

section and the appropriate nutrient and calorie levels in paragraphs (c) or (i)(1) of this section, whichever is applicable, actions, including technical assistance and training, shall be taken by the State agency, school food authority, or school, as appropriate, to ensure that the lunches offered to children comply with the nutrition standards established by paragraph (b) and the appropriate nutrient and calorie levels in paragraphs (c) or (i)(1) of this section, whichever is applicable.

(7) Any school food authority that operates the Summer Food Service Program authorized under part 225 of

this chapter and/or the Child and Adult Care Food Program under part 226 of this chapter may, at its option and with State agency approval, prepare meals provided for those programs using the assisted nutrient standard menu planning alternative, except for children under two years of age. For school food authorities providing meals for adults, FCS will provide guidance on the level of nutrients and calories needed. Meal supplements shall continue to be provided based on the appropriate program's meal pattern.

(k) *Food-based menu planning.* (1) *Menu planning alternative.* School food

authorities may choose to plan menus using the food-based menu planning alternative. Under the food-based menu planning alternative, specific food components in minimum quantities must be served as provided in paragraphs (k)(2) through (k)(5) of this section.

(2) *Minimum quantities.* At a minimum, school food authorities choosing to plan menus using the food-based menu planning alternative shall offer all five required food items in the quantities provided in the following chart:

| Meal component | Minimum quantities required for | | | |
|--|---|---|--|---|
| | Ages 1–2 | Preschool | Grades K–6 | Grades 7–12 |
| Milk (as a beverage) | 6 ounces | 6 ounces | 8 ounces | 8 ounces. |
| Meat or meat alternate (quantity of the edible portion as served):. | | | | |
| Lean meat, poultry or fish | 1 oz | 1½ oz | 2 oz | 2 oz |
| Cheese | 1 oz | 1½ oz | 2 oz | 2 oz. |
| Large egg | ½ | ¾ | 1 | 1. |
| Cooked dry beans or peas | ¼ cup | ⅜ cup | ½ cup | ½ cup. |
| Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters .. | 2 tbsp | 3 tbsp | 4 tbsp | 4 tbsp. |
| The following may be used to meet no more than 50% of the requirement and must be used in combination with any of the above: | | | | |
| Peanuts, soynuts, tree nuts, or seeds, as listed in program guidance, or an equivalent quantity of any combination of the above meat/meat alternate (1 ounce of nuts/seeds=1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish.). | ½ oz.=50% | ¾ oz.=50% | 1 oz.=50% | 1 oz.=50%. |
| Vegetables/Fruits (2 or more servings of vegetables or fruits or both) | ½ cup | ½ cup | ¾ cup plus additional ½ cup over a week ¹ . | 1 cup. |
| Grains/Breads Must be enriched or whole grain. A serving is a slice of bread or an equivalent serving of biscuits, rolls, etc., or ½ cup of cooked rice, macaroni, noodles, other pasta products or cereal grains. | 5 servings per week—minimum of ½ per day ¹ . | 8 servings per week—minimum of 1 per day ¹ . | 12 servings per week—minimum of 1 per day ^{1,2} . | 15 servings per week—minimum of 1 per day. ^{1,2} . |

¹ For the purposes of this chart, a week equals five days.

² Up to one grains/breads serving per day may be a dessert.

(3) *Meat or meat alternate component.* The quantity of meat or meat alternate shall be the quantity of the edible portion as served. When the school determines that the portion size of a meat alternate is excessive, it shall reduce the portion size of that particular meat alternate and supplement it with another meat/meat alternate to meet the full requirement. To be counted as meeting the requirement, the meat or meat alternate shall be served in a main dish or in a main dish and only one other of the items offered. The Department recommends that if schools do not offer children choices of meat or meat alternates each day, they serve no one meat alternate or form of meat (e.g., ground, diced, pieces) more than three times in a single week.

(i) Vegetable protein products, cheese alternate products, and enriched

macaroni with fortified protein defined in appendix A of this part may be used to meet part of the meat or meat alternate requirement when used as specified in appendix A of this part. An enriched macaroni product with fortified protein as defined in appendix A of this part may be used as part of a meat alternate or as a grain/bread item, but not as both food components in the same meal.

(ii) Nuts and seeds and their butters listed in program guidance are nutritionally comparable to meat or other meat alternates based on available nutritional data. Acorns, chestnuts, and coconuts shall not be used as meat alternates due to their low protein and iron content. Nut and seed meals or flours shall not be used as a meat alternate except as defined in this part under appendix A: Alternate Foods for

Meals. Nuts or seeds may be used to meet no more than one-half of the meat/meat alternate requirement. Therefore, nuts and seeds must be used in the meal with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the requirement.

(4) *Vegetables and fruits.* Full strength vegetable or fruit juice may be counted to meet not more than one-half of the vegetable/fruit requirement. Cooked dry beans or peas may be used as a meat alternate or as a vegetable, but not as both food components in the same meal. For children in kindergarten through grade six, the requirement for this component is based on minimum daily servings plus an additional ½ cup in any combination over a five day period.

(5) *Grains/breads.* (i) All grains/breads such as bread, biscuits, muffins or rice, macaroni, noodles, other pastas or cereal grains such as bulgur or corn