

NEW Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns

Child and Adult Meals



USDA recently revised the CACFP meal patterns to ensure children and adults have access to healthy, balanced meals throughout the day. Under the new child and adult meal patterns, meals served will include a greater variety of vegetables and fruit, more whole grains, and less added sugar and saturated fat. The changes made to the meal patterns are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, scientific recommendations from the National Academy of Medicine and stakeholder input. CACFP centers and day care homes must comply with the new meal patterns by October 1, 2017.




New Child and Adult Meal Patterns

Greater variety of vegetables and fruits:

- * The combined fruit and vegetable component is now a separate vegetable component and a separate fruit component; and
- * Vegetable and fruit juice is limited to once per day.

More whole grains:

- * At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich; 
- * Grain-based desserts no longer count towards the grains component; and
- * Ounce equivalents (oz eq) are used to determine the amount of creditable grains.

More protein options:

- * Meat and meat alternates may be served in place of the entire grains component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week; and
- * Tofu counts as a meat alternate.


Age appropriate meals:

- * A new age group to address the needs of older children 13 through 18 years old.

Less added sugar:

- * Yogurt must contain 23 grams of sugar or less per 6 ounces; and
- * Breakfast cereals must contain 6 grams of sugar or less per dry ounce.

Making every sip count:

- * Unflavored whole milk must be served to 1 year olds; unflavored low-fat or fat-free milk must be served to children 2 through 5 years old; and unflavored low-fat, unflavored fat-free, or flavored fat-free milk must be served to children 6 years old and older and adults;
- * Non-dairy milk substitutes that are nutritionally equivalent to milk may be served in place of milk to children or adults with medical or special dietary needs; and 
- * Yogurt may be served in place of milk once per day for adults only.

Additional improvements:

- * Extends offer versus serve to at-risk afterschool programs; and
- * Frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods on-site.

See a side-by-side comparison of the old and new child and adult meal patterns on the other side. For more information on the new CACFP meal patterns visit: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>.



Old and New Child and Adult Meal Patterns: Let's Compare



Breakfast Meal Patterns

	Ages 1-2		Ages 3-5		Ages 6-12 & 13-18		Adults	
	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Vegetables, fruit, or both	¼ cup	¼ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Grains	½ serving	½ oz eq*	½ serving	½ oz eq*	1 serving	1 oz eq*	2 servings	2 oz eq*

*Meat and meat alternates may be used to substitute the entire grains component a maximum of three times per week.

Oz eq = ounce equivalents

Lunch and Supper Meal Patterns

	Ages 1-2		Ages 3-5		Ages 6-12 & 13-18		Adults	
	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup*
Meat and meat alternates	1 oz	1 oz	1 ½ oz	1 ½ oz	2 oz	2 oz	2 oz	2 oz
Vegetables	¼ cup	⅛ cup	½ cup	¼ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	1 cup	½ cup
Fruit		⅛ cup		¼ cup		¼ cup		
Grains	½ serving	½ oz eq	½ serving	½ oz eq	1 serving	1 oz eq	2 servings	2 oz eq

*A serving of milk is not required at supper meals for adults

Oz eq = ounce equivalents

Snack Meal Pattern

	Ages 1-2		Ages 3-5		Ages 6-12 & 13-18		Adults	
	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
Milk	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Meat and meat alternates	½ oz	½ oz	½ oz	½ oz	1 oz	1 oz	1 oz	1 oz
Vegetables	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Fruit		½ cup		½ cup		¾ cup		
Grains	½ serving	½ oz eq	½ serving	½ oz eq	1 serving	1 oz eq	1 serving	1 oz eq

Select 2 of the 5 components for snack.

Oz eq = ounce equivalents

