

Healthy Child and Infant Meal Patterns

Obesity is an epidemic in NYS. More than 31% of New York's preschool children are overweight or obese! CACFP has announced that it will be joining in the fight against childhood obesity which can lead to chronic diseases such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

CACFP has revised and renamed its Child and Infant Meal Pattern to reflect the important role that you as a provider play in serving healthy food. ***Effective January 1, 2010, all meals must follow the Healthy Child/Infant Meal Pattern to be eligible for reimbursement.***

Required Child Meal Pattern Changes

- A. Milk
 - Children ages 1-5 must be served only unflavored milk.
 - For children 1-2 years of age, the milk must be whole.
 - For children 2-18 years of age, the milk must be fat-free or low-fat (1%).
 - The menu must specify the type of milk served.
- B. Vegetables/Fruits
 - No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.
- C. Grains/Breads
 - Sweet-grain products and sweet cereals may not be served at lunch or supper.
 - No more than two servings of sweet-grain products and/or sweet cereals may be served per week.
 - Sweet-grain products are specified in the Grains/Breads section of the Crediting Foods in CACFP under groups D, E, F and G. They include doughnuts, pastries, Pop-Tarts®, toaster pastries, granola bars, breakfast bars, muffins, cookies, cakes and brownies.
 - Sweet cereals are those that contain more than 6 grams of sugar per adult serving.
- D. Meat/Meat Alternates
 - Yogurt must be fat-free or low-fat and prepared without artificial sweeteners.
- E. Other
 - Water must be served with snack if neither of the two required components is a beverage. Water is not counted as a snack component.
 - The menu must specify when water is served at snack.

Required Infant Meal Pattern Changes (8-12 months of age only)

- A. Vegetables/Fruits
 - No more than one serving of juice may be served per day.
 - Juice must be served from a cup, not a bottle.
- B. Meat/Meat Alternates
 - Cheese food and cheese spread are not allowed as a meat alternate for infants.

Recommended Child Meal Pattern Changes

The following are recommendations for improvement that would further enhance the quality of meals served. They are not required and are not incorporated into the Healthy Child Meal Pattern.

A. Milk

- Unflavored fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk is recommended for school-age children.

B. Vegetables/Fruits

- Vegetables and fruits should be fresh, frozen, or canned and prepared with no added sugar, salt or fat.
- At least one of the two servings of vegetable/fruit required at lunch and supper should be a vegetable.
- One or more servings of vegetable/fruit per day should be high in vitamin C.
- Three or more servings of vegetable/fruit per week should be high in vitamin A.
- Three or more servings of vegetable/fruit per week should be fresh.

C. Grains/Breads

- All breads and cereals served should be whole grain. To be considered whole grain, the first ingredient listed on the nutrition label should be whole grain, not enriched.

D. Meat/Meat Alternates

- Meat and meat alternates (chicken, turkey, beef, pork, lamb, fish, and/or vegetable proteins) should be lean or low-fat.
- Meat and meat alternates should be prepared without adding extra fat.
- No more than one serving of processed or high-fat meat should be served per week. This includes hot dogs, chicken nuggets, fish sticks, fried chicken, Vienna sausages, corn dogs and/or cold cuts.
- No more than one serving of cheese should be served per week, unless the cheese is low-fat.