

Variations in Meal Requirements for Religious Reasons: Jewish Schools and Institutions

- PURPOSE:** This instruction sets forth the policy allowing variations in the food components of meals served to meet ethnic, religious, economic, or physical needs.
- SCOPE:** Sponsors and sites participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program, National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and the Summer Food Service Program for Children.
- DESCRIPTION:** In accordance with this provision, meals served in Jewish schools, institutions, and their facilities may be exempted from the enrichment portions of the bread requirement of the Child Nutrition Programs during the religious observance of Passover. Unenriched matzo may be substituted for the bread requirement during that period of time only. If Jewish schools and institutions wish to serve matzo as a bread/bread alternate at other times during the year, enriched matzo must be served.
- In addition to this variation, Jewish schools and institutions may be exempted from the meal requirements of the Child Nutrition Programs which requires that milk be served with all lunches and suppers. Such schools and institutions may choose from three options that apply **ONLY** to lunch and supper menus containing meat or poultry. In all other meals, for example, those containing fish, cheese, eggs, and peanut butter, milk must be served since Jewish Dietary Laws allow such meat alternates to be served with milk at the same meal. For review and audit purposes, schools and institutions must maintain a record on file of which of the following option(s) they have chosen.
- Option I: Serve an equal amount of full strength juice in place of milk with lunch or supper. When juice is substituted for milk, *it may not contribute to the vegetable/fruit requirement*. Schools or institutions operating five days per week may substitute juice for milk twice per week for lunches and twice for suppers, but no more than once each day. Schools and institutions operating seven days per week may make three substitutions per week for lunches and three for suppers, but no more than one each day.
- Option II: Serve milk at an appropriate time before or after the meal service period, in accordance with applicable Jewish Dietary Laws.

Option III: Serve the juice component that would be part of a supplement (snack) with lunch or supper, and serve the milk component that would be part of lunch or supper with the supplement (snack).

A limit is placed on the number of substitutions per week in Option I because milk is a primary source of calcium and riboflavin. Schools and institutions electing this option should be encouraged to serve other sources of calcium and riboflavin when substitution juice for milk. Other good sources of calcium are green leafy vegetables, such as greens and broccoli. Other good sources of riboflavin are dark green and yellow fruits and vegetables and whole-grain or enriched breads and cereals.

Options II and III are NOT permitted in outside-school-hours care centers under the Child and Adult Care Food Program and in non-camps under the Summer Food Service Program for Children because children are not always present for both meal services.

An exception for breakfasts served in Jewish schools and institutions is not necessary. Milk must be served with all reimbursable breakfasts since the School Breakfast Program meal pattern allows for, but does not require, a meat/meat alternate component, and the school may elect the Offer versus Serve option under the School Breakfast Program. Likewise, a meat/meat alternate is not a requirement in the Child and Adult Care Food Program and Summer Food Service Program for Children breakfast patterns, and the Offer versus Serve option is not allowed.

Entities wishing to exercise the options available under the above variations shall notify the State Agency. The CACFP institutions and SFSPC sponsors shall do so on the behalf of their facilities or sites. The decision to exercise these options shall be at the facility or site level.

SOURCE: FNS Instruction 783-13, Rev. 2, December 3, 1992, United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.