

New York City Food Standards

# Meals and Snacks Purchased and Served

Implementation Guide

# Contents

<b>Overview</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 1: Standards for Purchased Food</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Reference Table .....	<b>6</b>
Nutrient Requirements: Examples and Implementation Tips .....	<b>10</b>
Food Category Requirements: Examples and Implementation Tips.....	<b>10</b>
Checking Nutrition Facts Labels .....	<b>16</b>
<b>Section 2: Standards for Meals and Snacks Served</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Food Preparation and Service .....	<b>18</b>
Soliciting Client Feedback .....	<b>18</b>
Nutrient Requirements for Meals Served.....	<b>19</b>
Fruits and Vegetables .....	<b>24</b>
Grains.....	<b>26</b>
Beef.....	<b>26</b>
Processed Meat .....	<b>26</b>
Plant-based Entrees.....	<b>26</b>
Seafood.....	<b>27</b>
Dairy .....	<b>27</b>
Beverages.....	<b>28</b>
Snacks .....	<b>28</b>
Special Occasions.....	<b>28</b>
<b>Additional Resources</b> .....	<b>29</b>
Educational Resources.....	<b>29</b>
Recipes .....	<b>29</b>
Sustainability.....	<b>29</b>
<b>Appendices</b> .....	<b>30</b>
Sample Menus.....	<b>30</b>
Notes.....	<b>34</b>

## New York City (NYC) Food Standards

The NYC Food Standards (Food Standards) were first made effective by an Executive Order in 2008 and reaffirmed by Executive Order 8<sup>1</sup> on February 10, 2022. The Food Standards aim to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease, such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, by increasing access to healthy foods and improving dietary intake. The Food Standards help to combat some of the structural inequities that make healthy eating inaccessible for people with limited resources by ensuring all New Yorkers accessing meals or snacks from City agencies and their contractors will be served more nutritious foods.

## Standards for Meals and Snacks Purchased and Served

The Standards for Meals and Snacks Purchased and Served (Meals and Snacks Standards) apply to all foods and beverages purchased, prepared or served as meals or snacks to clients by City agencies and their contractors. These standards allow City agencies and their contractors to offer meals and snacks that are lower in sodium, added sugar and saturated fat and contain more whole, plant-based, nutrient-dense foods or ingredients. The Meals and Snacks Standards promote an economically and environmentally sustainable food system and align with NYC's commitment to adopt a Good Food Purchasing<sup>2</sup> framework.

## Using This Implementation Guide

This guide provides examples, tips, definitions and other tools to help City agencies and their contractors comply with the Meals and Snacks Standards and support implementation. The sections in this guide follow along with the Meals and Snacks Standards. City agencies are encouraged to read the Meals and Snacks Standards, which include all requirements and recommendations, before reading this guide.

Share the Meals and Snacks Standards and this implementation guide with your vendors and all staff involved in planning, purchasing, receiving or serving meals or snacks at your program. For more information and to read the Meals and Snacks Standards, visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search for **NYC Food Standards**.



<sup>1</sup>View the Executive Order at [nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/executive-orders/2022/eo-8.pdf](https://nyc.gov/assets/home/downloads/pdf/executive-orders/2022/eo-8.pdf).

<sup>2</sup>Center for Good Food Purchasing Program. The Good Food Purchasing Values. Available at [goodfoodpurchasing.org](https://goodfoodpurchasing.org).



## Definitions and Examples of Terms

The following table provides definitions and examples of terms (such as types of food, ingredients and food categories) found in the Meals and Snacks Standards.

Term	Definition	Examples
<b>Added sugar</b>	Any nutritive sweetener added to food during processing; food packaged as a sweetener; or sugar from syrup, honey, concentrated fruit or vegetable juice. Added sugar includes sugars used in recipes, cooking and baking but not naturally occurring sugars found in milk, fruits and vegetables. <sup>3</sup>	Table, brown, invert, raw and turbinado sugar; honey; corn sweetener; corn and malt syrup; high-fructose corn syrup; dextrose; fructose; glucose; lactose; maltose; sucrose; evaporated cane juice; fruit juice concentrates; molasses; and trehalose
<b>Frozen whole meals</b>	An entire meal (an entree and sides, but excluding a beverage) that is purchased precooked and frozen.	Meals supplied by a caterer and prepackaged meals that have multiple components
<b>Low- and no-calorie sweeteners</b>	Any no- or low-calorie alternatives to added sugar. These sweeteners contain fewer calories per gram than nutritive sweeteners because they are not completely absorbed by the digestive system. <sup>4</sup>	Acesulfame potassium, aspartame, saccharin, sucralose, stevia leaf extract, sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol, isomalt, xylitol, erythritol and monkfruit extract
<b>Plant-based entrees</b>	Any entree that includes a whole or minimally processed plant-based protein as the primary protein component.	Vegetable wrap with hummus, stir-fry with edamame or tofu, spicy three bean chili, lentil tacos, and coconut chickpea curry
<b>Portion-controlled and convenience foods</b>	Any food or ingredient that is purchased partially or completely prepared, and ready to heat and serve.	Breaded chicken; fish sticks; pancake or baking mix; and frozen pancakes, lasagna and veggie burgers
<b>Processed meat</b>	Meat that has been transformed through the following processes to enhance flavor or improve preservation: <sup>5,6</sup> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Curing:</b> To add salt, sugar or sodium nitrite to meat for color development, flavor enhancement, preservation or safety.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>	Hot dogs, sausages, bacon, deli meat (such as turkey, ham, bologna and salami), pepperoni, jerky, products that contain nitrates or nitrites, and substances that act as nitrates (such as celery seed powder)

<sup>3</sup>Adapted from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Available at [fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/added-sugars-new-nutrition-facts-label](https://www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/added-sugars-new-nutrition-facts-label).

<sup>4</sup>Adapted from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and FDA. Available at [www.nal.usda.gov/human-nutrition-and-food-safety/food-composition/sweeteners](https://www.nal.usda.gov/human-nutrition-and-food-safety/food-composition/sweeteners) and [permanent.access.gpo.gov/lps1609/www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2006/406\\_sweeteners.html](https://permanent.access.gpo.gov/lps1609/www.fda.gov/fdac/features/2006/406_sweeteners.html).

<sup>5</sup>Adapted from the World Health Organization. Available at [who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/cancer-carcinogenicity-of-the-consumption-of-red-meat-and-processed-meat](https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/cancer-carcinogenicity-of-the-consumption-of-red-meat-and-processed-meat).

<sup>6</sup>Murano, S. *Understanding Food Science and Technology*. Wadsworth Thomson Learning; 2003.

