

Tips for Meeting USDA's Targets for Fats in School Meals



Currently, USDA's target for total fat in school meals is 30 percent or less of total Calories, and the target for saturated fat is less than 10 percent of total calories.

As part of USDA's proposed meal pattern, the target for saturated fat would remain at less than 10 percent of total Calories, while no target was included for total fat.

Currently, USDA does not have a guideline regarding *trans* fat. However, USDA has proposed to minimize *trans* fat in school meals as part of the proposed meal pattern. To accomplish this, USDA would require the use of food products and ingredients that contain zero grams of *trans* fat per serving, as indicated on the Nutrition Facts label.

Food manufacturers can show "0 grams of *trans* fat" on the Nutrition Facts label if a serving contains less than 0.5 gram.

Although *trans* fat is found naturally in foods like meat, butter, and milk, schools can minimize the amount of *trans* fat in meals by avoiding the purchase of processed items that list *trans* fat on the Nutrition Facts label.

Purchasing

- Check the Nutrition Facts label of similar food items to compare the fat content, and choose the product that is lower in fat
- Select ground beef with no more than 15% fat
- Purchase turkey sausage instead of pork sausage
- Purchase reduced-fat processed meats, such as reduced-fat hot dogs and deli-meats
- Purchase tuna packed in water instead of oil
- Select low-fat whole-grain bread items
- Avoid high-fat bread items for breakfast, such as donuts and sweet rolls
- Order USDA part-skim mozzarella and reduced-fat cheese when available, otherwise purchase reduced-fat or low-fat cheese
- Purchase fat-free or low-fat yogurt
- Choose low-fat and fat-free salad dressings and mayonnaise
- Purchase and serve only low-fat (1%) milk and fat-free (skim) milk

Please note that 2% and whole milk are not to be served to meet the fluid milk requirement for the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Refer to USDA Policy [SP 29-2011—Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk](http://www.doe.in.gov/food/schoolnutrition/pdf/SP_29-2011.pdf) at www.doe.in.gov/food/schoolnutrition/pdf/SP_29-2011.pdf.

Preparation

- Bake, broil, or roast instead of frying
- Use beans for as much as half of the ground beef in tacos and burritos
- Use part-skim mozzarella cheese and low-fat cottage cheese or ricotta cheese in recipes listing cheese as an ingredient
- Reduce the amount of cheese on sandwiches (for example, use 1/2 ounce or 1 slice of cheese instead of 2 slices, and increase the amount of lean meat)
- Avoid too many items made with cheese over the course of a week
- Use spices or herbs for flavoring cooked vegetables instead of margarine or butter

This fact sheet was adapted from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction fact sheet "Tips for Lowering Fat And Saturated Fat in School Meals," and from USDA's "A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals." MyPlate is the new food icon from USDA.

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