



Nutrition Standards for All Foods Sold in School

Food/Nutrient	Standard	Exemptions to the Standard
General Standard for Competitive Food.	<p>To be allowable, a competitive FOOD item must:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) meet all of the proposed competitive food nutrient standards; and(2) be a grain product that contains 50% or more whole grains by weight or have whole grains as the first ingredient*; <i>or</i>(3) have as the first ingredient* one of the non-grain main food groups: fruits, vegetables, dairy, or protein foods (meat, beans, poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts, seeds, etc.); <i>or</i>(4) be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup fruit and/or vegetable. <p>*If water is the first ingredient, the second ingredient must be one of items 2, 3 or 4 above.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fresh fruits and vegetables with no added ingredients except water are exempt from all nutrient standards.• Canned fruits with no added ingredients except water, or are packed in 100% juice, extra light syrup, or light syrup are exempt from all nutrient standards.• Low sodium/No salt added canned vegetables with no added fats are exempt from all nutrient standards.
NSLP/SBP Entrée Items Sold A la Carte.	Any entrée item offered as part of the lunch program or the breakfast program is exempt from all competitive food standards if it is sold as a competitive food on the day of service or the day after service in the lunch or breakfast program.	
Sugar-Free Chewing Gum	Sugar-free chewing gum is exempt from all competitive food standards.	
Grain Items	Acceptable grain items must include 50% or more whole grains by weight, or have whole grains as the first ingredient.	
Total Fats	Acceptable food items must have ≤ 35% calories from total fat as served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduced fat cheese (including part-skim mozzarella) is exempt from the total fat standard.• Nuts and seeds and nut/seed butters are exempt from the total fat standard.

Food/Nutrient	Standard	Exemptions to the Standard
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats are exempt from the total fat standard. • Seafood with no added fat is exempt from the total fat standard. • Whole eggs with no added fat are exempt from the total fat standard.
Saturated Fats	Acceptable food items must have < 10% calories from saturated fat as served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combination products are not exempt and must meet all the nutrient standards. • Nuts and seeds and nut/seed butters are exempt from the saturated fat standard. • Products consisting of only dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats are exempt from the saturated fat standard. • Reduced fat cheese (including part-skim mozzarella) is exempt from the saturated fat standard. • Whole eggs with no added fat are exempt from the saturated fat standard.
Trans Fats	Zero grams of trans fat as served (≤ 0.5 g per portion).	

Sugar	Acceptable food items must have $\leq 35\%$ of weight from total sugar as served.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dried whole fruits or vegetables; dried whole fruit or vegetable pieces; and dehydrated fruits or vegetables with no added nutritive sweeteners are exempt from the sugar standard. • Dried whole fruits, or pieces, with nutritive sweeteners that are required for processing and/or palatability purposes (i.e., cranberries, tart cherries, or blueberries) with no added fats are exempt from the sugar standard. • Products consisting of only exempt dried fruit with nuts and/or seeds with no added nutritive sweeteners or fats are exempt from the sugar standard.
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Food/Nutrient	Standard	Exemptions to the Standard
Sodium	<p>Snack items and side dishes sold a la carte: ≤ 230 mg sodium per item as served. Effective July 1, 2016 snack items and side dishes sold a la carte must be: ≤200 mg sodium per item as served, including any added accompaniments.</p> <p>Entrée items sold a la carte: ≤480 mg sodium per item as served, including any added accompaniments.</p>	
Calories	<p>Snack items and side dishes sold a la carte: ≤ 200 calories per item as served, including any added accompaniments.</p> <p>Entrée items sold a la carte: ≤350 calories per item as served including any added accompaniments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrée items served as an NSLP or SBP entrée are exempt on the day of or day after service in the program meal.
Accompaniments	Use of accompaniments is limited when competitive food is sold to students in school. The accompaniment must be included in the nutrient profile as part of the food item served and meet all proposed standards.	
Caffeine	<p>Elementary and Middle School: foods and beverages must be caffeine-free with the exception of trace amounts of naturally occurring caffeine substances.</p> <p>High School: foods and beverages may contain caffeine.</p>	
<i>Beverages</i>		
Beverages	<p>Elementary School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plain water or plain carbonated water (no size limit); Low fat milk, flavored or unflavored (≤8 fl oz); Non fat milk, flavored or unflavored (≤8 fl oz), including nutritionally equivalent milk alternatives as permitted by the 	

