

# CHAPTER 4

A MENU PLANNER  
FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS™

## The ABC's of Successful Menu Planning







# The ABC's of Successful Menu Planning

**H**ow important is menu planning? In a successfully managed school lunch or breakfast program, it may be the *most* crucial step. The nutritional value of meals and compliance with federal program requirements depend on careful menu planning. But that's not all.

The menu influences almost *every* aspect of the food service operation — from what foods are purchased and how they are prepared, to whether or not meals are popular with students. Good planning can make a huge difference!

In this chapter, we'll look at the ABC's of successfully planning appealing school meals. We'll review the menu planning process and some important planning principles. We'll also explore ways to use the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the nutrient standards for healthy school meals as planning tools.

Planning menus involves much more than listing specific foods for daily meals. A menu planning worksheet can be helpful in organizing the total job. You will find sample worksheets and sample menus at the end of this chapter.





## **THE MENU PLANNING PROCESS — TEN STEPS TO SUCCESS**

No matter which menu planning approach you select — Traditional or Enhanced Food-Based, NSMP or Assisted NSMP — you will proceed through several logical steps. In the next few pages, we'll look at these steps. Where appropriate we'll add extra details, first for Food-Based Menu Planning, then for Nutrient-Based Menu Planning. The ten steps are:

- 1. SCHEDULE A TIME TO PLAN MENUS. COLLECT MENU RESOURCES.**
- 2. THINK ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU WANT TO GO.**
- 3. DETERMINE A TIME PERIOD.**
- 4. FOCUS ON THE AGE OR GRADE GROUP(S) YOU WILL SERVE.**
- 5. DECIDE THE NUMBER OF CHOICES YOU WILL OFFER.**
- 6. SELECT THE ENTRÉE FOR EACH DAY'S BREAKFAST AND LUNCH.**
- 7. SELECT THE OTHER MENU ITEM OR ITEMS.**
- 8. PROVIDE FLUID MILK CHOICES.**
- 9. MAKE SURE YOU ARE MEETING NUTRITION GOALS.**
- 10. EVALUATE WHAT YOU HAVE PLANNED.**





**STEP  
1****SCHEDULE A TIME TO PLAN MENUS. COLLECT MENU RESOURCES.**

Plan menus well in advance, preferably a month or more ahead of the time they are to be served. Depending on your role in menu planning, you will want to have time to:

- (1) Study food inventories, current market and price reports, previous menus, and food production records that indicate student preferences.
- (2) Involve students, parents, and other interested parties in the planning.
- (3) Select and test food products and recipes.
- (4) Plan and check the resulting menus.

To be prepared, you will want to pull together a variety of menu resources. These might include, for example, past successful menus, recipe files, and food trade journals. For easy reference, also have on hand copies of food production and inventory records, as well as sales histories, and publications such as USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*, *USDA Recipes for Schools (2006)*, *Choice Plus*, and *Fruits and Vegetables Galore: Helping Kids Eat More*. These publications are available for order or download from the Resource Library on the Team Nutrition web site at [teamn nutrition.usda.gov](http://teamn nutrition.usda.gov). (See Appendix 3 for more information on these publications.)

In addition, you will want to review important program information, such as requirements, nutrition goals, and lists of available USDA commodities. Also, note important dates on the school calendar and other opportunities for special promotions.

**STEP  
2****THINK ABOUT WHERE YOU ARE AND WHERE YOU WANT TO GO.**

An important next step is to take time to re-examine your current approach. Review your menus, the products you purchase, and preparation techniques. Will they work in any new menu planning system you may be considering? With the Dietary Guidelines and students' nutrition needs and preferences in mind, take another look at what you have been serving. Which areas are okay? Which need modifying?

- Are you planning sufficient variety?
- Do you need more servings of grains/breads? Have you included some whole grain food items?
- Can you serve more vegetables/fruits?
- Have you included vegetables from all five subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes, starchy vegetables, and other vegetables) several times a week?
- How often do you serve low-fat entrées?
- Do you need to add foods or increase servings to provide more calories?
- Do you need to serve some foods less often?



## STEP 3 DETERMINE A TIME PERIOD.

For each of the menu planning approaches, there are weekly nutrient requirements and nutrition goals *so be sure to plan menus by the week*. Weekly nutrient requirements are based on the normal school week of 5 consecutive days. They are adjusted accordingly if the school week is longer or shorter than 5 days.

In addition, you may want to select a time frame for a cycle menu. Cycle menus are menus planned for a longer time period and repeated on a regular basis. A cycle can be any number of weeks that works for your operation. See the screened box below for more information on cycle menus.

## MAKING THE MOST OF CYCLE MENUS

***If carefully planned, cycle menus can offer a number of advantages. They can...***

- Save time in repetitive functions such as precosting and work schedules.
- Adapt easily to varied grades and ages.
- Allow flexibility for such things as seasonal changes, availability of commodity foods, and special events.
- Allow more time for training and marketing.

Plan with your schools' needs in mind. You may want to have a seasonal cycle, for example, or a holiday cycle based on school celebrations.

***To use cycle menus to best advantage, be careful to avoid the potential pitfalls. Here are some tips:***

- To avoid having cycle menus become monotonous and repetitious, plan carefully and evaluate continually.
- So that holidays and special school activities won't go unrecognized, be sure to note them on the calendar well in advance. Designate specific dates when a special menu is to be substituted for the one in the cycle.
- To make the best use of foods in season, be flexible. Use general descriptive terms — for example, indicate "fresh fruit" rather than "apples." Or, plan one cycle for each season: Fall (September, October, November); Winter (December, January, February); and Spring (March, April, May).
- Be ready to make adjustments. For example, if you receive USDA-donated foods you may want to make changes in order to include them.

Flexibility is the key! Review menus frequently to make adjustments for changes in availability of USDA-donated foods; to take advantage of an especially good buy or a seasonal food; and to allow for a special occasion. It's a good idea to keep a small inventory of substitute items to use in the event of an emergency or a changing situation.



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## **STEP 4** **FOCUS ON THE AGE OR GRADE GROUPS YOU WILL SERVE.**

Although Food-Based and Nutrient-Based Menu Planning differ in many respects, the starting point for both is focusing on the ages or grades of the students you will serve.

To review how to select and use age/grade groups for Food-Based Menu Planning (Traditional and Enhanced), turn back to Chapter 2. For Nutrient-Based Menu Planning (NSMP and Assisted NSMP), see Chapter 3.

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## **STEP 5** **DECIDE THE NUMBER OF CHOICES YOU WILL OFFER.**

The number of choices you offer will depend on your operation. However, keep in mind that the variety offered does not affect *minimum requirements*. See Chapter 2 for minimum requirements for Traditional and Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning; see Chapter 3 for NSMP and Assisted NSMP.

In making your decision, try to balance cost, nutrients, equipment used, and labor needed to prepare each of the choices. Start by adding one or more entrées, then add a selection of side dishes that go with the entrée choices. This method works for any of the menu planning approaches.

Offering choices allows you to add new foods without risking a drop in participation. Remember that it often takes several opportunities for students to try foods before they learn to like them.



## STEP 6 SELECT THE ENTRÉE FOR EACH DAY'S BREAKFAST AND LUNCH.

Remember that the entrée sets the stage for the rest of the lunch menu and sometimes for the breakfast menu. It may determine whether students decide to eat that day.

Entrées should be selected first in menu planning because they are the central focus of a meal. They form the framework around which you will plan the rest of the menu.

If you are using NSMP or Assisted NSMP, you will find you have a different kind of flexibility than you had when working with meal patterns. This is because you are no longer serving specific food components in specific amounts. While this flexibility can help you make meals interesting and appealing, it is important to continue to use good menu planning practices.

Be careful when selecting entrées:

- (1) If you include an entrée that is not central to the meal or is not recognized by students as the entrée, this could result in poor acceptance.
- (2) Follow a plan for providing a *variety* of entrées.
- (3) If you do not have entrée choices and you repeat the same entrée during a 2-week period, consider varying the other foods served with it.

## STEP 7 SELECT THE OTHER MENU ITEM OR ITEMS.

You will want to include menu items that complement the entrée. Plan to use plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. Keep in mind that students like many vegetables raw as well as cooked. Try to introduce new foods, starting with small amounts.

## STEP 8 PROVIDE FLUID MILK CHOICES.

Plan to make a variety of milk options available every day. Remember that offering low-fat or fat-free milk is a good way to reduce fat and be consistent with the Dietary Guidelines. (See Appendix 8 for information on milk requirements and the labeling of fat-free and low-fat milk.)

Schools are required to offer a variety of milk choices consistent with students' preferences in the prior year. If a specific type of milk represents less than 1 percent of the total amount of milk consumed in the prior year, the school may elect not to offer that type of milk for lunch.





## LOWER FAT MILK CHOICES CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Offering lower fat milk choices is an easy way to reduce total fat and saturated fat. Here's an example:

**A menu planner decides to offer the following items for lunch:**

- Breaded Chicken on a Roll with Lettuce and Tomato
- Potato Wedges
- Cherry Cobbler
- Milk

**With WHOLE milk...**

34% of calories will come from fat

11% of calories will come from saturated fat

**With 2%-fat milk...**

32% of calories will come from fat

9% of calories will come from saturated fat

**With 1%-fat milk...**

31% of calories will come from fat

8% of calories will come from saturated fat

**With fat-free milk...**

29% of calories will come from fat

7% of calories will come from saturated fat

**In this example, offering fat-free milk instead of whole milk will reduce calories from fat by 5% and calories from saturated fat by 4%.**

## STEP 9

### **MAKE SURE YOU ARE MEETING NUTRITION GOALS.**

As you think about meals that will appeal to your student customers, keep the nutrition goals in mind. Looking at your menus, ask yourself questions like the following:

Do our meals provide students with adequate calories and nutrients while limiting fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, sodium and added sugars?

What kind of example do our meals set for students? Are they consistent with the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines? Do they encourage students to eat foods from every food group?

Do the menus emphasize whole grains and a variety of fruits and vegetables?

Will the foods on the menu appeal to students and taste good?

See Chapters 6 and 8 for tips on preparing and marketing healthful meals.

## STEP 10 **EVALUATE WHAT YOU HAVE PLANNED.**

Before you decide to wrap up a planning session, look over what you have planned. Will your meals meet your goals for nutritional value? For variety and customer appeal? What about cost?

