

The Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning Approach

Under the Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning Approach, schools must comply with specific component and quantity requirements by offering five food items from four food components. These components are: meat/meat alternate, vegetables and/or fruits, grains/breads, and milk. Minimum portion sizes are established by ages and grade groups.

Food Components and Food Items	GROUP I Ages 1-2 PRESCHOOL	GROUP II Ages 3, 4, and 5 PRESCHOOL
MILK (as a beverage)	6 fluid ounces	6 fluid ounces
MEAT OR MEAT ALTERNATE (quantity of the edible portion as served): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean meat, poultry or fish • Alternate protein product ^a • Cheese • Large egg • Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters • Cooked dry beans and peas • Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened • 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, soy nuts, 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) 	1 ounce 1 ounce 1 ounce ½ 2 Tablespoons ¼ cup 4 ounces or ½ cup ½ ounce = 50%	1 ½ ounce 1 ½ ounce 1 ½ ounce ¾ 3 Tablespoons 3/8 cup 6 ounces or ¾ cup ¾ ounce = 50%
Vegetable or Fruit: 2 or more servings of vegetables, fruits or both	½ cup	½ cup
GRAINS/BREADS (servings per week): 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 ^b – minimum of ½ serving per day	8 servings per week ^b – minimum of 1 serving per day

^a Must meet the requirements in appendix A of 7 CFR 210.

^b For the purposes of this table, a week equals five days.

The Traditional Food-Based Menu Planning Approach is designed to meet nutrition standards set forth in program regulations.

The Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning Approach

The Enhanced Food-Based Menu Planning Approach is a variation of the Traditional Menu Planning Approach. It is designed to increase calories from low-fat food sources in order to meet the Dietary Guidelines. The five food components are retained, but the component quantities for the weekly servings of vegetables and fruits and grains/breads are increased.

Food Components and Food Items	Ages 1-2	Preschool
MILK (as a beverage)	6 fluid ounces	6 fluid ounces
MEAT OR MEAT ALTERNATE (quantity of the edible portion as served): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean meat, poultry, or fish • Alternate protein products^a • Cheese • Large egg • Cooked dry beans or peas • Peanut butter or other nut or seed butters • Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened • 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, soy nuts, 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). 	1 ounce 1 ounce 1 ounce ½ ¼ cup 2 Tablespoons 4 ounces or ½ cup ½ ounce= 50%	1 ½ ounces 1 ½ ounces 1 ½ ounces ¾ 3/8 cup 3 Tablespoons 6 ounces or ¾ cup ¾ ounce= 50%
Vegetable or Fruit: 2 or more servings of vegetables, fruits, or both	½ cup	½ cup
GRAINS/BREADS (servings per week): 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 ^b – minimum of ½ serving per day	8 servings per week ^b – minimum of 1 serving per day

^a Must meet the requirements in appendix A of 7 CFR 210.

^b For the purpose of this table, a week equals five days.

The Enhanced Food Based Menu Planning Approach is designed to meet the nutritional set forth in program regulations.

The Nutrient Standard Menu Planning Approach

Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (sometimes called “NuMenus”) is a computer based menu planning system that uses approved computer software to analyze the specific nutrient content of menu items automatically while menus are being planned. It is designed to assist menu planners in choosing food items that create nutritious meals and meet the nutrient standards.

The Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning

Assisted Nutrient Standard Menu Planning (sometimes called “Assisted NuMenus”) is a variation of Nutrient Standard Menu Planning. It is for schools that lack the technical resources to conduct nutrient analysis themselves. Instead, schools have an outside source, such as another school district, State agency or a consultant, plan and analyze a menu based on local needs and preferences. The outside source also provides schools with recipes and product specifications to support the menus. The menus and analyses are periodically updated to reflect any changes in the menu or student selection patterns.

Here are the required minimums for nutrients and calories for these nutrient standard menu planning approaches:

Nutrients and Energy Allowances	Preschool
Energy allowances (calories)	517
Total fat (as a percentage of actual total food energy)	^a
Saturated fat (as a percentage of actual total food energy)	^a
RDA for protein (g)	7
RDA for calcium (mg)	267
RDA for iron (mg)	3.3
RDA for Vitamin A (RE)	150
RDA for Vitamin C (mg)	14
^a The Dietary Guidelines recommend that after 2 years of age “...children should gradually adopt a diet that, by about 5 years of age, contains no more than 30 percent of calories from fat.”	