

Nutrient Analysis

P R O T O C O L S

How to Analyze Menus for
USDA's School Meals Programs



Purpose of this Manual

This guidance manual establishes procedures (protocols) to conduct an accurate nutrient analysis. It is developed for:

- School Food Authorities (SFAs) using Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (NSMP) or Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (ANSMP) who are required to plan reimbursable meals using nutrient analysis.
- SFAs using Food-Based Menu Planning who may conduct an optional nutrient analysis and want the State agency to accept their nutrient analysis for the School Meals Initiative (SMI) Review.
- State agencies, during an SMI Review, who are required to:
 - Conduct a nutrient analysis of one school week's menus for SFAs using a Food-Based Menu Planning option.
 - Review the nutrient analysis process of SFAs using NSMP/ANSMP to ensure nutrient analyses have been conducted according to protocols.
 - Review the nutrient analysis process of SFAs using Food-Based Menu Planning who want the State agency to accept their nutrient analyses, to ensure that the SFA's nutrient analyses have been conducted according to protocols.

Purpose of Nutrient Analysis

The SMI requires that school meals meet the nutrition standards when averaged over a school week. To assist the evaluation process, USDA established nutrient standards, the minimum required nutrient and calorie levels, and maximum fat and saturated fat levels for each age or grade group used in menu planning. To determine calorie and nutrient levels in a specific menu, the menu planner uses a USDA-approved software program to analyze the nutrient composition for the menus and compares these levels with the required nutrient and calorie levels for each age or grade group.

An accurate nutrient analysis is a critical tool:

- To plan and evaluate menus using NSMP or ANSMP.
- To evaluate menus using Food-Based Menu Planning.

Table of Contents

Introduction and Background	5
The School Meal Initiative	6
Menu Planning Approaches—A Review	7
Chapter 1: Nutrient Standards	9
What is a Nutrient Standard?	10
Which Nutrient Standards Should You Use?	11
How are the Nutrient Standards Derived?	12
Nutrient Standards: Food-Based Menu Planning (FBMP)	13
Using the Established Grade Groups.	16
Modifications Available to Traditional and Enhanced FBMP	16
Nutrient Standards: NSMP and ANSMP	17
Modifications of Nutrient Standards for the Majority of Children ..	23
Chapter 2: Key Nutrient Analysis Concepts	25
Overview of the Software Database	26
All Foods are Included in the Nutrient Analysis	27
Nutrients Calculated “As Consumed” or “Edible Form”	28
Nutrients Averaged over the School Week	28
Weighted and Simple Averages	29
Option to Combine Breakfast and Lunch Analyses	29
Whole Foods versus Fortification	30
Chapter 3: Selecting Software and Hardware for Nutrient Analysis	33
USDA-Approved Nutrient Analysis Software Programs	34
Choosing an Approved Nutrient Analysis Software Program	35
Hardware Selection	38
Chapter 4: Overview of Conducting Nutrient Analysis	39
Contents of the Nutrient Analysis Software Database	40
Overview of Steps for Nutrient Analysis	43
Chapter 5: Preparing for Nutrient Analysis	47
Information and Materials Needed for Nutrient Analysis	48
Chapter 6: Entering Food Items (Ingredients) into the Local Database	53
How to Enter Data for New Food Products or Ingredients	54
Steps for Entering Data for New Food Products or Ingredients	54

Chapter 7: Adding a Recipe to the Local Database	59
How the Nutrient Analyses of USDA Quantity Recipes Were Calculated	60
Selecting the Correct Food Items/Ingredients for Recipes	62
Using the Yield Factor Method	63
Vegetables	64
Meats	66
Dried Pasta	70
Adjusting Moisture and Fat Loss or Gain in Commercially Prepared Food Products	71
Selecting the Correct Measure of a Food	72
Steps to Entering a Local Recipe	73
Creating a Recipe Variation	78
Creating a Theme Bar Recipe	80
Shortcut Hints for Data Entry for Menu Analysis: Creating Recipes to Simplify Data Entry	81
Common Errors in Data Entry of Recipes	83
Chapter 8: Entering Menu Plans	85
Identify Menu (Site) Names and Associated Grade or Age Nutrient Standards	86
Identify Menu or Meal Types	89
Enter Individual Menus	90
Assign Dates to Menus and Determine Date Range for Nutrient Analysis	91
Determine Number of Servings and Serving Sizes (Portions) of Menu Items	91
A More Detailed Explanation of Weighted Averages	93
What is Simple Averages	94
Menus for Field Trips	97
Print Applicable Reports for Review	97
Common Errors in Data Entry of Menus	98
Chapter 9: Evaluating and Modifying Menus and Recipes to Achieve the Nutrient Standards	99
Review the Menus for Variety	100
Evaluate How Well the Current Menus Met the Nutrient Standards ..	100
Review the Portion or Serving Sizes	101
Using the Nutrient Food Source List	101
Re-analysis of Menus for Substitutions and NSMP and ANSMP	102
Documentation of Substitutions	105
Documentation of Leftovers	106
Getting Help	107

Appendices	109
A: National Reference Levels for Sodium, Cholesterol, Carbohydrate, and Dietary Fiber	110
B: Age to Grade Comparison Chart	111
C: Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value	112
D: USDA-Approved Nutrient Analysis Software Requirements	113
E: Sample of the Nutrition Facts Label	115
F: Manufacturer’s Data Submission Form	116
G: Raw-to-Cooked Conversion Factor for Selected Vegetables	118
H: Common Moisture and Fat Change Values (%) for Purchased Prepared Foods that are Fried	119
I: Example of Determining Projected Servings Using Weighted Averages	120
J: Example of Determining Projected Servings Using Simple Averaging	121
K: Comparison Between Weighted Averages and Simple Averages	122
L: Sample Menu Substitution/Leftover Form	123
Index	125