Term	Definition	Examples
<b>Processed meat (continued)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fermentation:</b> To add fermentative bacteria to meat to add flavor or stop the growth of harmful organisms.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• <b>Salting:</b> To preserve meat with sodium.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• <b>Smoking:</b> To expose meat to smoke from burning hickory wood or applying liquid smoke ingredients to meat.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• <b>Other preservatives:</b> Food additives listed in Title 21 of the Code of Federal Regulations.</li> </ul>	
<b>Seafood that contains heart-healthy oils</b>	Any fish or shellfish that contains beneficial fatty acids (such as eicosapentaenoic acid and docosahexaenoic acid). <sup>7</sup>	Salmon, anchovies, herring, sardines, trout, and Atlantic and Pacific mackerel
<b>Whole and minimally processed foods</b>	<p>Whole foods are unprocessed and contain edible parts of plants or animals.</p> <p>Minimally processed foods are unprocessed or whole foods altered by industrial processes (such as the removal of inedible parts) to extend shelf life but that do not add any new substance (such as fats, sugars or salt).<sup>8</sup></p>	<p>Whole foods: seeds, fruits, vegetables, animal muscle meat, eggs and milk</p> <p>Minimally processed foods: fresh, dried, dehydrated and baked fruits and vegetables; nuts and seeds; nut and seed butters; and baked and roasted beans and legumes that do not contain low- or no-calorie sweeteners</p>
<b>Whole and minimally processed plant-based proteins</b>	<p>Whole plant-based proteins are any unprocessed plant-based proteins.</p> <p>Minimally processed plant-based proteins are any item with an unprocessed plant-based protein first or second on its ingredients list and that does not contain high-fructose corn syrup, hydrogenated oils, hydrolyzed proteins, modified starches, or additives made from organic or synthetic substances.<sup>8</sup></p>	<p>Whole plant-based protein: beans, chickpeas, lentils, edamame, nuts and seeds</p> <p>Minimally processed plant-based protein: tofu, seitan, some types of hummus and some bean-based burgers</p>
<b>Whole grain</b>	<p>Any grain that contains all three original parts – the bran, germ and endosperm.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>A product must have a whole grain first on its ingredients list to be considered whole grain.</p>	Barley; corn; oats; quinoa; brown and wild rice; and all cereal, tortillas, rolls, bagels, sliced bread and pasta with whole-wheat or whole-grain flour as the first ingredient in the ingredients list

<sup>7</sup>Adapted from the USDA and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Available at [dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary\\_Guidelines\\_for\\_Americans\\_2020-2025.pdf](https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/sites/default/files/2020-12/Dietary_Guidelines_for_Americans_2020-2025.pdf).

<sup>8</sup>Adapted from NOVA, a food classification system.

<sup>9</sup>Adapted from the Oldways Whole Grains Council. Available at [wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/whats-whole-grain-refined-grain](https://www.wholegrainscouncil.org/whole-grains-101/whats-whole-grain-refined-grain).

# Standards for Purchased Food

Standards are based on serving sizes indicated on items' Nutrition Facts labels and not portions served by a program. Check Nutrition Facts labels to determine if items meet the Standards for Purchased Foods in Section 1 of the Meals and Snacks Standards. Follow the standards when:

- Purchasing items from a store, vendor or caterer, or drafting contract specifications
  - Share the Standards for Purchased Food with your vendors. Use this guide to let vendors know about relevant standards when placing an order.
  - Compare each item's nutrition information to the Standards for Purchased Food before purchasing.
- Receiving food deliveries
  - Compare each item's nutrition information to the Standards for Purchased Food before accepting a delivery.

Make the following environmental sustainability and animal welfare considerations when drafting contract specifications and purchasing foods and beverages:

- Purchase foods grown using few or no pesticides, or an integrated pest management system. Look for items labeled "USDA Organic."
- Request animal products that are produced without antimicrobial drugs for disease prevention.
- Purchase food in bulk containers instead of individual portions to reduce waste from food packaging. Request that producers and distributors use recyclable or compostable food packaging.
- Purchase produce, beans, grains and grain-based products, milk, eggs and dairy, seafood, poultry, and meat from New York State (NYS) or regional sources whenever practical.
- Serve food grown at your program's farm or garden.

## Reference Table

Use the following table to make sure all food and beverages served meet the sodium, fiber and total sugar requirements in Sections 1 and 2.C.2 of the Meals and Snacks Standards. The table includes examples of common foods and beverages but does not provide a comprehensive list of items a program may purchase. Standards are per serving unless otherwise indicated.

Food Item	Sodium	Fiber	Total Sugar	Other Standards or Recommendations
<b>Bacon (beef, pork or turkey)</b>	Less than or equal to ( $\leq$ ) 480 milligrams (mg)	N/A <sup>†</sup>	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require be phased out by 2025.</li> <li>Recommend contain <math>\leq</math> 290 mg of sodium.</li> </ul>
<b>Bagel</b>	$\leq$ 290 mg	N/A	$\leq$ 18 grams (g)	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Baked goods</b>	$\leq$ 290 mg	N/A	$\leq$ 18 g	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Baking mixes</b>	$\leq$ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Beans (canned and frozen)</b>	$\leq$ 290 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Beef (canned)</b>	$\leq$ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	Recommend ground beef be extra lean (total fat $\leq$ 5%) and greater than or equal to ( $\geq$ ) 90% lean.
<b>Beverages (excluding milk and 100% juice)</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Require contain $\leq$ 24 calories per 8 ounces (oz).
<b>Bread (sliced sandwich)</b>	$\leq$ 180 mg	$\geq$ 2 g	N/A	Require be whole wheat or whole grain.
<b>Bread (French, Italian or hero)</b>	$\leq$ 290 mg	N/A	$\leq$ 18 g	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Breakfast sausage (beef, pork or turkey)</b>	$\leq$ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Require be phased out by 2025.</li> <li>Recommend contain <math>\leq</math> 290 mg of sodium.</li> </ul>
<b>Cereal</b>	$\leq$ 215 mg	$\geq$ 2 g	$\leq$ 6 g ( $\leq$ 17 g if it contains raisins, dates or cranberries)	Require be whole grain.
<b>Cheese</b>	$\leq$ 350 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Cheese sauce</b>	$\leq$ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A

<sup>†</sup>N/A: Not applicable

Food Item	Sodium	Fiber	Total Sugar	Other Standards or Recommendations
<b>Chicken (canned or frozen)</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Chicken patties</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Deli meat (turkey or ham)</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	Require be phased out by 2025.
<b>Fish (canned or frozen)</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	N/A	Recommend be purchased from sustainable fisheries and stocks.
<b>Fish sticks</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Fluid milk substitutes (nondairy beverages)</b>	N/A	N/A	≤ 9 g per 8 oz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk.</li> <li>• Require flavored fluid milk substitutes contain ≤ 130 calories per serving (for children ages 4 to 18).</li> </ul>
<b>Fruit (canned)</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Require be packed in 100% juice or water with no added sugar.
<b>Grain-based items served with meals</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	≤ 18 g	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Grain-based items served with snacks</b>	≤ 200 mg	≥ 2 g	≤ 10 g	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require contain ≥ 2 g fiber per serving.</li> <li>• Recommend be whole grain.</li> </ul>
<b>Juice</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Require be 100% juice and contain no added sweeteners.
<b>Lasagna</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Milk</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Require be 1% or nonfat with no added sweeteners.</li> <li>• Required flavored milk contain ≤ 130 calories per serving (for children ages 4 to 18).</li> </ul>
<b>Muffins</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	≤ 18 g	Recommend be whole grain.



<b>Food Item</b>	<b>Sodium</b>	<b>Fiber</b>	<b>Total Sugar</b>	<b>Other Standards or Recommendations</b>
<b>Pancakes (frozen)</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Pastries</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	≤ 18 g	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Pork (canned or frozen)</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	Recommend be extra lean (total fat ≤ 5%) and ≥ 90% lean.
<b>Processed meat</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	Require be phased out by 2025.
<b>Rolls</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	≤ 18 g	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Salad dressing</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	N/A	Recommend be vinegar-based.
<b>Sauces (barbecue, honey mustard or marinara)</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Seafood (canned or frozen)</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	N/A	Recommend be purchased from sustainable fisheries and stocks.
<b>Soy sauce</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	Require be labeled “less sodium” or “reduced sodium.”
<b>Turkey (canned or frozen)</b>	≤ 290 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Waffles (frozen)</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	Recommend be whole grain.
<b>Vegetables (canned or frozen)</b>	≤ 220 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Veggie burger (frozen)</b>	≤ 480 mg	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Yogurt</b>	N/A	N/A	See “Sugar Limits for Yogurt” on Page 12.	Require be low-fat or nonfat.

## Nutrient Requirements: Examples and Implementation Tips

### Avoid Trans Fat

Examples of food to watch out for that are more likely to contain trans fat include margarine, oil, baked goods, crackers, baking and sauce mixes, pudding, and snacks.



