

Commercial Infant and Other Foods Reimbursable as Meal Components
 in the Infant Meal Pattern in Child Nutrition Programs

- PURPOSE:** To clarify and revise policy on foods which are reimbursable in the Infant Meal Pattern.
- SCOPE:** Child Care Centers, Registered Day Care Ministries, and Family Day Care Homes.
- DESCRIPTION:** Before giving an infant a new food, check with the parents to be certain that the infant has been offered the food before and had no reaction to the food. If the child is allergic to certain food(s), a physician should complete a medical statement.
- Non-creditable foods can be served to infants but cannot be counted towards meeting the meal pattern. These food items would be fed as an additional food along with the required food items for the specific meal.
- The following are changes to or clarification of food items than meet the Infant Meal Pattern and are reimbursable. This is not an all-inclusive list, but only those that need clarification.

FRUIT, VEGETABLE AND FRUIT JUICE	Creditable	
	YES	NO
Food Items:		
Fruit and Mixed Fruit, Vegetables and Mixed Vegetables: Fruit or vegetable must be the <u>first ingredient on the label</u> .	X	
Combination <u>Dinners</u> that list fruit or vegetable as the first ingredient on the label.		X
Jarred baby <u>cereal</u> with fruit		X
<u>Pudding</u> or <u>dessert</u> with fruit as the first ingredient on the label.		X
100% fruit juice containing or fortified with <u>Vitamin C</u>	X	
<u>Pasteurized</u> frozen concentrate, shelf-stable, or canned 100% juice.	X	
Vegetable and fruit juices with <u>yogurt</u>		X
<i>Comments:</i> Childcare givers should carefully read the ingredient listing of commercial baby fruits and vegetables. Some brands of commercial baby food fruits and vegetables contain food starch, tapioca, cheese or rice, with water listed as the first ingredient. If a label states that the first ingredient is water, then the product is not creditable.		

BREADS, CRACKERS, AND INFANT CEREAL	Creditable	
	YES	NO
Food Items:		
Breads: white, wheat, whole wheat, French, Italian, and similar breads	X	
Biscuits	X	
Bagels	X	
English Muffins	X	
Pita bread: white, wheat, whole wheat	X	
Rolls: white, wheat, whole wheat, potato	X	
Crackers: saltines or snack crackers made without nuts, seeds or pieces of whole grain kernels, matzo crackers, animal crackers, graham crackers made without honey (honey, even possibly in baked goods, could contain <i>Clostridium botulinum</i> spores which can cause a type of serious food borne illness in infants)	X	
Soft tortillas: wheat or corn	X	
Zweiback	X	
Teething biscuits	X	
Iron-fortified dry cereal formulated for infants and mixed with either infant formula or milk prior to eating	X	
Iron-fortified dry infant cereal containing fruit		X
Commercial jarred baby food cereal that is ready to serve		X
Ready-to-eat breakfast cereal (cold, dry)		X
Breakfast cereals (cooked)		X
<p><i>Comments:</i> The Grains/Breads Instruction, which applies, to the meal pattern for children ages 1 to 12 years is not applicable for infants. The only grain/bread products included in the Infant Meal Pattern are infant cereal, crusty bread, and cracker-type products. Since infants develop their eating, chewing, and swallowing skills slowly, the infant should be gradually introduced to a variety of foods during the first year of life. Not all grain/bread alternates are appropriate for them.</p> <p>The bread and cracker-type products must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour and suitable for an infant to consume as finger food. None of the products should contain nuts, seeds, or hard pieces of whole-grain kernels.</p> <p>The above bread-type items must be prepared in a form that is suitable for an infant to use as finger food and reduces the chance of choking. The best way to serve breads to infants is to cut it into small, thin strips.</p> <p>Ready-to-eat breakfast cereal (cold, dry) and breakfast cereal (cooked) are not considered “iron-fortified, dry infant cereal”.</p>		

MEAT/MEAT ALTERNATE	Creditable	
	YES	NO
Food Items:		
Strained Baby Food Meats	X	
Combination Meat <u>Dinners</u>		X
Meat Sticks or “Finger Sticks” (miniature hot dogs)		X
Hot Dogs, Sausage		X
Breaded or Battered Fish or Seafood Products		X
Canned Fish with Bones		X
Yogurt		X
Nuts, Seeds and Nut and/or Seed Butters		X
<p><i>Comments:</i> There are a variety of reasons why the food products listed above are not creditable: the actual amount of meat in the product is difficult to determine, the manufacturer did not develop the product to be consumed by infants, and the products can cause an infant to choke. In order for yogurt to meet meal pattern requirements as a meat alternate in the Infant Meal Pattern, the regulations governing the Infant Meal Pattern would have to be revised.</p>		

SOURCE: Food and Nutrition Service, Midwest Region Policy Revision and Memorandum.