

This document outlines standards for food purchased and meals and snacks served, with the goal of improving the health of all New Yorkers served by City agencies and their contractors. The New York City Food Standards (“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.

Agencies and their contractors are required to follow the standards described in each of the four sections:

Section I. Standards for Purchased Food

- | Addresses food items purchased and provides specific standards by food category.

Section II. Standards for Meals and Snacks Served

- | Addresses the overall nutrient requirements for meals and provides standards for snacks and special occasions.

Section III. Agency and Population-Specific Standards and Exceptions

- | Addresses standards for specific populations (e.g., children) and agencies. The additions and exceptions in this section supersede the first two sections. For example, children under 2 years may be served whole milk, instead of 1% or non-fat milk as required in Section I.

Section IV. Sustainability Recommendations

- | Addresses recommendations to support a healthy and ecologically sustainable food system.

The first two sections overlap: all purchased food items must meet the standards in Section I and be incorporated into meals or snacks that meet the nutrient requirements in Section II. The Standards for Purchased Food ensure that people who only eat a few items of each meal still consume healthy options. The Standards for Meals and Snacks Served ensure that people eating whole meals and snacks have a healthy, balanced diet.

The Standards were developed based on agency feedback, review, and agreement. All food purchased and served by a City agency must meet the **required** standards that appear in bold. Agencies are expected to be in compliance with the revised Standards by November 1, 2018. Agency contractors are also required to comply with these Standards. This includes food service contractors, such as caterers, and programmatic contractors that serve food within the context of the program. These Standards do not apply to concessions that provide food for sale through leases, licenses or contracts at City programs.

The New York City Food Standards were made effective by Executive Order 122 on September 19, 2008,¹ and revised in December 2017. The Executive Order mandates that all City agencies follow the Standards for all foods that are purchased, prepared, and/or served by the agency and/or agency contractors, as well as the New York City Standards for Food Vending Machines and the New York City Standards for Beverage Vending Machines.²

For more information, please contact: nycfoodstandards@health.nyc.gov.

¹ View the Executive Order at: www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/downloads/pdf/eo_122.pdf

² View the New York City Standards for Food Vending Machines and New York City Standards for Beverage Vending Machines at: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cardio/cardio-vending-machines-standards.pdf> and <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cardio/cardio-vending-machines-bev-standards.pdf>

Section I. Standards for Purchased Food

These standards are defined per serving of food as shown on a product's Nutrition Facts label unless otherwise specified.³

A. Nutrient Requirements

The following applies to all purchased food.

Trans fat

- ‡ **Require** all labeled items contain 0 g trans fat.⁴

Sodium

- ‡ **Require** all individual items contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving, unless a lower standard is specified in the Food Category Requirements below.
- ‡ Recommend “low-sodium” items (≤ 140 mg sodium per serving).

B. Food Category Requirements

The following applies to specific categories of purchased foods. These requirements apply to items that City agencies choose to purchase but do not require agencies to purchase new types of food.

Beverages

- ‡ **Require** all beverages contain ≤ 25 calories per 8 oz, with the exception of 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners or milk.
- ‡ **Require** 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners.
- ‡ **Require** 1% or non-fat and unsweetened milk.
- ‡ **Require** unflavored fluid milk substitutes (e.g., soymilk).

Dairy

- ‡ **Require** low-fat or non-fat yogurt be plain or contain ≤ 30 g sugar per 8 oz or equivalent (e.g. ≤ 15 g sugar per 4 oz, ≤ 23 g sugar per 6 oz).
- ‡ **Require** cheese contain ≤ 350 mg sodium per serving.⁵
- ‡ Recommend serving plain yogurt and phasing out flavored yogurt.

Bread and other grains

- ‡ **Require** sliced sandwich bread:
 - ‡ contain ≤ 180 mg sodium per serving
 - ‡ be whole-wheat/whole grain
 - ‡ contain ≥ 2 g fiber per serving
- ‡ **Require** other baked goods (e.g., dinner rolls, muffins, bagels, tortillas) contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.
- ‡ Recommend all grains be whole grain (e.g., brown rice, whole-wheat pasta, dinner rolls, muffins, bagels and tortillas).

³ Serving size is based on FDA-established lists of “Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed Per Eating Occasion.”