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Although trans fat has mostly been phased out of the U.S. food supply, it may still be found in specific foods. To avoid trans fat, check every food item's ingredients list before serving and do not serve foods that contain partially hydrogenated oils.

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### Limit Sodium

Examples of high-sodium foods include baking mixes, pasta sauces, chicken stock and other broths and soup bases, processed meats, canned soups, and canned and packaged meals.



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To reduce the amount of sodium in meals and snacks your program serves:

- Choose whole foods over processed foods, as they generally contain less sodium.
  - Cook food from scratch when possible and always use standardized recipes.
  - Check for high-sodium ingredients or items that are used in multiple dishes and switch to low- or no-sodium varieties. This way, one ingredient or item change can lower the amount of sodium in multiple dishes.
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## Food Category Requirements: Examples and Implementation Tips

### Beverages

#### Added Sugar

Examples of beverages that contain no added sugar include water, unsweetened tea, unsweetened seltzer (plain and flavored) and flavored unsweetened water.



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To avoid serving beverages that contain added sugar at your program:

- Check the Nutrition Facts label on beverages for added sugar.
  - Only purchase juice labeled "100% juice." Avoid juices labeled "cocktail" or "juice drink," as they usually contain added sweeteners.
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## Calorie Limits

All beverages must contain  $\leq 24$  calories per 8 oz, except milk and 100% fruit juice. To determine how many calories there are per 8 oz in a beverage:

1. Divide the total number of calories in the container by the container size (in oz).
2. Multiply that number by 8.

For example, a 12-ounce can of soda contains 120 calories. Divide 120 by 12, which equals 10. Then, multiply 10 by 8, which equals 80. The can of soda contains 80 calories per 8 oz, which means it is **not** compliant with the standards.

## Milk

The requirements for milk by age group is listed in the following table.

Age Group	Amount per 8 oz
<b>Children ages 12 months to 2 years</b>	Only whole, unsweetened milk is permitted.
<b>Children ages 2 to 4</b>	Only unsweetened, 1% or nonfat milk is permitted.
<b>Children ages 4 to 18</b>	1% or nonfat milk is permitted. Unsweetened and unflavored milk is recommended. Flavored milk or flavored milk substitutes are allowed but must contain $\leq 130$ calories per serving.
<b>Adults age 19 or older</b>	Only unsweetened, 1% and nonfat milk is permitted.
<b>Everyone age 12 months or older</b>	Fluid milk substitutes are permitted but must be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk and contain $\leq 9$ g of sugar per 8 oz.

## Fluid Milk Substitutes

Fluid milk substitutes must be nutritionally equivalent<sup>10</sup> to cow's milk per 8 oz as shown in the following table.<sup>11</sup>

Nutrient	Amount per 8 oz
<b>Calcium</b>	276 mg
<b>Protein</b>	8 g
<b>Vitamin A</b>	500 international units (IU)
<b>Vitamin D</b>	100 IU
<b>Magnesium</b>	24 mg
<b>Phosphorus</b>	222 mg
<b>Potassium</b>	349 mg
<b>Riboflavin</b>	0.44 mg
<b>Vitamin B12</b>	1.1 micrograms



**Soy milk is more likely to be nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk than other substitutes.**

<sup>10</sup>The nutrients must meet or exceed the amounts per 8 oz listed in the table, except for protein. Fluid milk substitutes may not exceed 8 g of protein per 8 oz.

<sup>11</sup>Adapted from the USDA. Available at [ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-215/section-215.7a](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-B/chapter-II/subchapter-A/part-215/section-215.7a).

## Dairy Foods

Examples of dairy foods include yogurt, yogurt smoothies and cheese. Yogurt served to children must not contain low- or no-calorie sweeteners.



### Tips

- Only purchase yogurt labeled “low-fat” or “nonfat.”
- Low-fat and nonfat plain yogurt always meet the Standards for Purchased Food.
- Sweeten yogurt with diced fresh fruit or dried fruit that contains no added sugar.
- Varieties of cheese that contain less sodium include Swiss, goat, Monterey Jack, ricotta and fresh mozzarella.

## Sugar Limits for Yogurt

Use the following table to help meet the sugar standard for typical yogurt servings and containers.

Yogurt Serving Size	Total Sugar	Added Sugar
<b>3.5 oz (99 g)</b>	≤ 11 g	≤ 6 g
<b>4 oz (113 g)</b>	≤ 13 g	≤ 7 g
<b>5.3 oz (150 g)</b>	≤ 17 g	≤ 9 g
<b>6 oz (170 g)</b>	≤ 19 g	≤ 11 g
<b>8 oz (227 g)</b>	≤ 25 g	≤ 14 g

## Grains

### Sodium and Sugar

Examples of grain-based products likely to be high in sodium include tortillas, sandwich wraps, rolls, bagels and muffins. Examples of grain-based products likely to be high in sugar include muffins, sweet rolls, banana and zucchini bread, pastries, cakes, and cookies.



### Tips

To reduce the amount of sodium and sugar in grains your program serves:

- Purchase smaller-sized breakfast breads, wraps and bagels.
- Make breakfast breads and desserts from scratch when possible.
- Purchase plain (unflavored) oatmeal.
- Sweeten breakfast cereals (which include hot and cold cereals) with diced fresh fruit such as bananas, apples, pears, peaches or berries.



## Whole-grain Products

Examples of whole grains include whole wheat, whole rye, whole oats, whole corn, wild rice, brown rice, brown rice flour, buckwheat, bulgur, millet, oatmeal, popcorn, quinoa, rolled oats, wheat berries, farro, amaranth, spelt and teff.

Products labeled “multi-grain,” “stone-ground,” “100% wheat,” “cracked wheat,” “seven-grain” or “bran” are **usually not** whole grain. Products that have all-purpose flour, enriched flour, rice flour, unbleached flour, wheat flour or semolina as their first ingredient are **not** whole grain.

## **Fruits, Vegetables and Beans**

### Sodium and Sugar

Examples of canned and frozen vegetables include mixed vegetables, green beans, tomatoes and beets.

Examples of canned and frozen beans include chickpeas, kidney and black beans, and edamame.

Examples of canned fruits include pears, peaches, pineapples, fruit cocktails and unsweetened applesauce.



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**To reduce the amount of sodium and sugar in fruits, vegetables and beans your program serves:**

- Purchase fresh, frozen or dried products, as they generally contain less sodium than canned varieties.
  - If purchasing canned products, compare the Nutrition Facts labels of similar items to choose the one lowest in sodium.
  - Ask your vendor for fruits, vegetables and beans labeled “no salt added.”
  - Avoid frozen and canned vegetables that are already seasoned or in a sauce.
  - Check ingredients lists to make sure added sweeteners have not been added. For a list of added sweeteners, see the Definitions and Examples of Terms table on Page 4.
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## Sustainability

Consider offering seasonally available, regional or local produce options (for example, New York apples and New Jersey tomatoes) whenever possible. For resources on seasonal produce, see “Additional Resources” on Page 29.

Draft specifications that allow local farms to bid on contracts. For example, specify that your program would only like to receive varieties of fresh apples that are grown locally, such as Empire, Rome, Gala or Crispin apples. Only require USDA grades and standards for produce when necessary, as doing so may prevent small- and medium-sized farms from bidding on contracts.<sup>12</sup>

## **Seafood**

Examples of canned and frozen seafood include canned tuna and salmon, and frozen cod, tilapia, shrimp and pollock.



