (FBG) for specific items that are creditable. Some commercially prepared products, such as bean soup, are listed in the FBG.**

½ cup = 1 oz eq



Cheese

- Natural and processed cheese and cheese substitutes such as:
 - American, Cheddar, Mozzarella, Provolone, Swiss, Feta, Brie, Parmesan, Romano
- Cottage cheese, Ricotta cheese
- Cheese food, cheese food substitutes, cheese spread***

1 oz = 1 oz eq

2 oz (or ¼ cup) = 1 oz eq

2 oz = 1 oz eq

**Eggs, whole
(fresh, frozen, dried)**

½ large egg = 1 oz eq

**Peanut butter
& other nut or seed butters**

2 tablespoons = 1 oz eq

**Yogurt or soy yogurt (commercially prepared):
plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened**

- Yogurt served in CACFP and Preschool must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces of yogurt.****
- Yogurt drinks that meet the Food and Drug Administration's Standard of Identity for yogurt.
- Yogurt is the only creditable M/MA allowed in a smoothie. Smoothies can be prepared in-house or commercially (documentation required).

½ cup (4 oz) = 1 oz eq

- Yogurt is the only creditable M/MA allowed in a smoothie. Smoothies can be prepared in-house or commercially (documentation required).

*Not an exhaustive list ** See page 4 for Items That May Be Creditable With Proper Documentation ***Not creditable in the infant meal pattern. ****Effective July 1, 2025 in NSLP, SBP, Preschool, and NSLP afterschool snacks, and October 1, 2025 in CACFP, yogurt is limited to no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces.



Can we Serve Vegetables at Breakfast?

Although it isn't a required component vegetables can be served!



Vegetables at Breakfast

Allows schools to substitute vegetables for fruit in school breakfast program. If schools offer vegetables at breakfast one day per school week they may offer any vegetable from any subgroup, including a starchy vegetable.



The Fine Print....

Additionally, after a school offers vegetables from two different subgroups the school can choose to offer any vegetables at breakfast including vegetables from a subgroup the school has already offered that school week for example a school could serve a starchy vegetable and replacement of fruit at breakfast on Monday then substitute a dark green vegetable for fruit at breakfast on Tuesday the rest of the week the school may choose to substitute any vegetable including another dark green or starchy vegetable.



Monday

Pancake

Tuesday

Scrambled Egg
WW Toast

Wednesday

Cereal
Yogurt

Thursday

Cheese Omelet

Friday

French Toast Sticks

Breakfast Potatoes

Bell Peppers

Banana

Hashbrown Patties

Strawberries

Applesauce

Mandarin Oranges

100% Fruit Juice

Peaches

100% Fruit Juice

1% White Milk
Skim White Milk

1% White Milk
Skim White Milk

1% White Milk
Skim White Milk

1% White Milk
Skim White Milk

1% White Milk
Skim White Milk



Vegetable Sub Groups

Red/Orange

Dark Green

Beans, Peas &
Lentils

Starchy

Other



Rebranding:

Legumes → Beans, Peas and Lentils



Beans, Peas and Lentils at Lunch

Schools may count beans, peas, and lentils offered as a meat/meat alternate at lunch toward the weekly bean, pea and lentil vegetable subgroup requirement.

However, menu planners would still need to serve an additional vegetable at lunch if the bean, pea and lentil is offered as the meat/meat alternate



Traditional Indigenous Foods Expansion

School food authorities and schools that are Tribally operated, operated by the Bureau of Indian Education, and that serve primarily American Indian or Alaska Native children

Substitute any creditable vegetable for grains/breads, intended to accommodate cultural food preferences.



Any Change with Nuts and Seeds?

Final rule to allow nuts and seeds to credit for the full amount at breakfast, lunch, snack.

Still consider 2 oz of peanut butter = $\frac{1}{4}$ cup



Competitive Foods: Bean Dip Exemption

- Smart Snacks
- Final rule adds bean dip to the list of foods exempt from total fat standard.
- Applies to hummus and other bean dips made from beans, peas or lentils. (still subject to saturated fat and other smart snack requirements)



Changes with Meal Modifications?

