

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Calorie Range

If we have a childhood obesity problem, why don't the calorie requirements recommend that schools serve calories below 100%?

Serving a meal with less than 100% of the minimum calories would be less restrictive than the USDA Requirements. A State agency cannot make requirements that are less restrictive than the USDA Requirements. The majority of students participating in School Meal Programs come from food-insecure households, therefore meeting their minimum calorie requirements is important.

Trans Fat

What are natural trans fats? Are these okay in school meals?

A small amount of trans fat is found naturally in some animal-based foods such as beef, lamb, and dairy foods. It isn't clear if these naturally occurring trans fats have the same negative effects on the body as trans fats that have been industrially manufactured. According to the FDA, completely eliminating trans fat from the diet is not practical because it is unavoidable in ordinary diets. For this reason the trans fat requirements do not apply to naturally occurring trans fats.

Whole Grains

Will schools have to bake everything from scratch to meet the whole-grain standard?

No. Some schools choose to make their whole-grain baked products from scratch, while some choose to purchase some of their whole-grain products. The food industry has recently increased the availability of

whole-grain foods due to the whole-grain recommendations in the 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and customer demands. There are many whole-grain products available to purchase including whole-grain noodles, whole grain rice (brown rice), whole-wheat bread sticks, whole-wheat hoagie buns, and whole-wheat pizza crust. Remember to always read the Nutrition Facts label ingredient list to determine if a product is a true whole grain. Some sales reps may think their product is a whole grain when in fact it may not be.

Fruits and Vegetables

What does "variety" mean in the fruit and vegetable requirements?

Variety means serving fruits and vegetables from the different color categories and in different forms throughout the week. It is important that schools do not serve the same fruits and vegetables each day. Different fruits and vegetables contain different nutrients so it is important to serve a variety. The HealthierUS Challenge requires schools to serve at least one different fruit and at least one different vegetable every day of the week as well as three dark green or orange vegetables per week. This would be a good goal for a school to work toward.

Juice

Why limit juice?

Fruit juice is often low in fiber compared to whole fruits. Often the fiber in fruit comes from its peel and/or pulp, which are usually removed in juices. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend that whole fruit rather than fruit juice is consumed to meet the fruit recommendation to ensure

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adequate fiber intake. The American Academy of Pediatrics also recommends that juice intake be limited because of concerns about excess juice consumption leading to excess energy intake, as well as displacing other more nutrient-dense foods.

Milk

Can schools serve flavored milk under the new nutrition Requirements?

Yes, nonfat/skim milk may be flavored. Other milk fats may not. Studies show that offering students flavored milk can help increase consumption of the nutritionally dense beverage.

Legumes

What are dry beans? Do they have to be dry?

Dry beans do not mean that the bean needs to be purchased in its dry form. Dry beans include canned, pre-cooked beans or dry packaged beans that originated as dry beans before they were processed.

Fiber

How do you add fiber to breakfast?

Serving more whole grain foods and fruits at breakfast will help increase fiber.

Condiments

What does “control portions” mean in the condiment recommendations?

Condiments can be high in fat, saturated fat, and sodium. Portions of condiments can be controlled in many ways.

Below are some ideas for controlling portions:

- Control portions by providing correct serving utensils (1 oz ladle)
- Use pumps that are set at 1 oz
- Use portion packets
- Pre-portion condiments
- Pre-mix salad dressing in the salads (a salad recipe can be found on the Nutrition Requirements website)

Schools should not have high fat or sodium condiments available in self-serve containers that are high flowing and encourage large portions.