### **Tips**

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**Use the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch recommendation tool<sup>13</sup> to search for and identify sustainable and locally caught seafood available for purchase. Look for species labeled “best choice,” “certified” or “good alternative.”**

- **Tell your vendor about your commitment to purchasing seafood from sustainable fisheries and stocks.**
  - **Draft contract specifications to include sustainable seafood species only.**
  - **For all seafood purchased, ask your vendor to include the species name, source, and way it was caught or farmed on invoices.**
  - **Ask your vendor to help you find alternatives for any popular choices of seafood labeled “avoid” by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch.**
  - **Balance more expensive seafood options with less expensive seafood options to help manage costs.**
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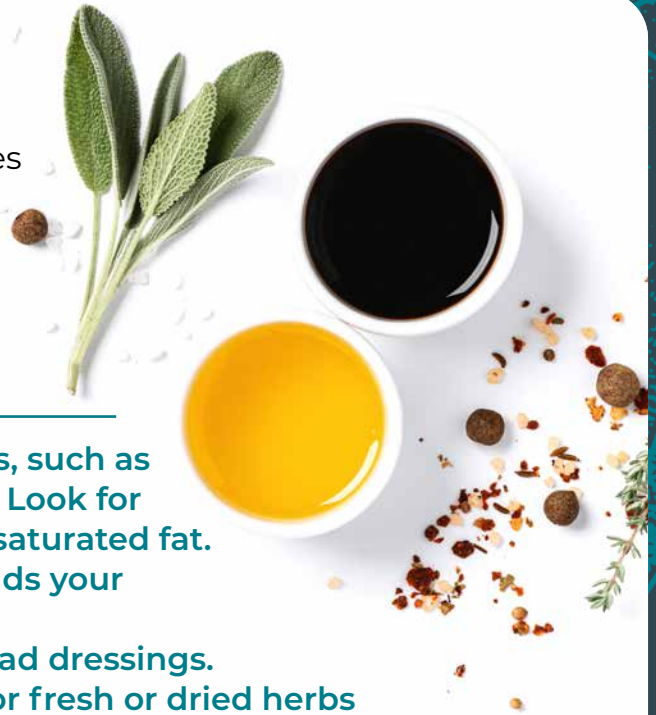


<sup>12</sup>Adapted from the USDA. Available at [www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards](http://www.ams.usda.gov/grades-standards).

<sup>13</sup>Available at [seafoodwatch.org/recommendations](http://seafoodwatch.org/recommendations).

## Condiments and Sauces

Examples of sauces include barbecue, teriyaki, honey mustard, marinara and hot sauce. Examples of condiments include mustard, mayonnaise, ketchup and relish. Examples of salad dressings include bottled or individually packaged Italian, French, ranch, blue cheese, balsamic vinaigrette and Thousand Island dressing.



### Tips

- Purchase vinegar-based salad dressings, such as balsamic vinaigrette or Italian dressing. Look for options that contain lower amounts of saturated fat.
- To reduce the amount of sodium in salads your program serves:
  - Offer oil and vinegar instead of salad dressings.
  - Add vinegar, lemon or lime juice, or fresh or dried herbs to enhance flavor.
  - Make your own low-sodium salad dressings and marinades in bulk. Refrigerate them for future use.

## Portion-controlled and Other Convenience Foods

Examples of portion-controlled and convenience foods include veggie burgers, breaded chicken patties, frozen French toast, baking and pancake mixes, and canned ravioli.



### Tips

- Check every portion-controlled or convenience food's Nutrition Facts label, as they usually contain high amounts of sodium or added sugars.
- If your program serves these foods, ask your vendor for varieties that contain low amounts of sodium and added sugar.

## Frozen Whole Meals

Examples of frozen whole meals include meals supplied by a caterer and prepackaged meals that have multiple components.



### Tip

- Purchase frozen whole meals that contain vegetables and whole grains, which have a higher nutritional value.



## Checking Nutrition Facts Labels

The Nutrition Facts label is an important tool to help you determine if a food item or beverage meets the Standards for Purchased Food. Nutrition Facts labels are usually found on an individual item's packaging or the outer case of bulk items. If an item does not have a Nutrition Facts label, contact your vendor or the manufacturer.

### Example 1: Frozen Veggie Burger

Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
<b>Serving size 1 burger (113g)</b>	
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>280</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 14g	<b>18%</b>
Saturated Fat 2g	<b>10%</b>
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 510mg	<b>22%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 18g	<b>7%</b>
Dietary Fiber 7g	<b>25%</b>
Total Sugars 5g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	<b>4%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 19g	
Vit. D 0mcg 0% • Calcium 45mg 4%	
Iron 4.9mg 25% • Potass. 340mg 8%	

\*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.

**Ingredients:** Lentils, black beans, beets, salt, cooked quinoa, roasted garlic, beet powder, arrowroot powder, chili powder, vinegar

### Item Assessment

1. Read the item's packaging and ingredients list to figure out which requirements apply.
2. Compare the information on the item's Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list with the requirements outlined in the Standards for Purchased Food.
  - This item is a convenience food. It must contain no trans fat and  $\leq 480$  mg of sodium per serving.
3. Assess if the item can be purchased.
  - While this item contains no trans fat, it contains  $> 480$  mg of sodium per serving. **Therefore, it cannot be purchased.**
  - If this item contained  $\leq 480$  mg of sodium per serving, it could be purchased and count as a plant-based entree (since it has a whole plant-based protein as the first ingredient).







## Example 2: Oats and Honey Cereal

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
16 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b> 3/4 cup (28g)	
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>110</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 1.5g	<b>2%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 22g	<b>8%</b>
Dietary Fiber 2g	<b>7%</b>
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 3g Added Sugars	<b>6%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 2g	
Vit. D 3mcg 15% • Calcium 0mg 0%	
Iron 12mg 66% • Potass. 340mg 8%	
<small>*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.</small>	

**Ingredients:** Whole-grain wheat, whole-grain oats, cane sugar, sunflower oil, sea salt, honey

### Item Assessment

1. Read the item's packaging and ingredients list to figure out which requirements apply.
2. Compare the information on the item's Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list with the requirements outlined in the Standards for Purchased Food.
  - This item is a cereal. It must contain no trans fat,  $\leq 215$  mg of sodium per serving,  $\geq 2$  g of fiber per serving and  $\leq 6$  g of sugar per serving, and be whole grain.
3. Assess if this product can be purchased.
  - This item contains no trans fat,  $\leq 215$  mg of sodium per serving,  $\geq 2$  g of fiber per serving and  $\leq 6$  g of sugar per serving, and is whole grain.  
**Therefore, it may be purchased.**



# Standards for Meals and Snacks Served

This section applies to food and beverages served as part of meals or snacks (prepared on-site or catered), or during occasions where food or beverages are provided.

## Food Preparation and Service

Use the following tips to offer nutrient-dense foods that are low in saturated fat, added sugar and salt:

- Do not deep-fry food. Bake, grill, sauté, steam, roast or broil instead.
- Cook food using whole ingredients. Avoid serving convenience, prepared and ready-to-serve foods whenever possible.
- Serve whole or minimally processed foods (such as fresh or frozen fruits or vegetables, grains, beans, or nuts or seeds) as much as possible.

## Soliciting Client Feedback

The Meals and Snacks Standards require client feedback be solicited annually and considered as part of the menu planning process. Questions for client feedback must include cultural preferences, taste and food quality.



### Tips

- **Solicit feedback in a way that makes sense for your program and clients. Options include focus groups, resident council meetings, QR codes, paper or electronic surveys, or taste tests.**
- Tell clients why you are soliciting feedback from them and how you will use the information they provide.
- Make sure feedback questions are clear, easy to understand and asked in languages spoken by your clients.
- Consider asking questions that begin with “what” or “why.”
- Recommend using a five-point scale for responses, such as poor, fair, good, very good and excellent.
- Follow up with clients regularly and share how you have used their feedback in menu planning.
- Ask your program’s leadership to support implementing changes based on client feedback.