Food/Nutrient	Standard	Exemptions to the Standard
	<p>school meal requirements;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 100% fruit/vegetable juice (≤ 8 fl oz); and • 100% fruit/vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation), and no added sweeteners (≤ 8 fl oz). <p>Middle School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain water or plain carbonated water (no size limit); • Low-fat milk, flavored or unflavored (≤ 12 fl oz); • Non-fat milk, flavored or unflavored (≤ 12 fl oz), including nutritionally equivalent milk alternatives as permitted by the school meal requirements; • 100% fruit/vegetable juice (≤ 12 fl oz); and • 100% fruit/vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation), and no added sweeteners (≤ 12 fl oz). <p>High School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain water or plain carbonated water (no size limit); • Low-fat milk, flavored or unflavored (≤ 12 fl oz); • Non-fat milk, flavored or unflavored (≤ 12 fl oz), including nutritionally equivalent milk alternatives as permitted by the school meal requirements; • 100% fruit/vegetable juice (≤ 12 fl oz); • 100% fruit/vegetable juice diluted with water (with or without carbonation), and no added sweeteners (≤ 12 fl oz); • Other flavored and/or carbonated beverages (≤ 20 fl oz) that are labeled to contain ≤ 5 calories per 8 fl oz, or ≤ 10 calories per 20 fl oz; and • Other flavored and/or carbonated beverages (≤ 12 fl oz) that are labeled to contain ≤ 40 calories per 8 fl oz, or ≤ 60 calories per 12 fl oz. 	



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Here's how you know

MENU

Final Rule: Child Nutrition Program Flexibilities for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Requirements

HOME

This final rule will codify, with some extensions, three menu planning flexibilities temporarily established by the interim final rule of the same title published Nov. 30, 2017.

- First, it will broaden the milk options in the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program by allowing local operators to permanently offer flavored, low-fat milk. For consistency across nutrition programs, it will also allow flavored, low-fat milk in the Special Milk Program for Children and in the Child and Adult Care Food Program for participants ages 6 and older.
- Second, this final rule will require that half of the weekly grains in the school lunch and breakfast menu be whole grain-rich, thus ending the need for the exemption process.
- Third, it will provide schools in the lunch and breakfast programs more time for gradual sodium reduction by retaining Sodium Target 1 through the end of school year (SY) 2023-2024, continuing to Target 2 in SY 2024-2025, and eliminating the Final Target that would have gone into effect in SY 2022-2023.

By codifying these changes, USDA acknowledges the persistent menu planning challenges experienced by some schools, and affirms its commitment to give schools more control over food service decisions and greater ability to offer wholesome and appealing meals that reflect local preferences.

This rule is effective Feb. 11, 2019.

12/12/2018

Publication Date

Wednesday, December 12, 2018

RIN

0584-AE53

Link

<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/12/12/2018-26762/child-nutrition-programs-flexibilities-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium-requirements><<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/12/12/2018-26762/child-nutrition-programs-flexibilities-for-milk-whole-grains-and-sodium-requirements>>

PDF Link

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-12-12/pdf/2018-26762.pdf><<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2018-12-12/pdf/2018-26762.pdf>>

Resource Type

Rule

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**School Breakfast Program Meal Pattern**

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^{b c}	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^{b c}	0	0	0
Dark green	0	0	0
Red/Orange	0	0	0
Beans and peas (legumes)	0	0	0
Starchy	0	0	0
Other	0	0	0
Grains (oz eq) ^d	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq) ^e	0	0	0
Fluid milk ^f (cups)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^{g h}	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Target 1 (mg)	≤ 540	≤ 600	≤ 640
<i>Trans</i> fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.