Will you be serving breakfast as well as lunch? Does your lunch menu repeat any of the foods you have selected for breakfast? How does what you have planned for breakfast affect equipment and staffing needs for lunch?

Do your meals comply with the requirements of the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs? By meeting these requirements, you are making sure your meals will qualify for the appropriate federal reimbursement.

As you know, your State agency periodically reviews your meals to make sure they are consistent with program requirements. How you evaluate your meals — and how the State agency will do its review — will depend on which menu planning approach you have selected.

What about special needs? School meal regulations require you to make substitutions for individual children with a physician's prescription for dietary accommodations due to a disability. You may also make substitutions for children with medical or other special dietary needs who do not have a disability. Exceptions must be supported by a statement from a recognized medical authority and must include recommended substitute foods. Be sure to keep this statement on file in the school. For more information, contact your State agency.



Pictured here is Beef Stir-Fry, one of many exciting entrées included in *USDA Recipes for Schools (2006)*. See Appendix 3 for more information.







## BASIC MENU PLANNING PRINCIPLES

Across the country, schools are offering meals in a variety of interesting forms — from simple boxed lunches to many-item buffets. Just as school lunches and breakfasts come in many forms, so do the foods that go into them.

Advances in food technology make it possible to select foods in many forms — frozen or chilled, partially or totally prepared, pre-portioned or in bulk, pre-prepared or as ingredients to put together “from scratch.”

All of this makes menu planning exciting as well as challenging. Where do you begin? The basic menu planning principles listed below and discussed on the following pages are a good starting point. Keep them in mind as you think about your customers’ preferences and nutrition needs.

1. *Strive for balance.*
2. *Emphasize variety.*
3. *Offer choices.*
4. *Add contrast.*
5. *Think about color.*
6. *Consider eye appeal.*



## 1. *Strive for balance.*

As you work to plan meals that are nourishing, appealing, and taste good, you will want to strive for balance in a number of different ways. Select and combine foods in ways that...

- ... **help you meet the required nutrient standards.** For example, as you work to achieve calorie goals and target fat levels, look for ways to balance higher fat foods with items that are lower in fat.
- ... **balance flavors in appealing ways.** Make sure individual foods, when served together, make a winning combination. Too many strongly flavored foods may make a meal unacceptable to children. Too many mild flavors may make it too bland.
- ... **balance color, texture, size.** Be sure your meals have pleasing, eye-appealing combinations of foods. To add interest, see suggestions listed under contrast and eye appeal on pages 100 and 101.

### *Here are some tips for achieving balance:*

**Balance higher fat foods with ones that have less fat.** For starters, avoid having too many higher fat foods in the same week. In other words, don't include pepperoni pizza on a week's menu if you are already planning to offer hot dogs and chicken nuggets.

In addition, balance a higher fat entrée with low-fat entrées. For example, when you are offering a cheeseburger, also offer a turkey sandwich.

And look for ways to use low-fat side dishes to balance a higher fat entrée. For example, with a grilled cheese sandwich, offer carrot and celery sticks.

**Use a combination of mild and strong flavors.** While some students enjoy strongly flavored foods, be careful not to serve too many in the same meal. For example, a meal with pepperoni pizza, cajun potatoes, coleslaw, and a brownie has too many spicy and strong flavors.

**Use a variety of shapes and sizes.** To make a menu interesting, include different shapes and sizes. If you serve fish sticks, oven-baked French fries, carrot sticks, and a banana, you have several similarly shaped foods. A meal with more varied shapes might feature: a baked chicken leg, mashed potatoes with low-fat gravy, seasoned green beans, and a watermelon wedge.





## *2. Emphasize variety.*

Serving a variety of foods is important because no one food or group of foods can give us everything we need for a healthy diet. Variety also makes menus interesting and appealing. To add variety in school meals, try to...

- ... **Include a wide variety of foods from day to day.** Unless you provide choices, avoid planning the same form of food on consecutive days, such as meatballs with spaghetti on Monday and meat ravioli on Tuesday.
- ... **Vary the types of main courses you serve.** For example, serve casseroles one day, soup and sandwiches the next, or perhaps a main-dish salad.
- ... **Include different forms of foods, and prepare them in a variety of ways.** For instance, some vegetables are good eaten raw. If you usually serve a particular vegetable cooked, serve it uncooked if it is good that way. Or cook it but use different sauces or seasonings. In any case, be sure the “different way” of serving is as appealing as the “usual way.”
- ... **Include a surprise item or a small amount of a new or unfamiliar food periodically.** For example, try adding raw cauliflower, red cabbage, or spinach to a salad.

## *3. Offer choices.*

Any school food service program, regardless of size, can offer choices in the menu. Try the following...

- ... **Decide on the number of choices you can offer in each category of food, and plan menus accordingly.** With careful planning and efficient management, offering choices need not increase your operating costs.
- ... **Offer choices within as many components as you can.** For example, offer two entrées and let students select one. Offer three or more fruits and vegetables and let students choose two. Offer two or more grains/breads and let students choose one or two. Offer a variety of milk choices and let students choose one.
- ... **Include the food combinations most acceptable to students in your school.** The lower the acceptability of the menu item, the less frequently you should offer it.



#### 4. *Add contrast.*

**Strive for contrasts of texture, flavor, and methods of preparation.**

- ... **Think about the texture of foods as well as their taste and appearance.** For added appeal, serve a green salad or raw vegetable with spaghetti. Offer a crisp fruit or vegetable with a burrito, and crisp steamed carrots and broccoli with meatloaf. Pair toasted garlic bread and cold broccoli salad with cheese ravioli.
- ... **Use some crisp, firm foods with soft creamy ones.** A green salad, raw vegetable sticks, or a hard roll could provide crispness to a meal with macaroni and cheese.
- ... **Avoid having too much of the same type of food in the same meal.** A lunch with too many starches or too many sweets lacks contrast as well as balance. So does a meal with too many heavy foods. If you are serving a hearty casserole, plan to offer a light vegetable or light dessert such as fresh fruit.
- ... **Use a pleasing combination of different sizes and shapes of foods.** Within a meal, present foods in several different shapes, such as cubes, mounds, shredded bits, and strips. A meal with cubed meat, diced potatoes, mixed vegetables, and fruit cocktail needs more contrast in size and shapes of foods.

#### 5. *Think about color.*

**Use combinations of colors that go together well, and strive for contrast and maximum color presentation. A good rule of thumb is to use at least two colorful foods in each menu for visual appeal. In addition...**

- ... **Avoid using too many foods of the same color in the same meal.** A meal with turkey, rice, cauliflower, white bread, and pears would lack color contrast. A better combination would be turkey and cranberry sauce, green peas, whole wheat bread, and pears.
- ... **Remember that vegetables and fruits are great for adding natural color to side dishes as well as entrées.** A slice of tomato really brightens up a potato salad. A fresh grape or strawberry livens up a dish of diced pears or peaches.
- ... **Use colorful foods in combination with those that have little or no color.** Serve broccoli spears with whipped potatoes, for example. Add pimento or green pepper to corn. Offer a bright red apple and green lettuce with a hamburger and baked beans. Serve green peas and apricots with oven fried chicken and mashed potatoes.
- ... **And don't forget spices.** It's easy to sprinkle on a dash of cinnamon or paprika for added color.







## 6. Consider eye appeal.

**Your customers' first impression will be how a meal looks. Make sure what you serve looks good as well as tastes good.**

- ... **Think of the total presentation.** As you plan for color, consider the color of the dishes, plates, or trays to be used as well as the colors of the foods.
- ... **Make the serving line attractive.** Try to add color and texture to the serving line. Where possible, garnish food in steamtable pans. For example, add a few red or green pepper rings to a pan of macaroni and cheese. Put parsley, a tomato wedge, or a piece of brightly colored fruit on a tray of sandwiches. Put a bit of paprika or some lemon slices on a pan of steamed rice.
- ... **Plan the way you will place the menu items on the tray or plate.** Visualize how the food will look when served and decide on the most attractive arrangement. Before serving the lunch, portion a sample plate so that all servers can see how it should look. This is also a good way to show them correct serving sizes.



***Keep in mind special considerations:***

As you apply the basic menu planning principles, keep in mind special considerations such as: regional food preferences, holidays and other special occasions, climate and seasons, and product availability.

**Food preferences:** Consider the regional, cultural, and personal food preferences of the students you serve, but don't be afraid to introduce new foods from time to time. Include new foods as choices and encourage students to try them. Be sure menus don't reflect your personal food prejudices.

**Holidays and special occasions:** Plan festive lunches and breakfasts for national holidays, school events, and special occasions like parents' visiting days. Don't forget National School Lunch Week, School Breakfast Week, and National Nutrition Month!

**Climate or seasons:** Include more hot foods in cold weather, and more cold foods in warm weather.

**Product availability:** Use foods in season. Plan to serve plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables when they are plentiful and at the peak of quality.

***Consider available staff and equipment:***

You will want to plan meals you can prepare and serve with available facilities, equipment, and staff. Here are some tips:

When thinking about facilities and equipment:

Consider the kind and size of ovens, kettles, steamers, and other equipment; also think about freezer and refrigeration space.

Consider sheet and baking pans, steamtable inserts, and other equipment used in meal preparation.

Consider the numbers and kinds of serving tools and dishes or compartments in a compartment tray needed to serve each meal.

When thinking about available staff:

Plan lunches and breakfasts employees can prepare in the time available.

Consider the amount of hand preparation required for each menu.

Schedule employees' time so their particular skills can be used to best advantage.

Balance the workload — food preparation and clean-up — from day to day and from week to week.



***If you also order or purchase food:***

In some school districts, menu planners are also responsible for ordering and purchasing food. If this is part of your job, you may find the following tips helpful.

Consider the availability of foods from local suppliers. If you need to reduce the number of deliveries, you can plan menus that include fresh produce on consecutive days. Do the same for commercially baked breads.

Operate within a budget, and precost your menu. Keep records of the approximate cost per serving of each menu item in order to determine what each lunch will cost as well as the average lunch cost per month. You can make substitutions if the average cost of the menu runs too high.

Postcost menus and compare with precost. Use this information to make menu adjustments and pinpoint possible problem areas.

Keep abreast of price trends and the market availability of various foods. Identify extremes — items which are very high priced or those which are very low priced — with a view to minimizing and maximizing, respectively, their use in the menu.

Use USDA-donated foods when available. Use them as efficiently and creatively as you would if you had purchased the food.