⁴ Restriction is consistent with NYC law. For more information: <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/public/notice-adoption-hc-art81-08.pdf>

⁵ Cottage cheese is exempt due to the limited availability of this product type that meets this standard.

Cereal

- ‡ **Require** cereal contain:
 - ‡ ≤ 215 mg sodium per serving
 - ‡ ≤ 10 g sugar per serving
 - ‡ ≥ 2 g fiber per serving
- ‡ **Require** cereals that contain dried fruit (e.g., dried cranberries, dates and raisins) contain ≤ 17 g of sugar per serving. Cereals must still meet fiber and sodium standards.
- ‡ Recommend phasing out these high sugar cereals over time.

Fruits and vegetables

- ‡ **Require** canned/frozen vegetables contain ≤ 220 mg sodium per serving.
- ‡ **Require** canned/frozen beans contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.
- ‡ **Require** canned fruit is in unsweetened juice or water. Do not purchase fruit canned in syrup.

Tuna, salmon and other seafood

- ‡ **Require** canned/frozen seafood contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.

Poultry

- ‡ **Require** canned/frozen poultry contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.

Beef and pork

- ‡ **Require** canned beef or pork contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.
- ‡ Recommend ground beef and pork be extra lean (total fat $\leq 5\%$) and $\geq 90\%$ lean.

Processed meat

- ‡ **Require** processed meat (e.g., deli meat, ham) contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.
- ‡ Recommend breakfast meat (e.g., bacon, turkey bacon, sausage) contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.
- ‡ Recommend phasing out processed meats.

Condiments and sauces

- ‡ **Require** salad dressings contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.
- ‡ **Require** sauces contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.⁶
- ‡ Recommend lower sodium condiments and sauces (e.g., reduced sodium soy sauce).

Portion controlled items and other convenience foods

- ‡ **Require** portion controlled items and other convenience foods (e.g., breaded chicken, veal patties, and frozen French toast and waffles) contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.

Frozen whole meals

- ‡ **Require** frozen whole meals contain $\leq 35\%$ of the daily sodium limit (adults and seniors: ≤ 805 mg, children 6-18 years: ≤ 770 mg).

⁶ Soy sauce is exempt due to lack of market availability for products that meet this standard. Recommend reduced sodium soy sauce.

Section II. Standards for Meals and Snacks Served

This section applies to all meals and snacks that are served.⁷ All City agencies must have a plan for regular menu review to ensure that they meet the standards in Parts B and C.

A. Food Preparation and Service

- | **Require** no deep frying.
- | **Require** all new or renovated kitchens be built without deep fryers.
- | Recommend, to help ensure reasonable portion sizes, establishing size standards for food
- | containers (e.g., smaller food plates or beverage cups).

B. Meals Served

I. Nutrient Requirements

For sites serving three meals per day:

- | **Require** three meals combined meet the following daily standards:^{8,9}

Calories*	2,000 calories
Sodium	< 2,300 mg
Total Fat	≤ 35% of total calories
Saturated Fat	< 10% of total calories
Fiber	≥ 28 grams

***Require** daily calories are no more than 10% above or below the standard

For sites serving only one or two meals per day:

- | **Require** each meal served meets appropriate range of calories, sodium and fiber:
 - | 25-30% for breakfast
 - | 30-35% for lunch
 - | 30-35% for dinner
- | **Require** each meal served meet the percentages for Total Fat and Saturated Fat stated in the chart above.

Exemption

A contracted agency program may apply for exemption from the above Nutrient Requirements if it meets **all** of the following requirements:

- | Meals are prepared on site or by another similar program (e.g., a day care center that prepares food for another facility).
- | Program does not have access to a City agency-employed nutritionist for regular menu review.
- | Program regularly serves fewer than 200 people per meal.
- | Program is not part of a larger contract for food purchasing coordinated by a City agency.

⁷ See page 8 for children's standards and other population-specific exceptions.

⁸ Standards are based on USDA's 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Available at: <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines>

⁹ Recommend the following daily nutrient standards: Protein 10-35% of total calories, Carbohydrate 45-65% of total calories, Potassium 4,700 mg, Calcium 1,000 mg, Iron > 8 mg (18 mg F; 8 mg M) * Daily limit, regardless of total calorie intake.