^b One-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

^c Schools must offer 1 cup of fruit daily and 5 cups of fruit weekly. Vegetables may be substituted for fruits, but the first two cups per week of any such substitution must be from the dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes), or “Other vegetables” subgroups, as defined in §210.10(c)(2)(iii) of this chapter.

^d At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched. Schools may substitute 1 oz. eq. of meat/meat alternate for 1 oz. eq. of grains after the minimum daily grains requirement is met.

^e There is no meat/meat alternate requirement.

^f All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be unflavored or flavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.

^g The average daily calories for a 5-day school week must be within the range (at least the minimum and no more than the maximum values).

^h Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, *trans* fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent milk fat are not allowed.



Food and Nutrition Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

A Guide to Smart Snacks in School



Help make the healthy choice
the easy choice for kids at school



May 2022

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Learn about Smart Snacks



Do you...

- ☐ Coordinate school fundraisers,
- ☐ Manage a school store or snack bar,
- ☐ Sell food or beverages during the school day on campus, or
- ☐ Manage school vending machines?

If you checked any of the boxes above, then the foods and beverages you're selling need to meet the Smart Snacks Standards. You play an important role in helping kids get the nutrition they need to grow and learn. Use this guide to learn how.

If you didn't check a box and still want to learn more about encouraging kids to choose Smart Snacks, visit **TeamNutrition.USDA.gov**.



Why are Smart Snacks important?

1

Almost a quarter of kids' daily calories may come from snacks.

2

Kids who have healthy eating patterns are more likely to perform better academically.

3

Kids consume more healthy foods and beverages during the school day. When Smart Snacks are available, the healthy choice is the easy choice.

4

Smart Snacks Standards are a Federal requirement for all foods sold outside the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.



Which foods and beverages sold at school need to meet the Smart Snacks Standards?

1

Any food and beverage sold to students at schools during the school day,* other than those foods provided as part of the school meal programs.

2

Examples include à la carte items sold in the cafeteria and foods sold in school stores, snack bars, and vending machines.

3

Foods and beverages sold during fundraisers, unless these items are not intended for consumption at school or are otherwise exempt by your State agency.

* The school day is defined as the midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the school day.



The Smart Snacks Standards apply only to locations on the school campus that are accessible to students. So, this does not include places like the teachers' lounge, although you may choose to vend healthy snacks there, too.

How can I tell if my snack meets the Smart Snacks Standards?