## Example Feedback Questions

- How would you rate the quality of the food served and why?
- How would you rate the taste of the food served and why?

- How would you rate the way the food looks and why?
- Were you satisfied with the portion sizes of the food and why?
- Was the food served at the correct temperature?
- What was your favorite item on the menu?
- What was your least favorite item on the menu?
- Is there anything that you would like added to the menu?
- Does the menu include food that represents your culture?
- How satisfied are you with the variety and number of plant protein options available?

## Nutrient Requirements for Meals Served

### Determining Nutrient Requirements

Use the following charts to figure out how many calories and how much sodium, saturated fat, fiber and added sugar you may serve per meal or day, depending on your program's age group. Programs that serve three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) per day should follow the "full day" requirements.

Some programs are exempt from these requirements. Refer to the Meals and Snacks Standards to see if your program qualifies for an exemption.

Meals for People Age 14 and Older	Calories	Sodium	Saturated Fat*	Fiber	Added Sugar*
<b>Full day (breakfast, lunch and dinner)</b>	1,800 to 2,200	≤ 2,300 mg	≤ 20 to 24 g	≥ 28 g	≤ 45 to 55 g
<b>Breakfast</b>	450 to 660 <sup>†</sup>	≤ 690 mg	≤ 5 to 7 g	≥ 7 g	≤ 11 to 17 g <sup>‡</sup>
<b>Lunch or dinner</b>	540 to 770 <sup>†</sup>	≤ 805 mg	≤ 6 to 9 g	≥ 8 g	≤ 14 to 19 g <sup>‡</sup>

\*Saturated fat and added sugar requirements are calculated based on 10% of total calories served.

<sup>†</sup>National School Breakfast and Lunch Program calorie limits supersede these requirements.

<sup>‡</sup>If your program serves one or two meals per day, use the total for the meals served. If your program serves three meals per day, follow the "full day" requirements.

Meals for Children Ages 9 to 13	Calories	Sodium	Saturated Fat*	Fiber	Added Sugar*
<b>Full day (breakfast, lunch and dinner)</b>	1,600 to 1,800	≤ 1,800 mg	≤ 18 to 20 g	≥ 24 g	≤ 40 to 45 g
<b>Breakfast</b>	400 to 540 <sup>†</sup>	≤ 540 mg	≤ 4 to 6 g	≥ 6 g	≤ 10 to 14 g <sup>‡</sup>
<b>Lunch or dinner</b>	480 to 630 <sup>†</sup>	≤ 630 mg	≤ 5 to 7 g	≥ 8 g	≤ 12 to 16 g <sup>‡</sup>

\*Saturated fat and added sugar requirements are calculated based on calories served.

<sup>†</sup>National School Breakfast and Lunch Program calorie limits supersede these requirements.

<sup>‡</sup>If your program serves one or two meals per day, use the total for the meals served. If your program serves three meals per day, follow the "full day" requirements.

Meals for Children Ages 4 to 8	Calories	Sodium	Saturated Fat*	Fiber	Added Sugar*
<b>Full day (breakfast, lunch and dinner)</b>	1,200 to 1,400	≤ 1,500 mg	≤ 13 to 16 g	≥ 19 g	≤ 30 to 35 g
<b>Breakfast</b>	300 to 420 <sup>†</sup>	≤ 450 mg	≤ 3 to 5 g	≥ 5 g	≤ 8 to 11 g <sup>‡</sup>
<b>Lunch or dinner</b>	360 to 490 <sup>†</sup>	≤ 525 mg	≤ 4 to 5 g	≥ 6 g	≤ 9 to 12 g <sup>‡</sup>

\*Saturated fat and added sugar requirements are calculated based on calories served.

<sup>†</sup>National School Breakfast and Lunch Program calorie limits supersede these requirements.

<sup>‡</sup>If your program serves one or two meals per day, use the total for the meals served. If your program serves three meals per day, follow the “full day” requirements.

Meals for Children Ages 2 to 3	Calories	Sodium	Saturated Fat*	Fiber	Added Sugar*
<b>Full day (breakfast, lunch and dinner)</b>	900 to 1,100	≤ 1,200 mg	≤ 10 to 12 g	≥ 14 g	≤ 23 to 28 g
<b>Breakfast</b>	225 to 330	≤ 360 mg	≤ 3 to 4 g	≥ 4 g	≤ 6 to 8 g <sup>†</sup>
<b>Lunch or dinner</b>	270 to 385	≤ 420 mg	≤ 3 to 4 g	≥ 4 g	≤ 7 to 10 g <sup>†</sup>

\*Saturated fat requirements are calculated based on calories served.

<sup>†</sup>If your program serves one or two meals per day, use the total for the meals served. If your program serves three meals per day, follow the “full day” requirements.

## Reducing Added Sugar

To figure out the percentage of calories from added sugar for a full day’s worth of meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner):

1. Add up the total calories and grams of added sugar for each food item and beverage.
2. Multiply the total grams of added sugar by 4 (1 g of sugar contains 4 calories) to get the number of calories from added sugar.
3. Divide the number of calories from added sugar by the total calories.

For example, if a full day’s worth of meals contains 1,705 calories and 30 g of added sugar:

1. Multiply 30 g of added sugar by 4, which is 120 calories from added sugar.
2. Divide 120 calories from added sugar by 1,705 total calories, which is 0.07.

0.07 equals 7%, which means these meals meet the daily standard for < 10% of total calories from added sugar.





## Tips

- 
- Avoid serving food items and beverages high in added sugar. Remove these items from your menus, reduce portion sizes or replace them with items low in added sugar.
    - Examples of food items and beverages high in added sugar: dairy products (such as ice cream, frozen dairy desserts, flavored and sweetened yogurt, and flavored milk), fluid milk substitutes (such as soy milk), grain-based items (such as breakfast breads, loaves and muffins, cakes, cookies, brownies, pies, and sweet rolls), condiments (such as jellies and syrups), sauces (such as marinara, tomato and teriyaki), glazes, dressings and baked beans.
  - Check ingredients lists for added sugar.
    - Added sugar is referred to by many different names. View the Definitions and Examples of Terms table on Page 4 for a list of common alternative names for added sugar.
    - Ingredients are listed by weight from the greatest to the smallest quantity. The higher the added sugar is on an item’s ingredients list, the more added sugar is in the item.
  - Avoid low- and no-calorie sweeteners, which items may contain as a replacement for added sugar.
    - Items labeled “diet,” “lite,” “sugar-free” or “no sugar” usually (but not always) contain low- or no-calorie sweeteners. Check the ingredients list for every item before preparing or serving.
    - Sites cannot serve food items and beverages that contain low- or no-calorie sweeteners to children age 18 and younger.
  - Serve items that contain < 10% of the daily value of added sugar.
  - Serve items low in added sugar at breakfast.
    - Serve breakfast items low in added sugar, such as plain, unsweetened yogurt or hot cereal with fresh fruit for sweetness, instead.
  - Avoid serving sugary desserts. Serve smaller portions or offer fresh fruit, unsweetened applesauce or desserts made with less added sugar instead.
  - Serve unflavored, unsweetened milk and water.
  - Serve fruit with no added sugar, including fresh fruit, canned fruit in 100% juice, dried fruit (such as raisins and apricots) and applesauce that contains no added sugar.
  - Reduce the amount of added sugar used in recipes.
    - If you are cooking (for example, pancakes, French toast or oatmeal) or baking (for example, cookies, muffins or cakes) from scratch, reduce the amount of added sugar in your recipe by one-third or one-half, or substitute sugar with unsweetened applesauce.
-

## Sample Menu

The following example is of a full-day menu (breakfast, lunch and dinner) for a program that serves children ages 9 to 13. It meets the limit for added sugar per meal and daily limit for calories from added sugar (< 10%). You can use this sample to help create your own menu that meets the limits for added sugar:

Menu Item	Total Calories	Added Sugar (g)	Calories From Added Sugar	Percentage of Total Calories From Added Sugar
<b>Breakfast</b>				
Whole-grain, buckwheat, blueberry pancakes (2 medium-sized)	160	2	8	N/A
Scrambled egg (1 egg)	80	0	0	N/A
Yogurt (4 oz)	90	6	24	N/A
Fresh apple (1 small)	80	0	0	N/A
1% plain milk (8 oz)	100	0	0	N/A
<b>Breakfast totals:</b>	<b>510</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>6%</b>
<b>Lunch</b>				
Baked jerk chicken with homemade mango salsa (4 oz)	230	8	32	N/A
Roasted broccoli (3/4 cup)	80	0	0	N/A
Orange pieces in 100% fruit juice (3/4 cup)	100	0	0	N/A
Cooked brown rice (3/4 cup)	150	0	0	N/A
Mini oatmeal chocolate chip cookie (1 cookie)	80	5	20	N/A
<b>Lunch totals:</b>	<b>640</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>8%</b>
<b>Dinner</b>				
Quinoa and black bean burger (1 patty)	220	6	24	N/A
Sautéed onions, mushrooms and peppers (3/4 cup)	75	0	0	N/A
Fresh sliced strawberries (3/4 cup)	40	0	0	N/A
Honey-glazed, roasted sweet potato fries (3/4 cup)	130	4	16	N/A
Whole-grain bun (1 each)	150	4	16	N/A
<b>Dinner totals:</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Daily totals:</b>	<b>1,765</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>8%</b>

## Requirements and Recommendations

The following table shows requirements and recommendations for each food category.

	Programs That Serve One to Two Meals Daily	Programs That Serve Three Meals Daily
<b>Fruits and Vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Require</b> at least 2 servings of fruits and vegetables* at lunch and dinner.</li> <li>• <b>Require</b> at least 1 serving of nonstarchy vegetables per day.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Require</b> at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables* per day.</li> <li>• <b>Require</b> at least 2 servings of nonstarchy vegetables per day.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Require</b> at least 1 serving of fruit* per day. 100% fruit juice does not count toward this requirement.</li> <li>• <b>Recommend</b>:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– At least 2 servings of fruits and vegetables* at breakfast</li> <li>– At least 2 servings of dark-green vegetables* per week</li> <li>– At least 6 servings of red and orange vegetables* per week</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
<b>Grains</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Require</b> at least half of all grains served<sup>†</sup> be whole grain.</li> <li>• <b>Require</b> all cereal and sliced sandwich bread served be whole grain.</li> <li>• <b>Recommend</b> all grains be whole grain.</li> </ul>	
<b>Beef</b>	<b>Require</b> no more than 1 serving of beef <sup>†</sup> per meal each week.	<b>Require</b> no more than 2 servings of beef <sup>†</sup> per week.
<b>Processed Meat</b>	<b>Require</b> no more than 2 servings of processed meat <sup>†</sup> per month or 1 serving per meal type every other week.	<b>Require</b> no more than 1 serving of processed meat <sup>†</sup> per meal type each week.
	<b>Require</b> be phased out by 2025.	
<b>Plant-based Protein</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Require</b> at least 1 serving of plant-based protein<sup>†</sup> per meal (excluding breakfast) each week.</li> <li>• <b>Recommend</b> 2 servings of plant-based protein<sup>†</sup> per meal type each week.</li> <li>• <b>Recommend</b> 1 serving of plant-based protein<sup>†</sup> contain 2 oz equivalents.<sup>‡</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Seafood</b>	Recommend 1 to 2 servings of seafood <sup>†</sup> per week, with at least 1 serving being fish that contains heart-healthy oils.	
<b>Dairy</b>	Recommend serving cheese <sup>†</sup> as the primary protein no more than once per meal type each week.	

\*According to the USDA, 1 serving of fruits or vegetables for adults equals 1 cup. For children ages 2 to 3, 1 serving of fruits or vegetables equals 1/2 cup. For children ages 4 to 13, 1 serving of fruits or vegetables equals 3/4 cup.

<sup>†</sup>Serving is defined by an item appearing on a menu.

<sup>‡</sup>For more information about oz equivalents, see the "Ounce-Equivalent of Protein Foods Table" at [myplate.gov/eathealthy/protein-foods](https://myplate.gov/eathealthy/protein-foods).

## Fruits and Vegetables

### Vegetable Types and Examples

Section 2 of the Meals and Snacks Standards have requirements for nonstarchy vegetables and include recommendations for different colored vegetables.

Use the following table to determine which vegetables are considered starchy, nonstarchy, dark-green, or red or orange.



Vegetable Type	Examples
<b>Starchy vegetables</b>	Potatoes, corn and green peas (for more examples, visit <a href="https://myplate.gov/eat-healthy/food-group-gallery#vegetables">myplate.gov/eat-healthy/food-group-gallery#vegetables</a> and click the <b>Starchy Vegetables</b> drop-down)
<b>Nonstarchy vegetables</b>	Black beans, bok choy, broccoli, carrots, collard greens, chickpeas, lettuce, squash, sweet potatoes and tomatoes
<b>Dark-green vegetables</b>	Broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, collards, bok choy and kale
<b>Red or orange vegetables</b>	Tomatoes, carrots, sweet potatoes, red peppers, winter squash, pumpkin and beets



**Tip** For more flavor, fiber and nutrition, add a full serving of vegetables to sauces, soups and other entrees.

### Fruit and Vegetable Serving Size Table

Use the following table to determine the required servings of fruits and vegetables per day based on the number of meals per day and population served.

Age Group	Serving Size	Programs That Serve One Meal Daily	Programs That Serve Two Meals Daily	Programs That Serve Three Meals Daily
		<b>Require</b> at least 2 servings of fruits and vegetables at lunch and dinner.		<b>Require</b> at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables per day.
<b>Ages 2 to 3</b>	1/2 cup equivalent	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 2 servings (1 cup equivalent) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> At least 1 serving (1/2 cup equivalent) daily	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 4 servings (2 cup equivalents) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> At least 1 serving (1/2 cup equivalent) daily	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 5 servings (2 1/2 cup equivalents) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> At least 2 servings (1 cup equivalent) daily

Age Group	Serving Size	Programs That Serve One Meal Daily	Programs That Serve Two Meals Daily	Programs That Serve Three Meals Daily
		<b>Fruit:</b> At least 1 serving (1/2 cup equivalent) daily	<b>Fruit:</b> At least 1 serving (1/2 cup equivalent) daily	<b>Fruit:</b> At least 1 serving (1/2 cup equivalent) daily <b>Additional fruit or vegetable:</b> 2 servings (1 cup equivalent) daily
<b>Ages 4 to 13</b>	3/4 cup equivalent	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 2 servings (1 1/2 cup equivalents) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> 1 serving (3/4 cup equivalent) daily <b>Fruit:</b> 1 serving (3/4 cup equivalent) daily	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 4 servings (3 cup equivalents) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> At least 1 serving (3/4 cup equivalent) daily <b>Fruit:</b> At least 1 serving (3/4 cup equivalent) daily	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 5 servings (3 3/4 cup equivalents) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> At least 2 servings (1 1/2 cup equivalents) daily <b>Fruit:</b> At least 1 serving (3/4 cup equivalent) daily <b>Additional fruit or vegetable:</b> 2 servings (1 1/2 cup equivalents)
<b>Age 14 and older</b>	1 cup equivalent	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 2 servings (2 cup equivalents) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> 1 serving (1 cup equivalent) daily <b>Fruit:</b> 1 serving (1 cup equivalent) daily	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 4 servings (4 cup equivalents) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> At least 1 serving (1 cup equivalent) daily <b>Fruit:</b> At least 1 serving (1 cup equivalent) daily	<b>Fruits and vegetables:</b> 5 servings (5 cup equivalents) daily <b>Nonstarchy vegetables:</b> At least 2 servings (2 cup equivalents) daily <b>Fruit:</b> At least 1 serving (1 cup equivalent) daily <b>Additional fruit or nonstarchy vegetable:</b> 2 servings (2 cup equivalents) daily

For amounts equal to 1 cup of fruit or vegetables, visit [myplate.gov/eathealthy/vegetables](https://myplate.gov/eathealthy/vegetables) (click the “Cup of Vegetable Table” drop-down menu) and [myplate.gov/eathealthy/fruits](https://myplate.gov/eathealthy/fruits) (click the “Cup of Fruit Table” drop-down menu).