Exempt programs should strive to meet these Nutrient Requirements through thoughtful menu planning. Should exemption be granted, programs must still comply with **all** other requirements of the NYC Food Standards.

II. Meal Requirements

The following applies to specific categories of foods for agencies serving meals to adults and children.

Fruits and vegetables

- | **Require**, for sites serving lunch and/or dinner only, a minimum of 2 servings of fruits and vegetables are served per meal.
- | **Require**, for sites serving all three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner), a minimum of 5 servings of fruits and vegetables are served per day.
- | Recommend, for sites serving breakfast, offering 2 servings of fruits and vegetables.
- | **Require**, for sites serving meals 5 days per week or less, ≥ 3 servings of non-starchy vegetables are served weekly per lunch and per dinner.^{10,11}
- | **Require**, for sites serving meals 6 or 7 days per week, ≥ 5 servings of non-starchy vegetables are served weekly per lunch and per dinner.¹¹
- | Recommend fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables are served instead of canned.

Beverages

- | **Require**, for sites serving adults, beverages contain ≤ 25 calories per 8 oz, with the exception of 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners or milk.
- | **Require** water at all meals (this can be in addition to or in place of other beverages regularly served). Recommend tap water.
- | **Require** 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners limited to portion sizes of ≤ 6 oz, if served.
- | **Require**, if providing meals, serving 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners only once per day.
- | Recommend serving juice less frequently or phasing out completely.

C. Snack Standards

Snacks should add important nutrients to the overall diet and help curb hunger.

The following standards apply to sites serving snacks to adults and children. These snack standards are in compliance with the snack pattern requirements of the USDA's Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and are eligible for reimbursement, with the exception of low-calorie beverage choices for sites serving adults.

I. Overall Requirements

- | **Require** all items contain 0 g trans fat.
- | **Require**, for sites serving adults, beverages contain ≤ 25 calories per 8 oz, with the exception of 100% juice with no added caloric sweeteners or milk.
- | **Require** water at all snack times.
- | Recommend serving foods on the list of acceptable choices below or provide equivalent nutrient value (e.g., melon slices can be substituted for a banana for the fruit category).

¹⁰ Standard does not apply to programs serving one or two meals per week.

¹¹ Starchy vegetables include white potatoes, corn, green peas, and lima beans. Examples of non-starchy vegetables include lettuce, asparagus, broccoli, cucumber, spinach, mushrooms, peppers and tomatoes.

II. Food Category Requirements

Fruits and vegetables

- Require 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners limited to ≤ 6 oz.
- Require, for sites serving snacks but not meals, serving juice no more than twice per week.
- Recommend serving juice less frequently or phasing out completely.
- Recommend choosing more whole foods like fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds.
- Examples of acceptable choices: carrot sticks, celery sticks, pepper slices, salads, apples, bananas, pears, oranges, dried fruit, unsweetened applesauce and canned fruit in unsweetened juice or water.

Breads and other grains

- Require sliced sandwich bread contain ≤ 180 mg sodium per serving.
- Require crackers and salty snacks contain ≤ 200 mg sodium per serving.
- Require all breads and grains contain ≤ 10 g sugar per serving.
- Require all breads and grains contain ≥ 2 g fiber per serving.
- Recommend serving all whole-grain items.
- Examples of acceptable choices: whole-wheat pita triangles, whole grain cereal, whole-grain crackers, whole-wheat bread, popcorn.
- Examples of inappropriate items: doughnuts, pastries, croissants, cake.

Protein¹²

- Recommend lean, low-sodium protein choices.
- Examples of acceptable choices: hummus, bean dip, cottage cheese, low-fat cheese, hard boiled eggs, low-fat or non-fat yogurt, low-sodium tuna, nuts, nut butters, sunflower seeds, low-sodium turkey slices.

Examples of acceptable snack choices, all served with water:

- Peanut butter, whole-grain crackers and apple slices
- A peach and whole-grain crackers
- Half of a tuna sandwich on whole-wheat bread with lettuce and tomato
- Turkey served with whole-wheat pita triangles and carrot sticks
- Milk and whole-grain cereal with fresh berries
- Low-fat yogurt topped with blueberries and granola
- Hummus with whole-grain pita and sliced red peppers

D. Special Occasion Standards for Meals and Snacks

Special occasion standards apply to trips, parties for major holidays and special events. This also includes food purchased from vendors not routinely used by the agency for normal food service.