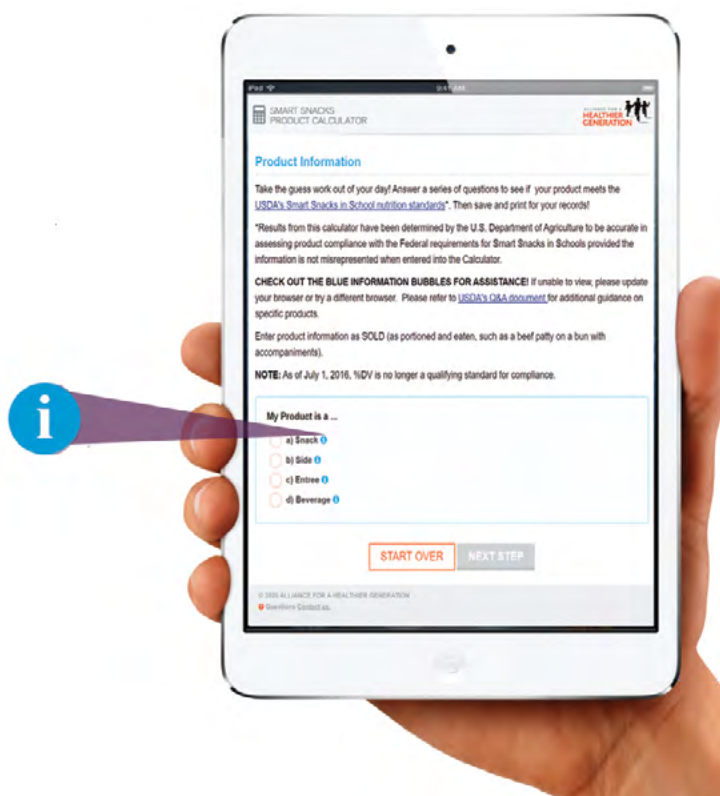
1

Enter information from the food or beverage's Nutrition Facts panel and ingredients list into the Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Smart Snacks Product Calculator (<https://www.healthiergeneration.org/app/resources/81>). For multi-unit packages, you must enter the servings per container as one (1) and the nutrition information for one (1) unit. Do not enter the servings per container for the entire bulk box or case.

2

If your snack doesn't have a nutrition label because it is made from scratch, then you may need to calculate the nutrition information. Your school nutrition program may already use a nutrient analysis software approved by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA; <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/usda-approved-nutrient-analysis-software>) that can be used to evaluate recipes.

Look for the blue information icons in the Smart Snacks Product Calculator! These helpful bubbles include additional information and regulatory guidance so you can enter product information correctly and get an accurate result.



Does USDA have a list of approved foods and beverages?

1

USDA does not approve individual foods or beverages. Even if a food says “Smart Snacks approved,” you should still evaluate the Nutrition Facts panel and ingredients list.

2

If you still have questions about a food or beverage, contact your State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>).



Fruits, vegetables, and water with no added ingredients are always Smart Snacks!

Finding information on the Nutrition Facts panel and ingredients list

Enter the highlighted information into the Smart Snacks Product Calculator (<https://www.healthiergeneration.org/app/resources/81>) to see if your snack meets the standards.

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size 2 cups (30g)

Amount per serving

Calories 140

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 4g 5%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 0mg 0%

Sodium 170mg 7%

Total Carbohydrate 25g 9%

Dietary Fiber 2g 7%

Total Sugars 8g

Includes 8g Added Sugars 16%

Protein 1g

Vitamin D 0mcg 0%

Calcium 0mg 0%

Iron 0mg 0%

Potassium 0mg 0%

INGREDIENTS: Popcorn, sugar, canola oil, salt

First Ingredient



What are the Smart Snacks Standards for foods?

To qualify as a Smart Snack, a snack or entrée must first meet the general nutrition standards:

- Be a grain product that contains 50 percent or more whole grains by weight (have a whole grain as the first ingredient); or
- Have as the first ingredient a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy food, or a protein food; or
- Be a combination food that contains at least ¼ cup of fruit and/or vegetable (for example, ¼ cup of raisins with enriched pretzels); and
- The food must meet the nutrient standards for calories, sodium, fats, and total sugars.

Nutrient	Snack	Entrée
Calories	200 calories or less	350 calories or less
Sodium	200 mg or less	480 mg or less
Total Fat	35% of calories or less	35% of calories or less
Saturated Fat	Less than 10% of calories	Less than 10% of calories
Trans Fat	0 g	0 g
Total Sugars	35% by weight or less	35% by weight or less

Are there healthy exemptions to certain nutrient requirements?

The Smart Snacks Standards reflect practical and flexible solutions for healthy eating. A few foods or combinations of foods are exempt from certain nutrient standards. Refer to the table below for examples of these exemptions.