Keep records of food purchased, used, and available in inventories. Also keep customer participation records and production records that note acceptability.



***Tips on purchasing quality foods:***

Foods you serve can only be as good as the quality of the foods you purchase. Careful use of competitive buying will not only help control food costs but will also help upgrade the quality of your meals. Here are some additional tips...

Be familiar with sources of supply. Buy from suppliers who provide the best quality food at the most reasonable prices. Seek out potential new suppliers. Put them on your mailing list for bids and requests for proposals. Also look for opportunities to buy through cooperative purchasing groups (co-ops).

Buy according to how you will use a product. Consider grade, style, type, size, count, container, and packing medium.

Develop clear, concise purchase specifications and food product descriptions. To ensure the purchase of quality foods at competitive prices, write specifications and descriptions that will make clear what you want and what you will accept. The following publications may be helpful: *First Choice* and *Choice Plus*. For more information, see Appendix 3.

Inspect upon delivery. Make sure what is delivered meets your specifications. Whenever possible, buy foods that are federally graded and inspected.

Remember storage facilities. Decide when to buy each type of food, keeping in mind perishability and storage space.

Keep records of food purchases.

For commercially prepared foods, determine the quantities of foods needed and portion sizes according to the age/grade group to be served. Be sure the purchase specifications include that information.







## PUTTING THE DIETARY GUIDELINES TO WORK FOR YOU ...

Applying the advice contained in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans is the best place to start when planning healthy school meals. As mentioned earlier, the current nutrition goals are based on the 1995 Dietary Guidelines, however information on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2005 is provided so that schools can begin to work towards these new goals.

**This part of Chapter 4 offers practical tips for putting the Dietary Guidelines to work. We'll look at breakfast first, then lunch. Before beginning this section, you may want to re-read the background on the Dietary Guidelines contained in Chapter 1.**

As we saw in Chapter 1, the Dietary Guidelines call for getting the most nutrition out of your calories and finding your balance between food and physical activity. They also stress the importance of making smart choices from every food group because no one food or group of foods can give us everything we need for a healthy diet.

It's important to remember that a healthy diet applies to a pattern of foods consumed over several days, not to single meals or foods. In fact, even foods of lower nutritional value can be part of a healthy diet when served in moderation, but menu planners should monitor the amount of these foods and how often they are served.

Serving meals that reflect the Dietary Guidelines is a great way to show children what it means to eat for good health!

### ***What do the Dietary Guidelines recommend?***

As described in Chapter 1, the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommend:

- Make smart choices from every food group—meat and meat alternates, grains/breads, vegetables, fruits, and milk and milk products.
- Find your balance between food and physical activity and get the most nutrition out of your calories.
- Know the limits for fats, sugar, and sodium, and how to use the Nutrition Facts Label.



## Putting the Dietary Guidelines to Work ...

### WHEN PLANNING SCHOOL MEALS

Here are some tips for applying the Dietary Guidelines for Americans as you plan healthy school meals. We'll look at three Guidelines in detail. For each of these, you will find a variety of suggestions. You probably have many ideas of your own to add to these!

For easy reference, foods are listed by the components used with Food-Based Menu Planning, such as "Meat/Meat Alternate." However, schools using Nutrient-Based Menu Planning Approaches will also find these tips helpful.

### Make smart choices from every food group

As you plan school meals for children, keep in mind that it's important to obtain nutrients from foods from every food group, not from a few highly fortified foods or supplements. This is because:

- Just as children need nutrients for growth and health, they also need energy. Offering foods from every food group is the best way to provide children with adequate calories as well as nutrients. A good breakfast provides energy to start the day and has been linked to improved behavior and better performance in the classroom. Lunch provides energy through the afternoon.
- Relying on fortified foods or supplements may limit the nutrients in meals served to children.
- There are some nutrients for which requirements and functions have not yet been established, even though our bodies need and use them. A varied diet will help avoid shortages of these nutrients as well as others.

#### Overall:

Offer a variety of vegetables, fruits, lean meats, milk and milk products, and grains (especially whole grains) with little saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol or added sugar. Offer a variety of whole-grain breads, cereals, pasta and rice with little added saturated fat and *trans* fat and a moderate or low amount of added sugars. When possible, use low-fat forms of foods in each group with little or no added sugars.

### Go lean with protein.

#### Meat or Meat Alternates

- Plan a different meat or meat alternate or a different combination of meat or meat alternates for each day in the week. Follow a plan for providing a good variety of meats and meat alternates in breakfast dishes and lunch entrées. Vary your protein choices—with more fish, beans, peas, nuts, and seeds.
- Offer lean turkey, roast beef, ham, or low-fat luncheon meats.
- Bake it, broil it, or grill it- use these methods instead of frying to reduce fat.





- Remove the skin from poultry before serving
- Serve extra lean beef and pork and trim or drain any excess fat.
- Skip or limit the breading on meat, poultry, or fish.
- Offer dry beans, peas, egg substitute, or nuts as an alternative to vegetarians or those avoiding meat products.
- Add a tablespoon of reduced-fat peanut butter to sliced apple or celery.
- Include kidney beans and chickpeas (garbanzo beans) on salad bars.
- Provide nuts on salads, or in main dishes.

### ***Make half your grains whole***

#### **Grains and Breads**

- Plan to use a different kind of enriched or whole-grain bread or cereal each day. Serve a variety of whole-grain cereals, such as toasted oats for a quick and easy breakfast. For lunch, include a variety of enriched or whole-grain macaroni, noodles, and other pasta products. For example, offer a variety of hot and cold whole-grain pasta salads.
- Whole grains cannot be identified by the color of the food. Read ingredient lists on foods and look for the word “whole” next to the grain name. For example, look for one of the following ingredients first on the label ingredient list: whole wheat, whole oats, whole rye, brown rice, oatmeal, whole-grain corn, graham flour, or cracked wheat.
- Read the Nutrition Facts Label on foods so you can choose grain products that are high in fiber and low in saturated fat and sodium.
- Buy or make low-fat quick breads, muffins, crackers, cookies, or pancakes with a high percentage of whole grains or whole-grain flours.
- Offer school-made whole-grain loaf breads or hot breads, such as rolls, sandwich buns, muffins, biscuits, or cornbread as often as possible. Look for more opportunities to use whole grains in your recipes and menus.
- When preparing a dish, try increasing the proportion of whole grains to other ingredients. Substitute whole-wheat flour and/or oatmeal for part of the white flour in flour-based recipes. Start with 10-percent whole-grain flour or grains, and gradually increase the amount each time the recipe is prepared. You may need to add a bit more leavening. Try this with pizza crust, which is usually made with white flour; for example, serve a thicker whole-grain pizza crust.
- Add whole grains such as pre-cooked oats and brown rice to ground beef in meat loaf and similar casseroles.
- Use brown rice or barley to thicken soups.
- Use whole-grain noodles, oats, cornmeal and brown rice in main dishes or in side dishes such as salads, hot grain products, and desserts.



- Make French toast with whole-wheat bread.
- Introduce children to whole-wheat bread by serving sandwiches with one slice of whole-wheat bread and one slice of white bread.
- Serve submarine sandwiches on whole-wheat rolls.

### ***What are some common grains?***

Five common grains — wheat, corn, oats, rice, and rye — are listed below, along with some of the forms in which you might buy or use them. Also listed are the names of four other grains you might try using.

Wheat	Corn	Rice
Whole wheat	Corn meal	Brown rice
Cracked wheat	Corn tortillas	Wild rice
Wheat Berries	Corn tortilla chips	
	Corn tortilla shells	
Oats	Rye	Other grains
Rolled Oats	Rye flakes	Amaranth
Oat meal	Rye flour	Barley
Oat flour		Millet
		Quinoa

### ***Vary Your Veggies and Focus on Fruits***

#### **Vegetables and Fruits**

##### **Tips for vegetables and fruits:**

- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables. Choose vegetables from each of the five vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes [dry beans], starchy, and other vegetables).
- Serve a sufficient amount of fruits and vegetables to meet meal pattern requirements or greater.
- Buy fruits and vegetables in season for better prices and tastier produce.
- Offer choices of two or more fruits or vegetables to let students select what they like to eat.
- Use a different combination of two or more servings of vegetables and fruits each day. Include all forms — fresh, canned, frozen, and dried.

##### **Vary your veggies.**

- Offer high fiber vegetables, such as cooked dry beans, broccoli, tomatoes, leafy greens, carrots, and potatoes with skin.





- Offer vegetables from each of the five vegetable subgroups (dark green, orange, legumes [dry beans], starchy, and other vegetables). Offer more dark green veggies, such as broccoli, kale, and other dark leafy greens; orange veggies, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, and winter squash; and beans and peas, such as pinto beans, kidney beans, black beans, garbanzo beans, split peas, and lentils.
- Add fresh spinach to salad greens on the salad bar. Broccoli and cauliflower florets, grated carrots, sliced green peppers, corn, and tomatoes are all popular.
- Increase the serving size of vegetables.
- Season vegetables with herbs for taste appeal.
- Offer raw vegetable salads and pre-cut raw vegetables.
- Serve vegetables as finger foods, or try combining two or three vegetables to contrast colors and textures (carrot and celery sticks, tomatoes and cucumbers). Serve colorful vegetable cups often.
- Cut vegetables into various shapes, such as carrot coins or green bean sticks.
- Use green peppers, mushrooms, zucchini and onions as pizza toppings; add spinach or broccoli to lasagna.
- Prepare some meals around a vegetable main dish such as a vegetable stir-fry or soup.
- Include cooked dry beans or peas in mixed dishes such as chili or minestrone soup.
- Include chopped vegetables in pasta sauce or lasagna.
- Add vegetables to baked products. Carrot muffins and zucchini nut bread are a few examples.
- Shred carrots or zucchini into quick breads, muffins, meatloaf, and casseroles.
- Use pureed, cooked vegetables such as potatoes to thicken soups, stews, sauces, and gravies.

**Focus on fruits.**

- Offer fruits high in dietary fiber such as those with edible skins—like apples, pears, nectarines, peaches—and those with edible seeds, such as berries and bananas. See the screened box on page 110 to compare the dietary fiber in common fruits.
- Serve whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, dried) rather than fruit juice most often to ensure adequate fiber intake.
- Increase the serving size of fruits.
- Offer fruit as a topping on cereal, pancakes, and waffles. Good choices might include: bananas, canned peaches, strawberries, raisins, or cinnamon applesauce.
- Add fruit to baked products. Pumpkin raisin bread, blueberry-banana oatmeal bread, and cinnamon raisin rolls are a few examples.
- Serve fresh or frozen fruit salads as side dishes.
- Team fruits with yogurt, cottage cheese, or tuna salad.
- Plan to use fresh, frozen, canned or cooked fruits in colorful fruit cups and desserts.



