

Five Meal Components

Milk

Unflavored whole milk must be served to 1 year old children; unflavored skim or 1% milk must be served to children 2 through 5 years of age; unflavored skim or 1% milk or flavored skim milk can be served to children 6 years and older including adults.

Specifics:

- Must be pasteurized fluid milk.
- Is a required component at breakfast, lunch, and supper.
- Milk may be served as a beverage, on cereal or used for some of both at breakfast and snack.
- Milk used in cooking is not creditable.
- Infants birth through 11 months must be provided breastmilk, including breastfed on site, or iron-fortified infant formula.
- Milk may not be served for snack when juice is served as the second component.

Meat/Meat Alternate (m/ma)

Includes lean meat, poultry, fish, cheese, egg, cooked dry beans/peas, nuts and seeds and their butters, tofu, alternate protein products, and yogurt - creditable at lunch, supper, and snack. An m/ma may replace the grain component at breakfast a maximum of 3 times per week.

Specifics:

- Required at lunch and supper as main dish.
- Nut and seed butters can be used to meet all of m/ma at lunch/supper. Nuts and seeds may be used to meet full m/ma requirements at snack, or up to 50% of the m/ma requirement at lunch or supper.
- Tofu, yogurt, and soy yogurts (that meet the sugar limit of 23 gm per 6 oz., maintain documentation) may be used to meet the m/ma alternate component.
- Yogurt credits as 4 oz. = 1 oz. m/ma.
- A combination food served as a main dish may be credited as the m/ma plus up to 2 other meal components (3 total) provided each component meets the minimum meal pattern requirement.
- Limit serving processed meats (lunch meat, cold cuts, hot dogs, and sausage products) to no more than one serving per week is recommended.
- Commercially processed food must have processed food documentation (CN label, product formulation statement) to be creditable.
- No more than 2 different m/ma items are creditable at 1 meal.
- May be served in place of the entire grain component at breakfast a maximum of 3 times per week. One ounce of m/ma equivalent to 1 ounce of grain (exception - see above regarding yogurt serving size to credit as 1 oz. of m/ma).

Vegetable

Includes fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables, and full-strength vegetable juice.

Specifics:

- Cooked dry beans and peas may credit as either a vegetable or as a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal.
- One cup of raw leafy greens counts as ½ cup of vegetables.
- One serving of either a fruit OR a vegetable or both is required at breakfast.
- A vegetable may be used to meet the entire fruit requirement at lunch/supper.
- When two vegetables are served at lunch or supper, two different kinds of vegetables must be served.
- Pasteurized full-strength 100% juice may only be used to meet the vegetable requirement at one meal, including snack, per day.
- The minimum creditable serving size for vegetables is ⅓ cup.

Fruit

Includes fresh, frozen, dried, canned fruit, and full-strength fruit juice.

Specifics:

- Fruits may be served fresh, frozen, canned, dried or as 100% pasteurized fruit juice.
- One serving of either a fruit OR a vegetable or both is required at breakfast.
- ¼ cup of dried fruit counts as ½ cup of fruit.
- Pasteurized full-strength 100% juice may only be used to meet the fruit requirement at one meal, including snack, per day.
- Juice may not be served at snack when milk is served as a component.
- Combinations such as fruit cocktail may be credited to meet one of the two required components at lunch or supper.
- One serving of fruit can be replaced with a vegetable at lunch/supper.
- The minimum creditable serving size for fruits is ⅓ cup.

Grains

Includes whole grain-rich or enriched bread, bread products; or whole grain-rich, enriched or fortified cereal grain, cooked pasta or noodle products, or breakfast cereal; or any combination of these foods.

Specifics:

- Required at breakfast, lunch, and supper.
- At least 1 grain per day must be whole grain (WG) rich (maintain documentation). (Whole grain-rich foods are those that contain 100% whole grains or at least 50% whole grains and the remaining grains in the food are enriched.)
- Ready-to-eat cereal may be served at breakfast and snack only and must contain no more than 6 gm of sugar per dry ounce (maintain documentation).
- Grain-based desserts do not count toward the grain requirement, with the exception of sweet crackers, which includes graham crackers of all shapes and animal crackers.
- A m/ma may be used to meet the entire grain component at breakfast a maximum of three times per week.