- Clarifies who can write a medical statement
- Updates regulatory text between disability and non-disability



Big Changes with Afterschool Snacks Effective July 1, 2025

**If someone else in your operation handles
this, make sure that they are aware**

- **i.e. ESP Coordinator**

**Information & updates in ASP Production
Record Book**





NSLP Afterschool Snacks (ASP)

- **Key notes:**

- Only one of the two components may be a beverage
- Milk must be fat-free or low-fat and may be unflavored or flavored
- **Grain-based desserts do not count towards grains**
- Foods that are deep-fat fried on-site are not reimbursable
- **Added sugars product-based limits for breakfast cereals and yogurts**
- **No more than half of the weekly fruit/vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice**
- **80% WGR requirement for grains**





New Snack Meal Pattern

Milk; Skim or 1%, Flavored or Unflavored	1 cup
Meat or Meat Alternate	1 ounce
Fruit	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Vegetable	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Whole Grain Rich or Enriched/Fortified Grains or Breads*	Equivalent of 1 serving

***Grain-Based Desserts
(not reimbursable in the
NSLP Afterschool Snack
Program as of July 1, 2025)***

- **Brownies**
- **Cakes**
- **Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars,**
- **Cookies, vanilla wafers**
- **Donuts**
- **Fig bars**
- **Marshmallow cereal treat bars**
- **Sweet: pie crusts, croissants, pita chips, scones, rolls such as cinnamon rolls**
- **Toaster pastries**

***Not Grain-Based Desserts
(Creditable in the NSLP Afterschool Snack
Program)***

- Quick breads, such as banana or zucchini breads
- Breakfast cereal that meets the added sugars limit (no more than 6 grams /1 ounce)
- Cornbread
- Crackers, all types, including graham crackers and animal crackers
- French toast
- Muffins
- Pancakes
- Savory: pie crusts, croissants, pita chips, scones
- Tortillas and tortilla chips

**Monday**

- 1) Sunflower Seed Kernels
(1.2 oz bag = 1 oz MMA)
- 2) Pineapple tidbits – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

Tuesday

- 1) Mandarin oranges – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup
- 2) Sugar Snap peas – $\frac{3}{4}$ cup

Wednesday

- 1) 6 oz 100% juice
- 2) 1 oz WGR Cheese Flavored Fish Cracker

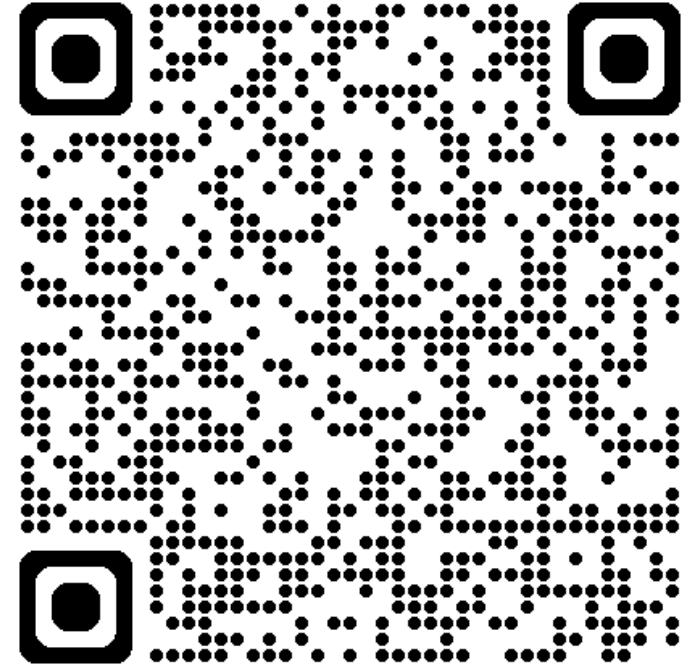
Thursday

- 1) 2 – 4oz each, Fruit cups
- 2) 1 oz WGR Chips

Friday

- 1) 4 oz Yogurt or 2 yogurt tubes
- 2) 1 oz WGR cereal

Program Operations



**Buy American, Hiring Standards, Geographic Preference,
Potable Water**





References

- United States Department of Agriculture. 2024. Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Vol. 89, Section 9, Page 32010.
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