Add fresh or dried fruits to canned fruits.

- Serve fresh fruits for naturally sweet foods. Serve fresh, baked, or dried fruits for snacks and naturally sweet desserts
- Serve fruits as finger foods, or try combining two or three fruits to contrast colors and textures (peach slices and grapes, strawberries and bananas).
- Cut fruits into various shapes, such as apple wedges and kiwi coins.

### ***How much fiber is in your fruit?***

As you can see from this list, some fruits are higher in fiber than others. In addition, a particular fruit may have lots of fiber in one form — for example, fresh with skin — and practically none in another form, such as juice. Compare below the amount of fiber in a fresh apple, applesauce, canned apple slices, and apple juice.



Fruit	Portion Size	Dietary Fiber (in grams)
Apple with skin	1 medium	3.3
Apple juice	1/2 cup	0
Applesauce	1/2 cup	1.5
Apple slices, canned	1/2 cup	1.9
Cantaloupe	1/2 cup	0.7
Grapes	1/2 cup	0.7
Kiwi	1 medium	2.3
Orange	1 medium	3.2
Orange juice	1/2 cup	0.2
Peaches, canned	1/2 cup	1.6
Peaches, dried	5	5.3
Peaches, frozen	1/2 cup	2.2
Peach with skin	1 medium	1.5
Pear with skin	1 medium	5.1
Pear, canned	1 half	1.2
Pineapple, canned	1/2 cup	1.1
Pineapple juice	1/2 cup	0
Raisins	1/4 cup	1.3
Strawberries	1/2 cup	1.7
Strawberries, frozen	1/2 cup	2.4
Watermelon	1/2 cup	0.6



**Get your calcium-rich foods.**

- Offer fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products with meals.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk for all or part of the water in oatmeal and other hot cereals.
- Use fat-free or low-fat milk when making condensed cream soups (such as cream of tomato).
- Offer fat-free or low-fat plain and flavored yogurt. Top cut-up fruit with flavored yogurt or make a dip for fruit or vegetables from low-fat yogurt.
- Top a baked potato with fat-free or low-fat yogurt.
- Top casseroles, soups, stews, or vegetables with shredded low-fat cheese.
- For dessert, make chocolate or butterscotch pudding with fat-free or low-fat milk.

**Find the balance between food and physical activity****Get the most nutrition out of your calories and get adequate nutrient within calorie needs.**

The best way to give a body the balanced nutrition it needs is by offering a variety of nutrient-rich foods every day. Just be sure to stay within the daily calorie needs. Fruits, vegetables, grains and milk products are all important to a healthful diet. When increasing intake of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products, it is important to decrease the intake of less-nutrient-rich foods to control calorie intake. It's important to encourage students to make smart food choices and watch portion sizes.

- Offer nutrient-rich foods that are lower in calories and limit foods high in saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, sodium, and added sugars.
- Offer plenty of vegetables, fruits, and whole grains.
- Offer children correct portion sizes.
- Offer sweetened cereals, sweet breads and desserts in moderation or offer fruit as an option.



### Meat or Meat Alternates

- Use a variety of lean meat or meat alternates, such as eggs, turkey sausage, ham, low-fat cheese, fat-free or low-fat yogurt, reduced-fat peanut butter, and fat-free refried beans.
- Plan and serve a different lean meat or meat alternate (or combination of meat or meat alternates) each day of the week.
- Offer a variety of menu choices — vegetarian as well as meat entrées.
- Serve eggs alone or in combination with different meats or cheeses, and prepare them in a variety of ways. In addition to scrambled or hard-cooked eggs, you might try preparing omelets, egg muffin sandwiches, breakfast burritos, or French toast.
- Try a deli sandwich bar with lean meats, a pasta bar, or a taco bar.
- Add an entrée salad or salad bar as a choice. Consider offering pre-plated fruit or vegetable salads with cottage cheese, yogurt, or other meat/meat alternates. These can be a quick-serve entrée.

### Grains and Breads

- Use a variety of low-fat, whole-grain bread products such as toast, biscuits, muffins, pancakes, bagels, cereals, tortillas, and sandwiches. (For more information on Grains/Breads, see Appendix 4, Grains/Breads Instruction.)
- Purchase or prepare whole-grain loaf breads or hot breads such as rolls, sandwich buns, or cornbread several times each week.
- Use a variety of whole-grain hot and cold cereals. Look for cereals that supply fiber and contain moderate amounts of sugar and salt.
- Include a variety of enriched or whole-grain macaroni, noodles and other pasta products or brown rice in entrées and side dishes. Consider serving brown rice as well as white rice.
- Serve Spanish rice with whole-grain tacos or burritos.
- Offer whole-wheat crackers or cornbread with chili.





## Vegetables And Fruits

- Offer a variety of fruits and vegetables in various forms — fresh, canned, frozen, and dried.
- Offer a variety of full-strength fruit or vegetable juices such as: apple, grape, pineapple-orange, pineapple-grapefruit, orange, and tomato.
- Offer different combinations of two or more servings of vegetables and fruits each day.
- Include foods high in vitamin A two to three times a week. Include vitamin C-rich foods daily.
- Serve seasonal fresh fruits whenever possible.
- Offer a salad bar or potato bar.

## Milk

- Offer a variety of low-fat and fat-free milk choices as a beverage and/or on cereal.
- Flavored milk is very acceptable in fat-free and low-fat versions, but test student acceptance before offering with cereal.



## **Be physically active everyday**

Regular physical activity is important to maintaining health. It uses calories, helps with weight control, and assists in the prevention of certain diseases later in life. While physical activity is not a Child Nutrition Program requirement, it is important that children be provided a healthy environment. Using the information provided in the other recommendations will assist you in providing healthy school meals and a healthy environment for your target populations. Offering correct portion sizes and promoting regular physical activity are just a couple of the ways that you can model healthy habits to your students. For more information, see Chapter 1.

## **Know the limits**

- Know your fats— Look for foods low in saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol.
- Don't sugarcoat it— Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners.
- Reduce sodium (salt) rich foods, and increase potassium.



**Know your fats—Look for foods low in saturated fats, trans fats, and cholesterol.****Tips for serving the right types and amounts of fats:**

- Limit solid fats like butter, stick margarine, shortening, and lard, as well as foods that contain these.
- Check the Nutrition Facts Label to keep saturated fats and *trans* fats low.
- Make most fat sources from polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fatty acids such as fish, nuts, and vegetable oils, such as olive or canola oil.
- Purchase soft margarine, which is lower in saturated fat and *trans* fat than stick margarine.
- Balance higher fat foods in menus with items lower in fat. For example, with chicken nuggets serve baked potatoes or steamed fresh vegetables rather than french fries.
- Use moderate amounts of high-fat condiments like mayonnaise. Instead, offer or use low-fat mayonnaise, mustard, catsup, and vegetable relishes, such as salsa.

**Meat or Meat Alternates**

- Offer lean meats, fish, poultry, cooked dry beans, dry peas, lentils or vegetable proteins. Purchase meat and meat alternate products in which fat has been reduced. Use the food label to select products that are lowest in saturated fat, *trans* fats, and cholesterol.
- Be careful when selecting precooked breaded meats, fish, or poultry (example: chicken nuggets or fish sticks). Check the fat content printed on the Nutrition Facts Panel and select those that are lower in fat.
- Use processed meats such as luncheon meat, sausage, or hot dogs sparingly, since these items are generally higher in fat. Offer lower fat luncheon meats.
- Serve main dishes that can be prepared without added fat. Bake, broil, steam, or boil instead of fry. Trim fat from meats. Drain all meat after cooking.
- To lower the weekly fat and saturated fat content, try alternating main dishes containing eggs and meat with ones that include whole grains, vegetables, and/or fruit.
- Consider serving dishes that combine meat or meat alternate with grains — beans and rice, for example.
- Offer cooked dry beans or canned beans in main dishes two to three times per week. Serve bean-based entrées, such as bean burritos, tostadas, and chili.
- Use part-skim mozzarella cheese and low-fat cottage or ricotta cheese in recipes listing cheese as an ingredient.
- Offer low-fat turkey, water-packed tuna, low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt with pre-plated vegetable or fruit salads.
- Enhance flavor with low-fat gravies and sauces.



## Grains and Breads

- Offer a selection of lower fat whole-grain products such as pancakes, bagels, English muffins, and pita bread.
- Make or buy low-fat whole grain baking mixes.
- Prepare whole-grain noodles, brown rice, barley, and bulgur with little or no added fat.
- Substitute English muffins for biscuits to lower the fat content of breakfast sandwiches.
- To lower saturated fat, cut the fat in recipes by 1/4 or 1/3 without losing the great taste. (See pages 170 to 172 for suggestions on how to retain quality and acceptability.)
- Use vegetable oil, *trans* fat free soft margarines, or fruit purees instead of butter, lard, or shortening.
- Use a non-stick cooking spray to grease baking pans.



## Vegetables and Fruits

- Prepare fruits and vegetables used in recipes without adding fat.
- Steam, simmer, or bake vegetables without adding butter.
- Use non-stick cooking spray when sautéing or baking potatoes.
- Offer baked French fries or seasoned baked potato wedges instead of deep-fried French fries.
- Season vegetables with herbs, spices, salsa, and lemon juice.
- Offer reduced-fat or fat-free salad dressings.
- Substitute plain low-fat or fat-free yogurt for part or all of the mayonnaise or creamy salad dressings in salads.
- Serve fresh vegetable strips with low-fat yogurt dip, salsa, or fat-free salad dressing.
- When serving salads, add sliced avocado or nuts to improve variety and taste.
- Serve fruit for dessert.



### ***Add salsas for fresh flavor...and less fat:***

By substituting salsa for sauces that are higher in fat, you can cut back on fat and sodium. Compare:

SAUCE (1/4 cup)	FAT (grams)	CALORIES	SODIUM (milligrams)
Salsa .....	1 g	30 calories	70 mg
Basic white sauce.....	6 g	76 calories	211 mg
Cheese .....	9 g	118 calories	252 mg

### **Milk**

Encourage choices that are lower in fat. Offer low-fat (such as 1 percent) and fat-free (skim) milk to help decrease the fat content of meals.