## Grains

To add more whole grains to meals your program serves:

- Switch out half of the all-purpose flour used in baking for whole-wheat flour.
- Use equal parts whole grain and refined grain, then gradually replace refined grains with whole grains over time when cooking.
- Ask your vendor if:
  - You can sample any new grains or grain-based products you may want to add to your menus
  - They offer grains that are grown and milled in NYS (such as whole-wheat flour, whole cornmeal, spelt and wheatberries)



## Beef

To reduce the amount of beef your program serves, replace it with plant-based protein (such as beans, lentils, tofu, vegetable burgers, soy or seitan). You can use the following table for more ideas.

Meal Containing Beef	Replacement Meal Ideas
<b>Beef chili</b>	Bean chili
<b>Ground beef tacos</b>	Lentil or crumbled tofu tacos
<b>Hamburgers</b>	Veggie burgers
<b>Steak</b>	Tofu
<b>Beef meatballs</b>	Soy, seitan, or lentil and mushroom meatballs
<b>Beef stew</b>	White bean stew
<b>Ground beef</b>	Beans, lentils, tofu, or ground turkey or chicken

## Processed Meat

Examples of processed meat include deli meats (such as ham, salami, bologna, turkey and sliced chicken), hot dogs, bacon and sausages.

To phase out processed meat, replace it with nut or seed butters, hard-boiled eggs, tuna salad, tempeh bacon and avocado, chicken breast, chickpea salad, hummus or bean spread, or roasted vegetables.

## Plant-based Entrees

Examples of entrees that feature whole or minimally processed plant-based proteins include bean burritos, Indian lentil dahl over brown rice, barbecue tofu with corn and potatoes, Mediterranean chickpea salad with whole-wheat pita, pasta e fagioli (with no processed meat), mapo tofu, curry channa, sesame tofu grain bowls, and quinoa with sweet potatoes and black beans.

At least one meal type per week (except breakfast) must feature a whole or minimally processed plant-based protein (such as nuts, beans, lentils, peas or soy) as the primary protein source. The primary protein source is the largest protein item by weight or oz equivalent.<sup>14</sup> For example, an entree with 2 oz equivalent of beans could include < 2 oz of cheese, dairy or egg.



### Tips

To serve more plant-based entrees at your program:

- Make your own plant-based burgers instead of purchasing processed ones (which are usually high in sodium). Choose a recipe with whole grains, beans and vegetables.
- Substitute plant-based proteins into meals your program likes, but keep the same seasonings and sauces.
- Many traditional dishes are plant-based (including ones found in Caribbean, Indian, Italian, Vietnamese, Mexican and Middle Eastern cuisine).
- Name them on menus using words that describe their texture, flavor or smell. For example, use “warm butternut squash curry with spicy roasted chickpeas” instead of “vegan curry.”



## Seafood

To serve more seafood at your program:

- Designate a meal on the same day each week to feature seafood.
- Substitute beef or processed meat with seafood.

## Dairy

Examples of entrees where cheese can be reduced or replaced with whole, plant-based or lean animal proteins, or seafood:

- **Macaroni and cheese:** Replace with macaroni primavera and garbanzo beans or ground chicken, or reduce the amount of cheese and add vegetables.
- **Pizza:** Replace with a garden vegetable flatbread or use sauces (such as pesto) that can be used without cheese.
- **Mozzarella sticks:** Replace with baked fish sticks.
- **Cheese quesadilla:** Reduce the amount of cheese or replace it with roasted vegetables and beans.



### Tip

Use cheese as a topping or garnish instead of as a primary protein.

<sup>14</sup>Adapted from the USDA. Available at [myplate.gov/eathealthy/protein-foods](https://myplate.gov/eathealthy/protein-foods).

## Beverages

To serve more water at your program, add oranges, limes, cucumbers or mint to enhance flavor. Keep water pitchers near the meal service and provide cups.

100% juice contains healthy vitamins and no added sugar. However, it is a high-calorie beverage and usually does not contain the same fiber as whole fruit. Consider serving 100% juice less frequently or phasing it out completely.

## Snacks

Any food not served as part of a meal or for a special occasion is considered a snack. Snacks must meet the requirements in Section 1 and additional requirements listed in Section 2C of the Meals and Snacks Standards.

Examples of recommended snack choices, all served with water:

- Peanut butter and banana on whole-wheat bread
- Cheese slices and a pear
- Low-fat plain yogurt with granola
- Crunchy, roasted chickpeas with orange wedges
- A hard-boiled egg with whole-grain crackers



### Tips

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To serve more satisfying and nutritious snacks at your program:

- Include multiple food groups in your snacks.
  - Use whole or minimally processed foods whenever possible.
  - Avoid individually-packaged items to reduce cost and limit waste from packaging.
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## Special Occasions

Create a policy for special occasion events that explains which items can be served and how often special occasions are allowed. Special occasions can include holiday celebrations, cultural heritage events and events for clients, and should be held no more than once per month.



### Tips

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- Refer to the Standards for Meetings and Events (available at [nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cardio/nyc-meetings-events-standards.pdf](https://nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cardio/nyc-meetings-events-standards.pdf)) for food options and sample menus.
  - Offer sweet breakfast breads and desserts in small portions and limited quantities.
  - Only serve beverages that meet the purchasing standards in Section 1B of the Meals and Snacks Standards.
  - Offer nutrient-rich and whole or minimally processed foods.
  - Include a whole or minimally processed plant-based meal.
-

## Educational Materials

You can use these resources to help implement the Meals and Snacks Standards and promote them to your clients.

- For nutrition-related posters, fact sheets and other materials, visit [nyc.gov/health](https://nyc.gov/health) and search for **nutrition at work facilities**.
- For more information about the updated Nutrition Facts label, visit [fda.gov/media/99331/download](https://fda.gov/media/99331/download).

## Recipes

You can use the recipes from the following sources when preparing meals and snacks for your program. Check the nutrition information for every recipe and only use those that meet the requirements for your program.

