

Five Day NSLP Lunch Meal Pattern Grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12

Food Components ¹	Grades K-5		Grades 6-8		Grades 9-12	
	Daily	Weekly ²	Daily	Weekly ²	Daily	Weekly ²
Milk, fluid (cups) ³ Low-fat (1%) milk or fat-free milk, unflavored or flavored	1	5	1	5	1	5
Fruits (cups) ⁴ Fruit juice cannot exceed half of the weekly fruits	1/2	2 1/2	1/2	2 1/2	1	5
Vegetables (cups) ⁵ Vegetable juice cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetables	3/4	3 3/4	3/4	3 3/4	1	5
Dark green ^{5,6}	0	1/2	0	1/2	0	1/2
Red/orange ^{5,7}	0	3/4	0	3/4	0	1 1/4
Beans/peas (legumes) ^{5,8}	0	1/2	0	1/2	0	1/2
Starchy ^{5,9}	0	1/2	0	1/2	0	1/2
Other ^{5,10}	0	1/2	0	1/2	0	3/4
Additional vegetables to reach total ^{5,11}	0	1	0	1	0	1 1/2
Grains (ounce equivalents) ¹² Whole grain-rich (WGR) or enriched	1	8-9	1	8-10	2	10-12
Meats and meat alternates (ounce equivalents) ¹³	1	8-10	1	9-10	2	10-12
Dietary Specifications (Nutrition Standards) <i>Daily amount based on the average for a five-day week</i>						
Calories ^{14,15}	550-650		600-700		750-850	
Saturated fat (percentage of total calories) ¹⁵	< 10		< 10		< 10	
Sodium (milligrams) ^{15,16}	≤ 1,230		≤ 1,360		≤ 1,420	
Trans fat (grams) ¹⁵	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving					

Five-day Lunch Meal Patterns for Grades K-5, 6-8, and 9-12

Menu planning notes

- ¹ Lunches must include the minimum serving of all five components. Larger amounts may be served if the weekly lunch menu meets the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, sodium, and trans-fat.
- ² A week equals five days. School food authorities (SFAs) that regularly operate for six or seven days must increase the weekly requirements by 20 percent for each additional day. SFAs that regularly operate for less than five days must decrease the weekly requirements by 20 percent for each day less than five days.
- ³ SFAs must offer at least two different varieties of low fat (1%) milk, (unflavored or flavored) or fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored). At least one choice must be unflavored low fat or fat free milk. Whole milk and reduced fat (2%) milk cannot be served.
- ⁴ The fruits component includes fresh fruit, frozen fruit, dried fruit, and canned fruit in juice, water, or light syrup. Fruit credits based on volume, except dried fruit, which credits as twice the volume served, e.g. ¼ cup of dried fruit credits as ½ cup of the fruit's component. Fruit juice must be pasteurized 100 percent full-strength juice and cannot exceed half of the weekly fruit offerings. The juice limit includes all sources of juice, e.g., 100% juice, frozen pops made from 100% juice, pureed fruits in smoothies, and juice from canned fruit in 100% juice. For best nutrition, serve whole fruits instead of juice.
- ⁵ Vegetables include fresh, frozen, canned, and rehydrated dried vegetables. Dried vegetables require a Product Formulation Statement (PFS). A serving of cooked vegetables must be drained. Vegetables credit based on volume, except raw leafy greens credit as half the volume served e.g. 1 cup equals ½ cup vegetables, and tomato paste, and puree credit based on the volume as if reconstituted. Vegetable juice must be pasteurized 100% full-strength juice and cannot exceed half of the weekly vegetable offerings. Pureed vegetables in smoothies credit only as juice.
- ⁶ Examples of the dark green subgroup include bok choy, broccoli, collard greens, dark green leafy lettuce, kale, mesclun, mustard greens, romaine lettuce, spinach, turnip greens, and watercress.
- ⁷ Examples of the red/orange subgroup include acorn squash, butternut squash, carrots, pumpkin, tomato juice, and sweet potatoes.
- ⁸ Examples of the beans and peas (legumes) subgroup include black beans, black-eyed peas, garbanzo beans (chickpeas), kidney beans, lentils, navy beans, soybeans, split beans, and white beans. Note: green peas, green lima beans, and green (string) beans are not legumes and are not in this subgroup.
- ⁹ Examples of the starchy subgroup include black-eyed peas (not dry), corn, cassava, green bananas, green peas, green lima beans, whole hominy (canned, drained), parsnips, plantains, taro, water chestnuts, and white potatoes.
- ¹⁰ The "other" subgroup includes all other vegetables such as artichokes, asparagus, avocado, beets, brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, eggplant, green beans, green peppers, iceberg lettuce, mushrooms, okra, onions, turnips, wax beans, and zucchini. The "other" vegetables requirement may be met with any additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) subgroups, but not the starchy subgroup.
- ¹¹ Any vegetable subgroup may be offered as additional vegetables to meet the total weekly vegetable requirements.
- ¹² Per VT Child Nutrition requirements, all of the weekly grains offered at lunch must be Whole Grain Rich (WGR), a stricter requirement than the Federal requirement. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains, and the remaining grain content comes from enriched flour. Grains must meet the applicable weights (groups A-G) or volumes (groups H-I) in the USDA's ounce equivalents chart (see [Grain Ounce Equivalents for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#)), or provide the minimum creditable grains per serving (see [Calculation Methods for Crediting Grains for Grades K-12 in the NSLP and SBP](#)). Menus are not required to meet the weekly maximum ounce equivalents for grains but must meet the weekly minimums and stay within the weekly calorie range. The weekly maximum ounce equivalents provide a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. Up to 2-ounce equivalents per week may be a grain-based dessert if the weekly lunch menu meets the weekly dietary specifications.
- ¹³ The serving size refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish as served, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, extenders, or other ingredients. A 1-ounce equivalent equals 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish; 1 ounce of cheese (low-fat recommended); 2 ounces of cottage or ricotta cheese (low-fat recommended); ¼ cup of cooked beans and peas (legumes); ½ large egg; 2 tablespoons of nut butters; 1 ounce of nuts or seeds; ¼ cup (2.2 ounces) of commercial tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein; 1 ounce of tempeh; 3 ounces of surimi; ½ cup of yogurt or soy yogurt; and 1 ounce of alternate protein products (APPs). APPs must meet the USDA

requirements in [Appendix A](#) of the NSLP regulations (7 CFR 210). Allowable nuts and seeds include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. Nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than 50 percent of the meat/meat alternates requirement and must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to meet the minimum daily serving. Menus are not required to meet the weekly maximum ounce equivalents for meat/meat alternates but must meet the weekly minimums and stay within the weekly calorie range. The weekly maximum ounce equivalents provide a guide for planning age-appropriate meals that meet the dietary specifications for calories, saturated fat, and sodium.

- ¹⁴ The lunch menus' average daily amount of calories for a five-day school week must be at least the minimum value, but no more than the maximum value.
- ¹⁵ Meals may include discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) if the weekly lunch menu meets the dietary specifications.
- ¹⁶ These are the first sodium targets. Weekly lunch menus must meet the first sodium target through June 30, 2024.