### ***Don't sugarcoat it – Choose and prepare foods and beverages with little added sugars or caloric sweeteners.***

- Always check the ingredients for added sugars (e.g., corn syrup, high fructose corn syrup, honey, and fructose). Foods that have added sugars as one of the first two ingredients are high in sugar content.

### **Grains and Breads**

- Offer a variety of unsweetened or lightly sweetened dry cereals. If children are reluctant to give up higher sugared cereals, mix a small amount of the higher sugar cereal with the non-sugary cereal.
- Use fruit as a topping on dry and cooked cereals.
- Modify recipes of sweet breakfast breads, snacks, and desserts when you do serve them to reduce sugar without compromising quality. Add fruits, vegetables, and nuts for added flavor and texture.
- Use spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves to flavor foods without using sugar.





## Vegetables and Fruits

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables in season when they may be less expensive and at their peak flavor. Avoid adding sugar or honey to fresh fruits.
- Do not add sugar to vegetables such as stewed tomatoes, corn, or green beans.
- Use fruits packed in light syrup, juice, or water. Since these are already sweet, there is no need to add sugar.
- Use fresh or frozen fruit for desserts.

## ***Reduce sodium (salt) rich foods, and increase potassium***

### **Tips to reduce sodium:**

- Read the Nutrition Facts Panel for sodium content. Select foods that are lower in sodium.
- Learn to use spices and herbs, rather than salt, to enhance the flavor of food.
- Serve smaller amounts of salty condiments such as salad dressings, mustard, soy sauce, catsup, pickles, and olives — or serve them less often.
- Offer salt-free seasonings as an alternative to salt. For example, mix herbs and put into marked shakers on serving line for self-serve by students.

## Meat or Meat Alternates

- When purchasing ready-made foods, especially processed products such as soups, meats, and main dishes, check the sodium content and select foods that have less — for example, those using herbs and spices. Read Nutrition Facts Panel carefully for sodium content.
- When preparing foods, use lower sodium products. Review recipes for ways to reduce sodium, such as substituting herb blends and spices for salt.
- Choose fresh or frozen fish, shellfish, poultry, and meat most often. They are lower in salt than most canned and processed forms.
- Serve homemade instead of canned soups.

## Grains and Breads

- Modify recipes when you do prepare them to reduce salt without sacrificing quality.
- Use spices such as cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves to flavor foods such as cooked cereals and baked goods without adding salt.
- Do not add salt when cooking pasta and rice. Use herb blends in pasta, rice, and savory side or main dishes without adding salt for added flavor.
- Offer a variety of lower sodium ready-to-eat cereals.
- Limit the number of times you serve salty foods such as crackers or pretzels and offer them in smaller amounts.



## Vegetables and Fruits

- Serve more fresh vegetables and fruits, which are naturally low in sodium.
- Purchase fresh and plain frozen or canned vegetables without added salt most often.
- Alternate fresh vegetables with canned and frozen vegetables when menu planning.
- Use herbs and spices to flavor vegetables.
- Offer potassium-rich fruits (fruit from the vine, apricots, bananas, cantaloupe, orange juice, and dried peaches) and vegetables (sweet potatoes, white potatoes, tomato products, white beans, lima beans, winter squash, and spinach) at meals.

## Milk

- Offer fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products.

### ***How much sodium does a food contain?***

**Processing can make a big difference. Compare the sodium content (in milligrams) of four common vegetables in three forms — fresh, frozen, and canned:**

Vegetable (1/2 cup)	Fresh	Frozen	Canned	Canned No Salt Added
Carrots	44 mg	43 mg	176 mg	31 mg
Corn	14 mg	3 mg	285 mg	3 mg
Green Beans	1 mg	1 mg	175 mg	1 mg
Peas	3 mg	58 mg	212 mg	2 mg





## USING THE NUTRIENT STANDARDS AS PLANNING TOOLS

**As you develop your breakfast and lunch menus, think of the nutrient standards as planning tools. Use them as guideposts to help select and prepare foods. Use them to market your product: Tell parents and students school meals are the best deal in town for nutrition as well as taste!**

In Chapters 1 and 2, we looked at the nutrient standards — what they are and why they are such an important part of the *School Meals Initiative for Healthy Children*.

- We saw that to meet the standards, schools will need to achieve certain target levels for: calories (also called Energy Allowances), protein, calcium, iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, calories from fat, and calories from saturated fat.
- We also saw that while the nutrient standards do not set specific target levels for cholesterol, sodium, and dietary fiber, these are also important considerations. You will want to work to *reduce* cholesterol and sodium and *increase* dietary fiber.

Let's take a closer look at the key nutrients and dietary components singled out in the nutrient standards. What do they contribute to good health? What are some common food sources?

Take a moment to review the charts on pages 27 through 30 for Food-Based Menu Planning or pages 69 through 72 for Nutrient-Based Menu Planning. These show you the school week averages you will be working to achieve for various age/grade groups.

*As you look over the charts, remember: The figures shown reflect levels in effect in 1995. Specific levels may change from time to time as the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans are updated to reflect new nutrition knowledge. What is important in this section is understanding how to use the target levels as guides for planning healthy meals.*



## CALORIES

**What are the target levels?** The nutrient standards set age-appropriate target levels for calories. Here are a few examples using the Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning approach for lunch (see chart on page 28):

*If you are planning lunch for Grades K-6, you will aim to meet a target level of 664 calories for Energy Allowances. In other words, when averaged over the school week, a lunch for this age group should provide at least 664 calories. If you are planning lunch for Grades 7-12, your target level will be considerably higher — 825 calories per lunch when averaged over the school week.*

As we saw in Chapter 1, it's important to be sure you balance calories and fat intake. If you are having trouble providing adequate levels of calories, see the screened box below for some tips.

### ***Here are some menu planning tips for balancing calories and fat intake:***

**1. When planning meals, consider substituting menu items, adjusting serving sizes, or adding condiments.**

Substitute higher calorie menu items for lower calorie menu items, keeping in mind all other nutrient standards (such as target goals for calories from fat).

Increase serving sizes of low-fat food items where appropriate and affordable — for example, offer larger serving sizes and/or extra servings of bread and rolls.

Add menu items, considering all other nutrient standards and costs of the items.

Add condiments, such as honey, jams, jellies, catsup, low-fat gravies or sauces, fruit toppings, low-fat whipped topping, where appropriate.

**2. When cooking, substitute or add ingredients.**

Use reconstituted nonfat dry (NFD) or nonfat fluid milk when recipe calls for “water or milk.” Use juice in place of water in gelatins.

Add dried, canned, frozen, or fresh fruit to bread/cake/muffin recipes. Add corn to cornbread/muffin recipes.

**3. Keeping students' preferences in mind, modify recipes and introduce new combinations of foods.**

To salads or salad bar selections, try adding croutons, low-fat or fat-free cheese, red or black beans, peas, Oriental noodles.

Add or increase amount of foods like pasta, rice, potatoes, corn, and peas in stews, soups, and casseroles.

Increase amount of bread in sandwiches, and pizza. Introduce more whole-grain foods.



Add sauces or toppings to menu items. For example, try honey-mustard sauce on chicken, low-fat or fat-free sour cream on Mexican entrées.

With baked potatoes, offer toppings like vegetable chili or low-fat cheese, or low-fat or fat-free sour cream. Add beans to tacos, burritos, chili, and other Mexican dishes.

#### 4. **Be creative with desserts.**

Offer low-fat, high-carbohydrate desserts more frequently, including ones that contain fruits, vegetables, and/or whole grains.

Consider serving angel food cake as well as lower fat versions of richer tasting cakes.

Top fruited gelatin with fat-free yogurt. Consider serving low-fat frozen yogurt, ice milk, sherbet, and fat-free milk pudding.

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## PROTEIN

**What are the target levels?** The nutrient standards set target levels for grams (g) of protein. Here's another example from the chart on page 28:

*If you are planning lunch for Grades K-6 with the Enhanced approach, your goal will be to provide at least 10 grams of protein per lunch when averaged over the school week. For Grades 7-12, your target level for a school week average will be 16 grams per lunch.*

**What does protein contribute to good health?** While we use the word “protein,” there are actually many different proteins. Proteins build and repair body tissues. They help antibodies fight infection. And they supply energy (4 calories per gram) if more protein is consumed than needed to build and repair body tissues.


**What are food sources for protein?** Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, yogurt, cheese, dry beans, dry peas, nuts, nut butters.

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## CALCIUM

**What are the target levels?** The nutrient standards set target levels for milligrams (mg) of calcium. Looking at the chart on page 28, you will see:

*If you are planning lunch for Grades K-6 with the Enhanced approach, you will aim to provide at least 286 milligrams of calcium per lunch when averaged over the school week. For Grades 7-12, your target level for a school week average will be 400 milligrams per lunch.*



**What does calcium contribute to good health?** Calcium is needed for healthy bones. It also helps in blood clotting and aids in muscle contraction and normal nerve functions.

**What foods are good sources of calcium?**

- **Major sources** include dairy products, such as milk (fat-free, low-fat, and reduced fat) and milk products such as cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, ice milk. Puddings made with milk can also provide substantial amounts of calcium.
- **Non-dairy sources of calcium:**
  - **Meat and Meat Alternates:** Soybeans, canned salmon, cowpeas (Blackeyes), ocean perch, rainbow trout, sesame butter, baked beans, tofu, calcium fortified soy beverage, and almonds
  - **Grains and Breads:** Ready-to-eat fortified cereals, fortified oatmeal and hot cereals, English muffins or other breads, enriched, with calcium propionate.
  - **Vegetables and Fruits:** Leafy green vegetables (collards, dandelion greens, turnip greens, kale, and spinach), Chinese cabbage, okra, cowpeas (Blackeyes), white beans, baked beans, and calcium fortified fruit juices.

## IRON

**What are the target levels?** The nutrient standards set target levels for milligrams (mg) of iron. Looking at the chart on page 28, you will see:

*If you are planning lunch for Grades K-6 with the Enhanced approach, you will aim to provide at least 3.5 milligrams of iron per lunch when averaged over the school week. For Grades 7-12, your target level for a school week average will be 4.5 milligrams per lunch.*

**What does iron contribute to good health?** Most important, iron combines with protein in the blood to form hemoglobin.

**What foods are sources for iron?** For easy reference, several foods are grouped below under: Meat/Meat Alternates, Grains/Breads, Vegetables, and Fruits.