- CACFP Recipes for Child Care Homes and Adult Day Care (USDA): [fns.usda.gov/tn/standardized-recipes-cacfp](https://fns.usda.gov/tn/standardized-recipes-cacfp)
- Recipes for Healthy Kids: Cookbook for Schools (USDA): [fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-schools](https://fns.usda.gov/tn/recipes-healthy-kids-cookbook-schools)
- Oldways Cultural Food Traditions: [oldwayspt.org/recipes](https://oldwayspt.org/recipes)

You can also try the following plant-based recipes:

- Plant-forward recipes (including grab-and-go options): [nycfoodstandards@health.nyc.gov](mailto:nycfoodstandards@health.nyc.gov) (request via email)
- Forward Food Recipe Database: [forwardfood.org/recipes](https://forwardfood.org/recipes)
- Meatless Mondays: [mondayscampaigns.org/meatless-monday](https://mondayscampaigns.org/meatless-monday)
- Universal Meals Recipes (Physician's Committee for Responsible Medicine): [pcrm.org/universalmeals/recipes](https://pcrm.org/universalmeals/recipes)
- Edgy Veggies Toolkit: [sparqtools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/20190925\\_EdgyVeggiesToolkit-1.pdf](https://sparqtools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/20190925_EdgyVeggiesToolkit-1.pdf)












## Sustainability

View the following resources to help procure food items that promote environmental sustainability:




























- Seafood Recommendations (Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch): [seafoodwatch.org/seafood-recommendations](https://seafoodwatch.org/seafood-recommendations)
- What's Available Harvest Calendar (GrowNYC): [gownyc.org/greenmarket/whatsavailable](https://gownyc.org/greenmarket/whatsavailable)

## Sample Menus

Use the following examples to help your program plan healthy menus that meet the Meals and Snacks Standards:

<b>Key:</b>  Fruit	 Plant-based protein	 Vegetable (other than dark-green, red, orange or starchy)
 Beef	 Dark-green vegetable	 Cheese
 Whole grain	 Red or orange vegetable	 Fish
 Processed meat	 Starchy vegetable	

### Sample Two-meal Menu for Children Ages 4 to 13

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Lunch</b>	 Apple slices (3/4 cup)	 Fresh pineapple chunks (3/4 cup)	 Mandarin orange (3/4 cup)	 Fresh kiwi slices (3/4 cup)	 Fresh peach (1 medium)	 Mixed fruit cup (3/4 cup)	 Fresh apple slices (3/4 cup)
	 Baked sweet potato wedges (3/4 cup)	 Rainbow coleslaw (3/4 cup)	 Veggie sticks (3/4 cup) with ranch dressing dip	 Pico de gallo (3/4 cup)	 Red and orange bell pepper stir-fry (3/4 cup)	 Tomato soup (3/4 cup)	 Fresh leafy green garden salad (1 1/2 cup)
	 Hummus and vegetable wrap	 Egg salad on whole-wheat bread	  Zesty tuna pockets on whole-wheat pita bread	 Vegetarian black bean and sweet corn taco with shredded cheese	  Ground beef with whole-grain pasta	 Side salad (1/2 cup)	 Spaghetti and marinara sauce with turkey meatballs
	 Cucumbers (3/4 cup)	Oatmeal raisin cookie (sweetened with fruit)	Water or 1% milk	 Corn tortillas	Water or 1% milk	  Grilled cheese sandwich on whole-wheat bread	Water or 1% milk
	Water or 1% milk	Water or 1% milk		Water or 1% milk		Water or 1% milk	Water or 1% milk
				100% fruit juice (6 oz)			100% fruit juice (6 oz)































	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Dinner</b>	Fresh peach (1 medium)	Banana (1 medium)	Mixed fruit cup (3/4 cup)	Banana (1 medium)	Fresh cantaloupe wedges (3/4 cup)	Mandarin oranges (3/4 cup)	Fresh strawberries (3/4 cup)
	Fresh tomato slices (3/4 cup)	Roasted garlic broccoli (3/4 cup)	Glazed carrot sticks (3/4 cup)	Sautéed garlic and lemon mustard greens (3/4 cup)	Sweet Thai tofu	Steamed corn on the cob (1 medium ear)	Baked sweet potato sticks (3/4 cup)
	Oven-roasted deli turkey	Teriyaki chicken thighs	Beef stroganoff	Fluffy mashed potatoes (3/4 cup)	Soy-glazed roasted eggplant and zucchini salad (3/4 cup)	Lemon herbed salmon	California plant-based veggie burger
	Whole-grain bread	Brown rice	Whole-grain noodles	Oven-roasted chicken drumsticks	Steamed rice	Couscous	Whole-wheat bun
	Water or 1% milk	Water or 1% milk	Water or 1% milk	Water or 1% milk	Water or 1% milk	Water or 1% milk	Water or 1% milk
	100% fruit juice (6 oz)						
	Water or 1% milk						

## Sample Three-meal Menu for Adults

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Breakfast</b>	 Apple (1 small)	 Orange (1 large)	 Banana (1 large)	 Pear (1 medium)	 Fresh cut fruit salad (1 cup)	 Banana (1 large)	 Mixed berries (1 cup)
	Plain (unflavored) low-fat yogurt	Scrambled eggs	 Turkey bacon	Veggie omelet with cheddar cheese	Plain (unflavored), low-fat, Greek-style yogurt	Hard-boiled egg	 Almond butter
	 Oat and honey whole-grain cereal	 Whole-grain farina	 Warm apple cinnamon whole-grain oatmeal	 Whole-wheat toast	 Hearty cinnamon whole-grain granola	 Whole-grain English muffin	 Belgian waffle
	1% milk	1% milk	1% milk	1% milk	1% milk	1% milk	1% milk
	Coffee, tea or water	Coffee, tea or water	1% milk	Coffee, tea or water	1% milk	Coffee, tea or water	Coffee, tea or water
	Coffee, tea or water		Coffee, tea or water	Coffee, tea or water	Coffee, tea or water	Coffee, tea or water	Coffee, tea or water
<b>Lunch</b>	 Tomato cucumber salad (1 cup)	 Baked sweet potato wedges (1 cup)	 Roasted butternut squash (1 cup)	 Steamed mixed vegetables (1 cup)	 Cantaloupe wedges (1 cup)	 Pineapple chunks (1 cup)	 Steamed carrots (1 cup)
	 Fluffy mashed potatoes (1 cup)	 Sautéed garlic broccoli (1 cup)	 Sautéed spinach (1 cup)	 Baked sweet potato (1 large)	 Leafy green garden salad (2 cups)	 Cherry tomatoes and carrot sticks (1 cup)	 Corn on the cob (1 large ear)
	Balsamic marinated grilled chicken breast	 Oven-baked tilapia piccata	 Beef meatloaf with gravy	Herb turkey patty	 Curry chicken salad in a whole-wheat pita pocket	 California plant-based veggie burger	 Vegetarian black bean chili
	 Whole-wheat roll	Water	Rice pilaf	 Whole-wheat bun	Water		 Brown rice
			1% milk				

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Lunch</b>	Water	100% juice (6 oz)	Coffee, tea or water ..... 100% juice (6 oz)	Mini chocolate chip cookie ..... Water		 Whole-wheat bun ..... Water	100% juice (6 oz) ..... Water
	 1 banana (1 large) .....  Vegetable stir-fry (1 cup) with edamame and tofu .....  Brown rice ..... 1% milk ..... Coffee, tea or water	 Pear (1 medium) .....  California blend vegetables (1 cup) .....  Baked whole-grain macaroni and cheese .....  Whole-wheat dinner roll ..... 1% milk ..... Coffee, tea or water	 Chicken with stir-fried vegetables (1 cup) .....  Brown rice ..... 1% milk ..... Coffee, tea or water	 Peach (1 large) .....  Sautéed cabbage (1 cup) .....  Oven-baked ripe plantains .....  Coconut chickpea curry ..... Basmati rice ..... 1% milk ..... Coffee, tea or water	 Apple slices (1 cup) .....  Herb roasted red potatoes (1 cup) .....  Tossed garden salad (2 cups) .....  Whole-wheat roll .....  Baked lemon dijon salmon ..... Water	 Oven-roasted garlic and herb Brussels sprouts (1 cup) .....  Garden salad (2 cups) ..... Yellow rice and pigeon peas .....  Pepper and onion chicken sausage ..... Brownie bite ..... 1% milk ..... Coffee, tea or water	 Strawberries (1 cup) .....  Bell pepper stir-fry (1 cup) .....  Beef meatballs in tomato sauce ..... Spaghetti .....  Whole-wheat bread ..... 1% milk ..... Coffee, tea or water