Food	Smart Snacks Standards Exemptions
Fresh and frozen fruits and vegetables, with no added ingredients except water Canned fruits packed in 100% juice or light syrup, with no added ingredients except water Canned vegetables (no salt added/low sodium), with no added fats	Exempt from all nutrient standards
Reduced-fat cheese (including part-skim mozzarella) Nuts, seeds, or nut/seed butters Apples with reduced-fat cheese* Celery with peanut butter (and unsweetened raisins)* Whole eggs with no added fat	Exempt from the total fat and saturated fat standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards
Seafood with no added fat (e.g., canned tuna packed in water)	Exempt from the total fat standard, but must meet all other nutrient standards
Dried fruits with no added sugars Dried cranberries, tart cherries, or blueberries, sweetened only for processing and/or palatability, with no added fats	Exempt from the sugar standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards
Trail mix of only dried fruits and nuts and/or seeds, with no added sugars or fats	Exempt from the total fat, saturated fat, and sugar standards, but must meet all other nutrient standards

*Paired exemptions are always required to meet the calorie and sodium limits for Smart Snacks.

What are the Smart Snacks Standards for beverages?

Water



Plain water, with or without carbonation.

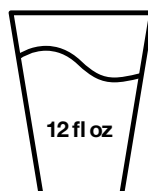
All Grades

Milk

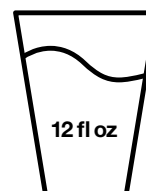
Unflavored or flavored fat-free milk, unflavored low-fat milk, and milk alternatives as permitted by the National School Lunch Program/School Breakfast Program. Starting on July 1, 2022 for school years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, schools may also sell flavored low-fat milk as a Smart Snack.*



Elementary School



Middle School



High School

Juice

100% fruit or vegetable juice, with or without carbonation.



Elementary School



Middle School



High School

* In accordance with the Transitional Standards for Milk, Whole Grains, and Sodium Final Rule: <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/fr-020722>

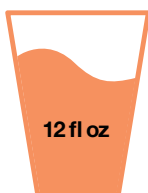
What are the Smart Snacks Standards for beverages? (continued)

Diluted Juice

100% fruit or vegetable juice diluted with water, with or without carbonation, and with no added sweeteners.



Elementary School



Middle School



High School

Low- and No-Calorie Beverages (High School Only)

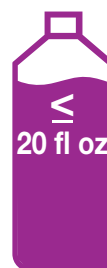
Low- and no-calorie beverages, with or without caffeine and/or carbonation; calorie-free, flavored water.



Low Calorie Maximums:*

- 40 calories/8 fl oz
- 60 calories/12 fl oz

*Equivalent to 5 calories per fluid ounce.



No Calorie Maximum:*

- 10 calories/20 fl oz

*Less than 5 calories per 8 fluid ounces.



Do you have questions about Smart Snacks Standards?
Contact your State agency that administers the National School Lunch Program (<https://www.fns.usda.gov/contacts>).

What is an entrée?

For purposes of Smart Snacks, an entrée is defined as the main course of a meal that has a combination of:

- meats/meat alternates + whole grain-rich food;
 - vegetables + meats/meat alternates;
 - fruits + meats/meat alternates;
 - meats/meat alternates alone, except for meat snacks (e.g., beef jerky), yogurt, low-fat or reduced fat cheese, nuts, seeds, and nut or seed butters; and
 - a grain only, whole grain-rich entrée that is served as the main dish of the School Breakfast Program reimbursable meal.
-

When school meal leftovers are sold à la carte

Sometimes, schools serve extra entrées from school meals as à la carte items (as individual items sold outside of the school meal). These entrées do not have to meet Smart Snacks Standards when they are sold as an à la carte item up to one day after being served at school lunch or breakfast. For example, if a bean burrito is served at school lunch on Wednesday, it may also be sold as a Smart Snacks on Wednesday through Thursday without needing to meet Smart Snacks Standards.

Some schools also serve school meal side dishes as à la carte items. These side dishes must always meet Smart Snacks Standards.



Are condiments part of a Smart Snack?

When checking to see if your snack meets the standards, be sure to consider how it is packaged as well as how it is sold, including all accompaniments. For example, if butter is added to popcorn, or ranch dressing is offered along with veggies, be sure to count the nutrition information for these condiments when determining if your snack meets the standards.