- Require serving healthy options, such as fresh fruit, leafy green salad, and/or vegetable slices.
- Require serving water at all special occasions.
- Recommend adopting a policy for special occasion meals and snacks.
- Recommend limiting special occasion meals and snacks (e.g., once a month).
- Recommend, if serving sweets/desserts, offering in moderation and in small portions (e.g., one small cookie per person).
- Recommend adhering to beverage standards described in Section IB on page 2.
- Recommend eliminating all foods that meet the USDA definition of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV).¹³ Examples of FMNV include chewing gum, candy and water ices.

¹² For CACFP programs, this category is referred to as 'meat or meat alternative.'

¹³ Definition available at: <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2011-title7-vol4/pdf/CFR-2011-title7-vol4-part210-appB.pdf>

Section III. Agency and Population-Specific Standards and Exceptions

A. Children

Children have different nutritional needs than adults. This section provides specific nutrition standards and exceptions that apply to agencies that serve children up to and including age 18 years old.

I. Requirements for Purchased Foods

Agencies purchasing food for children (up to and including age 18 years old) are required to follow the standards listed in Section I unless stated otherwise below:

All beverages

- **Require**, for sites serving a majority of children under 18 years old, beverages contain no artificial or non-nutritive sweeteners.
- **Require**, for child care facilities regulated by Article 47 of the New York City Health Code, not serving 100% fruit juice to children under 2 years of age.
- **Require**, for child care facilities regulated by Article 47 of the New York City Health Code, 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners limited to ≤ 4 oz per serving.

Milk and milk substitutes

- **Require**, for child care facilities regulated by Article 47 of the New York City Health Code, only unsweetened milk.
- **Require**, for children aged 12 months to under 2 years old, only whole and unsweetened milk.
- **Require**, for children aged 2 years and older, only 1% or non-fat and unsweetened milk (unless milk with a higher fat content is medically required, as documented by a child's medical provider).
- **Require**, for children aged 4-18 years old, flavored milk or flavored fluid milk substitutes be ≤ 130 calories per serving.
- Recommend that agencies set timeline for phasing out flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes.

II. Nutrient Requirements for Meals and Snacks Served¹⁴

Overall Requirements

- Recommend, for agencies serving a majority of participants up to and including age 18 years old, following the Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board's Dietary Reference Intakes for appropriate age groups.¹⁵

Sodium

- **Require**, for sites serving a majority of children aged 1-5 years old, limiting sodium to $\leq 1,700$ mg per day: breakfast: ≤ 510 mg, lunch: ≤ 595 mg and dinner: ≤ 595 mg.
- **Require**, for sites serving a majority of children aged 6-18 years old, limiting sodium to $\leq 2,200$ mg per day: breakfast: ≤ 660 mg, lunch: ≤ 770 mg and dinner: ≤ 770 mg.

Fiber

- **Require**, for sites serving a majority of children aged 1-4 years old, ≥ 19 g of fiber per day.
- **Require**, for sites serving a majority of children aged 5-18 years old, ≥ 25 g of fiber per day.

¹⁴ Please see page 4 for programs that are exempt from this standard.

¹⁵ The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, Medicine. Health and Medicine Division. Dietary Reference Intakes Tables and Application: <http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/Activities/Nutrition/SummaryDRIs/DRI-Tables.aspx>

Sugar

Require, for child care agencies, cereal contain ≤ 6 g sugar per serving.

Require, for sites serving a majority of children under 18 years old, yogurt contain no artificial or non-nutritive sweeteners.

Calories

Participants of the National School Breakfast and School Lunch Programs may adhere to the calorie requirements provided by this program.

B. Correctional Population

Agencies serving the adult correctional population have a majority of young, moderately active women and men who may require a higher than average caloric intake. **Require** $\leq 2,200$ calories per day for women and $\leq 2,800$ calories per day for men.

C. Youth Detention Facilities

Agencies serving the youth detention population have a majority of young, moderately active males who may require a higher than average caloric intake. **Require** $\leq 2,500$ calories per day for males.