- **Meat and Meat Alternates:** Soybeans, legumes/beans (baked, white, kidney, navy, chickpeas (garbanzo), great northern, black, pinto, cowpeas (blackeyed), lentils, split peas), beef liver, beef (chuck, bottom round, ground), turkey, chicken, pork, fish, shrimp, clams, and frankfurters.
- **Grains and Breads:** Fortified ready-to eat or cooked cereals, breads made with enriched flour (bread, rolls, biscuits, cornbread, pita, pizza crust, tortillas, muffins), egg noodles, macaroni, spaghetti, and enriched rice.

*Note: Read the Nutrition Facts Panel on ready-to-eat cereals and prepared food items for amounts in the product.*





- **Vegetables:** Soybeans, legumes/beans (baked, white, kidney, navy, chickpeas (garbanzo), great northern, black, pinto, cowpeas (blackeyed), lentils, split peas), spinach, baked or boiled potato, sauerkraut, peas, turnip greens, collards, beets, asparagus, sweetpotato, tomato products (paste, sauce, raw), brussel sprouts, mixed vegetables.
- **Fruits:** Cherries, plums, raspberries, prune juice and strawberries

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## VITAMIN A

**What are the target levels?** The nutrient standards set target levels for Retinol Equivalents (RE) of vitamin A based on the 1995 nutrient standards. Currently, the RDA's express vitamin A recommendations in Retinol Activity Equivalents (RAE). As more nutrient content information becomes available, future nutrient standards may be expressed in this unit. Looking at the chart on page 28, you will see:

*If you are planning lunch for Grades K-6 with the Enhanced system, you will aim to provide at least 224 RE of vitamin A when averaged over the school week. For Grades 7-12, your target level for a school week average will be 300 RE per lunch.*

**What does vitamin A contribute to good health?** Vitamin A helps keep eyes healthy and able to adjust to dim light. It helps keep skin healthy. It helps keep the lining of the mouth, nose, throat and digestive tract healthy and resistant to infection. It promotes growth.

### What foods are sources for vitamin A?

- **Milk:** Vitamin A-fortified milk (reduced-fat, fat-free, low-fat).
- **Grains and Breads:** Ready-to-eat cereals, with added vitamin A, and instant fortified cooked cereals
- **Vegetables:** Sweet potato, pumpkin, carrots, red sweet peppers, mixed vegetables, leafy green vegetables (collards, kale, mustard greens, dandelion greens, turnip greens, spinach green leaf lettuce), winter squash (acorn, butternut, Hubbard), red sweet pepper, Chinese cabbage, vegetable juice cocktail, peas, and broccoli.
- **Fruits:** Cantaloupe, apricots (canned and dried), grapefruit, plums, and tangerines (canned, mandarin oranges)

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## VITAMIN C (Ascorbic Acid)

**What are the target levels?** The nutrient standards set target levels for milligrams (mg) of vitamin C. Looking at the chart on page 28, you will see:

*If you are planning lunch for Grades K-6 with the Enhanced approach, you will aim to provide at least 15 milligrams of vitamin C when averaged over the school week. For Grades 7-12, your target level for a school week average will be 18 milligrams per lunch.*



**What does vitamin C contribute to good health?** Vitamin C helps strengthen blood vessels and hastens healing of wounds and bones. It increases resistance to infections, and it helps the body absorb iron in the diet.

**What foods are sources for vitamin C?**

- Vegetables: Broccoli, Brussels sprouts, sweet red and green peppers, red and green chili peppers, cauliflower, leafy green vegetables (collards, kale, mustard greens, cabbage, dandelion greens, turnip greens, spinach), kohlrabi, asparagus, okra, potatoes (baked, boiled, or steamed, reconstituted instant mashed/vitamin C restored), sauerkraut, soybeans, sweet potatoes, tomatoes products (raw, juice, paste, puree, sauce), cauliflower, lima beans, squash (summer and winter), corn, peas, and rutabagas.
- Fruits: Oranges, orange juice, papayas, guavas, kiwi, grapefruit, grapefruit juice, grapefruit/orange juice, mangoes, pineapple juice (canned/vitamin C restored), strawberries, tangerine juice, tangerines (mandarin oranges), cantaloupe, honeydew melon, raspberries, tangelos, peaches, watermelon, banana, star fruit (carambola) and grapes.

## CALORIES FROM FAT AND FROM SATURATED FAT

**What are the target levels?** The nutrient standards set target levels for: (1) calories from fat; and (2) calories from *saturated fat*.

- No more than 30 percent of total calories should come from fat.
- Less than 10 percent of total calories should come from saturated fat. (Keep in mind that the percent of calories from saturated fat is part of the percent of calories from total fat.)

**Here's an example:** We'll start by looking at the chart on page 28 to find the calorie goal for lunch for a particular age/grade group. We'll then determine the maximum number of these calories that should come from fat and from saturated fat when averaged over the school week.

### STEP 1

#### DETERMINE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CALORIES THAT SHOULD COME FROM OVERALL FAT.

We're planning lunch for Grades K-6 using the Enhanced approach. The chart shows we should provide a school week average of at least 664 calories per lunch.

To determine the target level for fat, we'll multiply 664 calories by 30 percent ( $664 \times .30$ ). The result: When averaged over the school week, no more than 199 calories per lunch should come from fat for this age/grade group.



## STEP 2 DETERMINE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF CALORIES THAT SHOULD COME FROM SATURATED FAT:

To determine the target level for saturated fat, we'll multiply this 664 calories by 10 percent ( $664 \times .10$ ). The result: When averaged over the school week, no more than 66 calories per lunch should come from saturated fat for this age/grade group.

## STEP 3 CONSIDER TOTAL FAT AND SATURATED FAT TOGETHER:

In this example, we've seen that no more than 199 calories should come from fat of any type. Of these 199 calories from fat, no more than 66 calories should come from saturated fat.

*While the nutrient standards do not set specific target levels for trans fat or cholesterol, you will want to work to lower trans fat or cholesterol intake. In the screened box below and on page 126 are some ideas for lowering fat, saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol.*

### ***Here are some ideas for lowering fat, saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol:***

What can you do to lower fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat and cholesterol? You will find lots of tips in Chapter 6. For starters, however, review the abbreviated list below. As the list shows, serving lower fat meals begins with the decisions you will make during menu planning.

Included are ideas for planning menus and purchasing, preparing, and serving food. This is not a complete list — look it over and think about what you might add. (An asterisk (\*) next to an idea indicates it will decrease saturated fat.)

#### **Menu Planning**

- Offer a "light meal option" each day.
- Use angel food or sponge cakes which contain little fat.\*
- Substitute lean ham for bacon or sausage.\*
- Make pizza with reduced fat cheese and lean ham instead of sausage or pepperoni.\*
- Serve grilled chicken instead of deep-fried chicken patties.
- Offer mustard, ketchup and/or low-fat mayonnaise with sandwiches.
- Offer hot sauce with greens instead of seasoning with butter.\*

### Purchasing

- Purchase low-fat and/or fat-free milk and other fat-free or low-fat dairy products.
- Review the prepared entrée products you purchase to determine if lower fat products would be acceptable and affordable.
- Find lower fat breakfast products or menu items to offer more frequently instead of higher fat items. For example: lower fat breakfast pizza, fruit muffins, or pancakes; low-fat cinnamon rolls with light glaze or powdered sugar dusting.\*
- Purchase oven-ready French fries instead of fries for deep-fat frying.
- Purchase ground chicken or turkey (without skin) to mix with lean ground beef.\*
- Purchase leaner meats (such as ground beef with no more than 15% fat).\*
- Purchase tuna packed in water instead of oil.
- Purchase reduced-fat processed meats, such as reduced-fat frankfurters and deli-meats.\*
- Purchase some lower fat salad dressings. Try newest versions of low-fat and fat-free mayonnaise, especially for use in salads or salad dressing mixes.
- Purchase lower fat variety breads (such as bagels, pita bread, corn tortillas, English muffins, etc.) to offer more frequently instead of higher fat grain products such as croissants, doughnuts, and sweet rolls.\*
- Revise specifications to prohibit saturated vegetable oils, such as coconut oil, palm oil, palm kernel oil, and hydrogenated shortening or stick-type margarine.\*
- Purchase soft margarine which is lower in *trans* fat and saturated fat than stick margarine.\*

### Preparing and Serving

- Use only enough salad dressing to lightly coat salad. Excess dressing can add unnecessary fat.
- Where appropriate for the finished product, steam meats and vegetables instead of sauteing.
- Use non-stick cooking spray in place of oil or shortening for braising and sauteing.\*
- To prevent baked products from sticking, use non-stick cooking spray or parchment paper, as appropriate.
- Use fat-free fluid or reconstituted fat-free dry milk instead of whole milk in cooking.\*
- Reduce the amount of cheese on sandwiches (for example, 1/2 ounce instead of 1 ounce) and increase the amount of lean meat.\*
- Use part-skim mozzarella cheese in pizza, salad bar offerings, and tacos.\*
- When not needed to meet Meat/Meat Alternate requirements, reduce the amount of cheese in recipes. Boost cheese flavor with enhancers such as dry mustard and lemon juice. Make casserole toppings by reducing cheese and combining with dry bread crumbs and herbs.\*
- Thicken soups with instant potato flakes instead of cream sauce. To thicken gravies and sauces without adding fat, mix cornstarch with a small amount of cold liquid to make a slurry.





## SAMPLE LUNCH MENUS FOR A TYPICAL WEEK

### **EXAMPLE #1: USING TRADITIONAL FOOD-BASED MENU PLANNING**

Here are 1 week's lunches planned with the Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning approach. Because of the ages of the students to be served, the menu planners have used the Traditional meal pattern for *Grades 4-12*.

For every day, they have listed what items are planned and what each contributes to meeting meal pattern requirements. They've used the following abbreviations for the required food components:

M/MA	=	Meat/Meat Alternate
G/B	=	Grains/Breads
F/V	=	Fruit/Vegetable
FL MK	=	Fluid Milk (served as a beverage)

After Friday's menu, they have totalled and noted the number of Grains/Breads offered for the week. This is because there are weekly as well as daily requirements for Grains/Breads with Food-Based Menu Planning. For additional information on requirements and meal patterns for the Traditional approach, see Chapter 2.