How do the Smart Snacks Standards affect school fundraisers?

- Sales of foods and beverages that meet the Smart Snacks Standards and sales of nonfood items (e.g., wrapping paper and apparel) are not limited under the Federal policy.
- Fundraising activities that occur during nonschool hours, on weekends, or at off-campus events are not limited under the Federal policy.
- Fundraisers selling foods that are intended to be consumed outside the school day are not limited under the Federal policy.
- Some State agencies allow a certain number of in-school fundraisers to be exempt from the Smart Snacks Standards. Contact your State agency for more information.



What if my school district wants to have stricter standards?

These Federal Standards are the minimum requirements. State agencies and/or local school districts can establish stricter standards, if desired. Consult your school's Local School Wellness Policy for more information.

What are some other resources?

Team Nutrition

<https://teamnutrition.usda.gov>

Access free nutrition education resources like this Guide to Smart Snacks in School handout.

Fueling My Healthy Life

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/fueling-my-healthy-life>

Learn more about added sugars and sodium with these interactive materials for 7th and 8th grade.

Discover *MyPlate*: Snack Time!

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/discover-myplate-parent-handouts>

Get ideas about choosing snack foods and beverages with less saturated fat, added sugars, and sodium with this handout for parents of young children.



How do I learn more about Smart Snacks Standards?

Find National School Lunch Program policy memorandum at
<https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp>.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food and Nutrition Service**

Slightly Revised May 2022

FNS-623

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

**National School Lunch Program Meal Pattern**

	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Food Components	Amount of Food ^a per Week		
	(minimum per day)		
Fruits (cups) ^b	2½ (½)	2½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups) ^b	3¾ (¾)	3¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark green ^c	½	½	½
Red/Orange ^c	¾	¾	1¼
Beans and peas (legumes) ^c	½	½	½
Starchy ^c	½	½	½
Other ^{c d}	½	½	¾
Additional Vegetables to Reach Total ^e	1	1	1½
Grains (oz eq) ^f	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meats/Meat Alternates (oz eq)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid milk (cups) ^g	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Other Specifications: Daily Amount Based on the Average for a 5-Day Week			
Min-max calories (kcal) ^h	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated fat (% of total calories) ^h	<10	<10	<10
Sodium Interim Target 1 (mg) ^h	≤ 1,230	≤ 1,360	≤ 1,420
Sodium Interim Target 1A (mg) ^{h i}	≤ 1,110	≤ 1,225	≤ 1,280
<i>Trans</i> fat ^h	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of <i>trans</i> fat per serving.		

^a Food items included in each group and subgroup and amount equivalents. Minimum creditable serving is ⅛ cup.

^b One-quarter cup of dried fruit counts as ½ cup of fruit; 1 cup of leafy greens counts as ½ cup of vegetables. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings may be in the form of juice. All juice must be 100% full-strength.

^c Larger amounts of these vegetables may be served.

^d This category consists of “Other vegetables” as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii)(E) of this section. For the purposes of the NSLP, the “Other vegetables” requirement may be met with any

additional amounts from the dark green, red/orange, and beans/peas (legumes) vegetable subgroups as defined in paragraph (c)(2)(iii) of this section.

^e Any vegetable subgroup may be offered to meet the total weekly vegetable requirement.

^f At least 80 percent of grains offered weekly must meet the whole grain-rich criteria specified in FNS guidance, and the remaining grain items offered must be enriched.

^g All fluid milk must be fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1 percent fat or less). Milk may be flavored or flavored, provided that unflavored milk is offered at each meal service.

^h Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, *trans* fat, and sodium. Foods of minimal nutritional value and fluid milk with fat content greater than 1 percent are not allowed.

ⁱ Sodium Interim Target 1A must be met no later than July 1, 2023 (SY 2023-2024).