D. Child Care Services Providers

Home-based child care providers are not required to comply with these Standards.

E. Patients Under Therapeutic Care

Nutrition requirements consistent with established medical guidelines and diets for patients under therapeutic care replace general nutrition criteria described here. The Patient Bill of Rights allows patients under therapeutic care to request specific food items. These items are considered part of the therapeutic diet and do not need to meet the nutrition criteria.

F. Populations with Religious or Special Dietary Food Needs

If an agency cannot meet the required purchased food standards in Section I due to a lack of availability of food items that meet specific needs of the population it serves (e.g., packaged kosher foods), the agency is expected to seek suitable replacements in the marketplace as quickly as is feasible. The agency must identify and report these products to the Food Policy Director and the Health Commissioner.

G. Emergency Food

Agencies that purchase food to be distributed by a third party to emergency food providers, such as soup kitchens and food pantries, are **required** to follow the standards outlined in Section I. This does not include food purchased for the intention of a disaster response outlined in *Exceptions*.

H. Federal Commodity Food Program

Food provided by the federal government to agencies or agency programs is not required to meet the standards outlined in Section I. However, agencies/programs accepting these foods are **required** to meet the standards outlined in Section II. Agencies/programs are expected to provide documentation upon request to verify which products were obtained through the commodity food program.

I. Donated Foods

Foods that are donated or provided at no cost to a program are not required to meet the standards outlined in Section I. However, agencies accepting these foods are required to meet the nutrition standards outlined in Section II. Programs are not permitted to accept donations of candy or sugar-sweetened beverages for use in meal or snack service.

J. Foods for Disaster Response

- Food purchased by agencies to serve solely for a disaster or crisis response are not restricted by these Standards, recognizing that foods stocked for such purposes intentionally include nutrient-dense products.

Section IV. Sustainability Recommendations

The Standards for Meals/Snacks Purchased and Served focus on promoting a healthy eating pattern as part of a city-wide strategy to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, and reduce related health disparities among New Yorkers. New York City also recognizes the importance of promoting an economically and environmentally sustainable¹⁶ food system that supports local and regional economies and minimizes environmental impacts, in alignment with long term public health goals.

Agencies are encouraged to consider, when practical and cost effective:

- Meal patterns higher in plant-based foods, such as vegetables, fruits, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds, and lower in animal-based foods which can be achieved through a variety of dietary patterns, including the USDA Healthy U.S.-Style Eating Pattern,¹⁷ the Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern,¹⁸ and the Healthy Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern.¹⁹
- Procurement practices that prioritize local and regional food producers and meal patterns that emphasize the seasonal availability of fruits, vegetables and other products in the region. Agencies are encouraged to request that their vendors offer fruit, vegetables, dairy products and seafood that is locally and/or regionally grown or produced, as well as food products that are manufactured locally.
- Procurement practices that prioritize producers that provide a safe and healthy workplace for the workforce and provide healthy and humane care for animals.
- Procurement practices that support sustainable production systems that reduce the overall environmental impact of the food system, are aligned with long term public health goals and conserve natural resources that are needed to sustain the food supply in the long term. For example, preferred products may include:
 - Fruits, vegetables, dairy and meat that is local, seasonal or are transported limited miles to get to the point of service.
 - Poultry, meat and dairy that avoids the use of hormones and antibiotics.
 - Products that are or are grown by producers using low amounts or no pesticides or an integrated pest management system.
 - Seafood that is sustainably raised or harvested.²⁰
- Educating their customers about these local and/or sustainably produced foods through labeling or other mechanisms

These suggestions will continue to be evaluated and updated based on the latest scientific research on nutrition, the relationship between human health and food production methods, the impact of New York City on the food economy and the sustainability of the food system.

¹⁶ New York City does not endorse any particular labeling or documentation system or program over another, and recognizes that many agricultural producers practice sustainable agriculture without their products being labeled as such.

¹⁷ USDA Healthy U.S.-Style Pattern available at: <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-3/>

¹⁸ USDA Healthy Vegetarian Eating Pattern available at: <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-5/>

¹⁹ USDA Healthy Mediterranean-Style Eating Pattern available at: <https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/appendix-4/>

²⁰ For example, seafood that is identified as a “best choice” or “good alternative” on the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch list, or similarly certified by other equivalent program.