### **MONDAY**

### **Meal Pattern Contribution**

Beef Steak on Multi-Grain Bun (2 oz bun) with Reduced-Fat Mayonnaise - OR - Breaded Chicken Nuggets with Honey BBQ Sauce with Whole-Wheat Roll (2 oz)/Margarine	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B  2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B
Oven-Fried Potato Wedges (with Catsup as condiment) Chilled Applesauce	1/2 cup F/V 1/2 cup F/V
Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)

**TUESDAY****Meal Pattern  
Contribution**

Chicken Stir-Fry with Chinese Noodles (1/2 cup) and Steamed Rice (1/2 cup) - OR -	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B + 1/2 cup F/V
BBQ Beef on Whole-Wheat Bun (2 oz) and with Cole Slaw	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B + 1/4 cup F/V
Garden Peas	1/4 cup F/V
Chilled Pineapple Tidbits	1/4 cup F/V
Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)
Gingerbread with Whipped Topping	

**WEDNESDAY****Meal Pattern  
Contribution**

Tuna Salad on Bun (2 oz) - OR -	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B
Vegetable Lasagna with Italian Bread (1 oz)/Margarine	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B + 3/4 cup F/V
Lettuce and Tomato	1/4 cup F/V
Carrot Sticks	1/4 cup F/V
Fresh Grapes	1/4 cup F/V
Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)

**THURSDAY****Meal Pattern  
Contribution**

Turkey/Cheese Club Bagel (2 oz) with Lettuce/Tomato/ Reduced-Fat Mayonnaise/Mustard - OR -	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B + 1/4 cup F/V
Sausage Pizza with Bread Stick and Marinara Sauce	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B + 1/4 cup F/V
Golden Corn	1/4 cup F/V
Fresh Orange Wedges	1/4 cup F/V
Fluid Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	1 - 8 fl oz (1 cup)



<b>FRIDAY</b>	<b>Meal Pattern Contribution</b>
Honey Lemon Chicken with Brown Rice Pilaf (1/2 cup) - OR - Chili Beans/Cheese with Dinner Roll (1 oz)/Margarine	2 oz M/MA + 1 G/B  2 oz M/MA + 1 G/B
Fresh Broccoli and Cauliflower Pieces with Ranch Dip Green Beans Peach Half	1/4 cup F/V  1/4 cup F/V 1/4 cup F/V
Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)
Whole-Wheat Sugar Cookie	

**Total number of Grains/Breads offered for week = 9**

### **EXAMPLE #2: USING ENHANCED FOOD-BASED MENU PLANNING**

Here are 1 week's lunches planned with the Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning approach. In this instance, the menu planners will be serving junior high and high school students, so they have used the Enhanced meal pattern for *Grades 7-12*.

As with Example #1:

- For each day's menu, the planners have listed what food items are planned and what each contributes to meeting meal pattern requirements.
- Components are abbreviated: M/MA = Meat/Meat Alternate; G/B = Grains/Breads; F/V = Fruit/Vegetable; FL MK = Fluid Milk (served as a beverage).
- At the end of the week, the planners have indicated the total number of Grains/Breads offered. As with Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning, the Enhanced approach has weekly as well as daily requirements for Grains/Breads. For additional information on requirements and meal patterns for Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning, see Chapter 2.

In this example, dessert *does* count toward meeting meal pattern requirements. (This is not true with the Traditional Food-Based approach.)



**MONDAY****Meal Pattern  
Contribution**

BBQ Pork on Whole-Wheat Bun (2 oz) with Coleslaw - OR - Chicken Stir-Fry with Chinese Noodles (1/2 cup) and Steamed Rice (1/2 cup)	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B + 1/2 cup F/V  2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B + 1/2 cup F/V
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Pineapple Tidbits	1/2 cup F/V
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Gingerbread with Whipped Topping	1 G/B
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Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)
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**TUESDAY****Meal Pattern  
Contribution**

Vegetable Lasagna with Garlic Bread (1 oz) - OR - Sub Sandwich (3 oz roll) with Reduced-Fat Mayonnaise with Lettuce, Tomato, & Pickle (and Catsup as condiment)	2 oz M/MA + 3 G/B + 3/4 cup F/V  2 oz M/MA + 3 G/B + 1/4 cup F/V
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Tossed Salad with Dressing	1/2 cup F/V
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Fresh Apple	1/2 cup F/V
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Oatmeal Raisin Cookie	1/4 G/B
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Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)
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**WEDNESDAY****Meal Pattern  
Contribution**

Breaded Chicken Nuggets with Honey Mustard Dip - OR - Corn Dog with Mustard	2 oz M/MA + 1/2 G/B  2 oz M/MA + 1/2 G/B
--	--

Oven Fries (with Catsup as condiment) Carrot/Celery Sticks with Ranch Dip	3/4 cup F/V 1/2 cup F/V
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Whole-Wheat Roll (1 oz) with Margarine	1 G/B
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Chocoleana Cake	3/4 G/B
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Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)
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**THURSDAY****Meal Pattern  
Contribution**

Nachos, with Ground Beef with Whole-Wheat Roll (1 oz) - OR - Fish Fillet on Bun (2 oz) with Tartar Sauce	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B  2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B
Tossed Salad with Dressing Orange Half	1/2 cup F/V 1/2 cup F/V
Steamed Rice (1/2 cup)	1 G/B
Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)

**FRIDAY****Meal Pattern  
Contribution**

Spaghetti (1 cup) with Meat Sauce - OR - Honey Lemon Chicken with Steamed Rice (1 cup)	2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B +3/8 cup F/V 2 oz M/MA + 2 G/B
Steamed Broccoli Fresh Peach	1/2 cup F/V 1/2 cup F/V
Garlic Bread (1 oz)	1 G/B
Peanut Butter Cookie	1/2 G/B
Milk - 1% unflavored, 1/2% chocolate, fat-free	8 fl oz (1 cup)

**Total number of Grains/Breads offered for week = 15 servings**

**EXAMPLE #3: USING NSMP OR ASSISTED NSMP**

Here are 1 week's lunches planned with NSMP or Assisted NSMP. The students to be served are in *Grades 7-12*.

For every day, the menu planners have listed what items are planned. They've also written appropriate portions — for example, “1 each” for a Turkey Club Bagel, “1/2 cup” for Fruit Cocktail, and “1 portion” for Cherry Cobbler. Two choices are provided for the entrée, vegetables, and fruit/desert group. Three low-fat choices are provided for milk.

The results of the computer nutrient analysis are based on a weighted nutrient analysis of the menu for 500 reimbursible meals. In this case, the nutrient analysis shows the menu weekly average for the following: calcium, cholesterol, sodium, fiber, iron, calcium, vitamin A, vitamin C, protein, carbohydrates, total fat, saturated fat. It also shows percentage of calories from: protein, carbohydrates, total fat, and saturated fat.

For more information on planning meals with NSMP or Assisted NSMP, see Chapter 3. For more information on nutrient analysis and how it's done, see Chapter 5.



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**MONDAY** **Portion # of Servings**


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Bean Burrito with Cheese and Salsa (D-12A) .....	1 each.....	400
with Spanish Brown Rice (B-17).....	1 cup	
- OR -		
Turkey Club Bagel (Whole-Wheat) with Reduced-Fat .....	1 each.....	100
Mayonnaise and Lettuce and Tomato .....	1/8 cup	
Carrot/Celery Sticks .....	1/4 cup .....	350
with Ranch Dressing Dip (E-19) .....	2 oz	
- OR -		
Broccoli with Cheese Sauce .....	1/2 cup .....	150
Chilled Fruit Cocktail.....	1/2 cup .....	250
- OR -		
Raspberry Gelatin with Bananas .....	1/2 cup .....	250
Choice of Fluid Milk:		
1% low-fat milk .....	8 fl oz (1 cup) .....	50
1% chocolate milk.....	8 fl oz (1 cup) .....	400
Skim (fat-free) milk.....	8 fl oz (1cup) .....	50

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**TUESDAY** **Portion # of Servings**


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Hamburger on Whole-Wheat Bun .....	1 each.....	400
with Lettuce/Tomato/Mustard/Relish .....	1/8 cup	
- OR -		
Chicken Fajitas with Tortillas and Salsa (D-40) .....	1 each.....	100
French-Cut Green Beans.....	1/2 cup .....	100
- OR -		
Oven-Fried Potato Wedges with Catsup .....	1/2 cup .....	400
Fresh Grapes.....	1/2 cup .....	150
- OR -		
Cherry Cobbler (C-06).....	1 portion .....	350
Choice of Fluid Milk:		
1% low-fat milk .....	8 fl oz (1 cup) .....	50
1% chocolate milk.....	8 fl oz (1 cup) .....	400
Skim (fat-free) milk.....	8 fl oz (1cup) .....	50

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**WEDNESDAY****Portion # of Servings**

Vegetable Lasagna (D-50) .....	1 portion .....	300
with Whole Wheat Italian Bread and Margarine .....	1 slice	
- OR -		
Fish Sandwich on Multi-Grain Bread .....	1 portion .....	200
with Catsup, Tartar Sauce, Pickles		
Tossed Salad with Italian Dressing .....	1 cup .....	300
- OR -		
Potato Salad (E-09).....	2/3 cup .....	200
Sweet Potato-Prune Bread Square (B-18) .....	1 piece .....	350
- OR -		
Fresh Orange .....	1 each.....	150
Choice of Fluid Milk:		
1% low-fat milk .....	8 fl oz (1 cup) .....	50
1% chocolate milk.....	8 fl oz (1 cup) .....	400
Skim (fat-free) milk.....	8 fl oz (1cup) .....	50

**THURSDAY****Portion # of Servings**

Honey-Lemon Chicken (D-44).....	2 pieces.....	300
with Tater Tots and Catsup.....	1/2 cup	
and Whole-Wheat Roll with Margarine .....	2 oz roll	
- OR -		
Baked Potato Bar - (Ham, Cheese, Black Beans, Broccoli, Carrots, Cauliflower, and low-fat Sour Cream) .....	1 portion .....	200
and Whole-Wheat Roll with Margarine .....	2 oz roll	
Creamy Cole Slaw (E-06) .....	1/2 cup .....	200
- OR -		
Seasoned Green Peas .....	1/2 cup .....	300
Fresh Peaches .....	1 each.....	100
- OR -		
Whole-Wheat Cookie (B-02).....	1 each .....	400
Choice of Fluid Milk:		
1% low-fat milk .....	8 fl oz (1 cup) .....	50
1% chocolate milk.....	8 fl oz (1 cup) .....	400
Skim (fat-free) milk.....	8 fl oz (1cup) .....	50



**FRIDAY**

**Portion # of Servings**

Taco Pie with Salad Topping (D-45A).....	1 portion .....	300
- OR -		
Chicken Salad (E-05) Sandwich on Multi-grain Bread .....	1 sandwich .....	200
Golden Corn .....	1/2 cup .....	200
- OR -		
Refried Beans (I-15).....	2/3 cups.....	300
Watermelon Chunks .....	1/2 cup .....	100
- OR -		
Apple Crisp (C-02) .....	1 portion .....	400
Choice of Fluid Milk:		
1% low-fat milk .....	8 fl oz (1 cup).....	50
1% chocolate milk.....	8 fl oz (1 cup).....	400
Skim (fat-free) milk.....	8 fl oz (1 cup).....	50

**NUTRIENT ANALYSIS - MENU WEEKLY AVERAGE**

Cals	Mg Chol	Mg Sodm	G Fibr	Mg Iron	Mg Calc	RE Vit A	Mg Vit C	G Prot	G Carb	G T Fat	G S Fat
824	57	1536	11.03	6.68	589	980	40.68	35.62	120	24.46	7.92

% of Calories from Protein .....	17.30
% of Calories from Carbohydrates .....	58.17
% of Calories from Total Fat .....	26.72
% of Calories from Saturated Fat .....	8.65







## EVALUATING WHAT YOU HAVE PLANNED

Evaluate your meals by asking yourself questions like the ones listed below and on the next page. The questions are in several categories: (1) foods selected; (2) staffing and equipment; (3) cost; (4) recipes and production records; (5) special considerations; (6) meal requirements. This general checklist can be used for *either* Food-Based Menu Planning or Nutrient-Based Menu Planning.

To evaluate how well you are meeting meal requirements for a particular menu planning approach, use one of the three separate checklists that begin on page 137. These are listed at the bottom of page 136.

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### GENERAL CHECKLIST

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#### (1) *Foods Selected:*

Do the food choices have appealing colors and textures? ..... Yes  No

Do the menus have foods with different shapes, sizes, and colors? ..... Yes  No

Do the breakfast and lunch menus complement each other? ..... Yes  No

Have you considered special events and promotions? ..... Yes  No

Have you incorporated seasonal foods and USDA commodities? ..... Yes  No

Have you introduced any new food items? ..... Yes  No

#### (2) *Staffing and Equipment:*

Can some preparation be done ahead? ..... Yes  No

Is the workload balanced among employees? ..... Yes  No

Can you prepare and serve meals with available equipment? ..... Yes  No

Are oven and surface-cooking areas adequate for items planned? ..... Yes  No

#### (3) *Cost:*

Have you considered cost? ..... Yes  No

Do high and low cost foods balance in menus? ..... Yes  No



**(4) Recipes and Production Records:**

Have you specified the standardized recipes, preparation techniques, and processed foods to be used? ..... Yes  No

Have you listed the projected servings for each item? ..... Yes  No

Are portion sizes stated in correct amounts?..... Yes  No

Have you listed on the menu production record the condiments to be served? ..... Yes  No

**(5) Special Considerations:**

Is a vitamin C food included three to four times a week? ..... Yes  No

Are vitamin A foods included two to three times per week? ..... Yes  No

Are iron-rich foods included each day? ..... Yes  No

Are whole-grain products offered daily?..... Yes  No

Are low-fat entrées and lower in fat milk choices (such as low-fat and fat-free) offered daily? ..... Yes  No

Are assorted dry cereals offered at least once a week? ..... Yes  No

Are fresh fruits or vegetables offered on several different days? ..... Yes  No

**(6) Meal Requirements:**

Do menus meet the minimum requirements of the particular menu planning approach you are using? ..... Yes  No

*To answer this question, complete one of the following checklists:*

- *Checklist 1 for Traditional Food-Based..... page 137*
- *Checklist 2 for Enhanced Food-Based ..... page 139*
- *Checklist 3 for Nutrient-Based ..... page 141.*







## CHECKLIST 1: MEETING MEAL PATTERN REQUIREMENTS FOR TRADITIONAL FOOD-BASED MENU PLANNING

*After you have selected and recorded the foods and portions you plan to serve, check your menus by answering the questions below.*

### BREAKFAST

1. Have you selected the appropriate grade group (or groups) for the students you will be serving? Yes  No

2. Have you included the required food components and food items in the correct serving sizes?

■ Does each day's breakfast menu include *at least*:

8 ounces of fluid milk  
as a beverage or on cereal ..... Yes  No

1/2 cup fruit or vegetable  
or full-strength fruit or vegetable juice..... Yes  No

*One serving from each* of the Grains/Breads  
and Meat/Meat Alternate components

*OR*

*Two servings from either* Grains/Breads  
or Meat/Meat Alternate? ..... Yes  No

### LUNCH

1. Have you selected the appropriate grade group (or groups) for the students you will be serving? Yes  No

2. Have you included the required food components and food items in the correct serving sizes? Are you meeting minimum requirements for each of the grade groups you are serving? (See questions next page.)

***IF YOU ARE SERVING GRADES K-3:***

■ **Does each day’s lunch menu include *at least*...**

- 8 ounces fluid milk as a beverage ..... Yes  No
- 1-1/2 ounces Meat/Meat Alternate ..... Yes  No
- 1/2 cup Vegetables/Fruits ..... Yes  No
- 1 serving of Grains/Breads daily ..... Yes  No

■ **Do lunch menus for the week meet the *weekly minimum* for Grains/Breads?**

A total of 8 servings of Grains/Breads over the week..... Yes  No

***IF YOU ARE SERVING GRADES 4-12:***

■ **Does each day’s lunch menu include *at least*...**

- 8 ounces fluid milk as a beverage ..... Yes  No
- 2 ounces Meat/Meat Alternate..... Yes  No
- 3/4 cup Vegetables/Fruits ..... Yes  No
- 1 serving of Grains/Breads daily ..... Yes  No

■ **Do lunch menus for the week meet the *weekly minimum* for Grains/Breads?**

A total of 8 servings of Grains/Breads over the week..... Yes  No

***IF YOU ARE ALSO USING THE RECOMMENDED (OPTIONAL) GRADE GROUP FOR GRADES 7-12:***

■ **Does each day’s lunch menu include *at least*...**

- 8 ounces fluid milk as a beverage ..... Yes  No
- 3 ounces Meat/Meat Alternate..... Yes  No
- 3/4 cup Vegetables/Fruits ..... Yes  No
- 1 serving of Grains/Breads daily ..... Yes  No

■ **Do lunch menus for the week meet the *weekly minimum* for Grains/Breads?**

A total of 10 servings of Grains/Breads over the week..... Yes  No







## CHECKLIST 2: MEETING MEAL PATTERN REQUIREMENTS FOR ENHANCED FOOD-BASED MENU PLANNING

*After you have selected and recorded the foods and portions you plan to serve, check your menus using the questions below.*

### BREAKFAST

1. Have you selected the appropriate grade group (or groups) for the students you will be serving? Yes  No

2. Have you included the required food components and food items in the correct serving sizes?

■ Does each day's breakfast menu include *at least*:

8 ounces of fluid milk  
as a beverage or on cereal ..... Yes  No

1/2 cup fruit or vegetable  
or full-strength fruit or vegetable juice..... Yes  No

*One serving from each* of the Grains/Breads  
and Meat/Meat Alternate components  
*OR*

*Two servings from either* Grains/Breads  
or Meat/Meat Alternate? ..... Yes  No

### LUNCH

1. Have you selected the appropriate grade group (or groups) for the students you will be serving? Yes  No

2. Have you included the required food components and food items in the correct serving sizes? Are you meeting minimum requirements for each of the grade groups you are serving? (See questions next page.)



### ***IF YOU ARE SERVING GRADES K-6:***

■ **Does each day's lunch menu include *at least*...**

8 ounces fluid milk as a beverage ..... Yes  No   
 2 ounces Meat/Meat Alternate..... Yes  No   
 3/4 cup Vegetables/Fruits ..... Yes  No   
 1 serving of Grains/Breads daily ..... Yes  No

■ **Do lunch menus for the week meet *weekly minimum* requirements for Grains/Breads and Vegetables/Fruits?**

- **Grains/Breads:**

A total of 12 servings over the week ..... Yes  No

- **Vegetables/Fruits:**

An *extra* 1/2 cup over the week..... Yes  No

### ***IF YOU ARE SERVING GRADES 7-12:***

■ **Does each day's lunch menu include *at least*...**

8 ounces fluid milk as a beverage ..... Yes  No   
 2 ounces Meat/Meat Alternate..... Yes  No   
 1 cup Vegetables/Fruits ..... Yes  No   
 1 serving of Grains/Breads daily ..... Yes  No

■ **Do lunch menus for the week meet the *weekly minimum* for Grains/Breads?**

A total of 15 servings of Grains/Breads  
 over the week..... Yes  No

### ***IF YOU ARE USING THE RECOMMENDED (OPTIONAL) GRADE GROUP FOR GRADES K-3:***

■ **Does each day's lunch menu include *at least*...**

8 ounces fluid milk as a beverage ..... Yes  No   
 1-1/2 ounces Meat/Meat Alternate ..... Yes  No   
 3/4 cup Vegetables/Fruits ..... Yes  No   
 1 serving of Grains/Breads daily ..... Yes  No

■ **Do lunch menus for the week meet the *weekly minimum* requirement for Grains/Breads?**

A total of 10 servings of Grains/Breads  
 over the week..... Yes  No







### CHECKLIST 3: MEETING MEAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NSMP AND ASSISTED NSMP

*After you have selected and recorded the foods and portions you plan to serve, check your menus using the questions below.*

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#### BREAKFAST

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1. Have you selected the appropriate age/grade group (or groups) for the students you will be serving? Yes  No
2. Do meals meet nutrient standards when averaged over the school week? Yes  No
3. Are at least 3 menu items offered daily? Yes  No
4. Is fluid milk as a beverage offered daily? Yes  No

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#### LUNCH

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1. Have you selected the appropriate age/grade group (or groups) for the students you will be serving? Yes  No
  2. Do meals meet nutrient standards when averaged over the school week? Yes  No
  3. Are at least 3 menu items, including an entrée and fluid milk as a beverage, offered daily? Yes  No
  4. Is fluid milk as a beverage offered daily? Yes  No
- 



