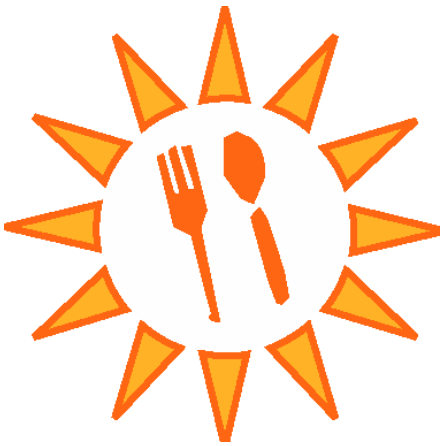
United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

Summer Food Service Program for Children

2003 Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors



Food That's In When School Is Out!

For your reading ease, changes from last year's edition are highlighted.

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Revised December 2002

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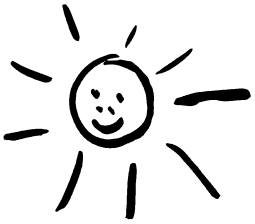


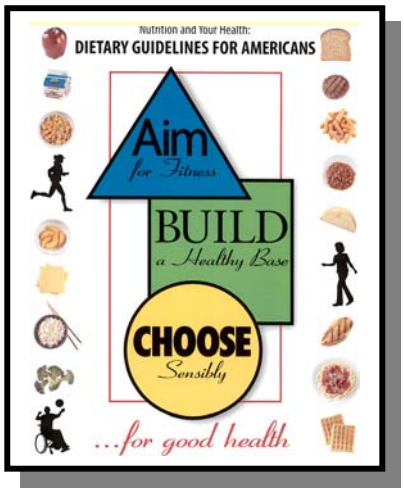
Introduction

"*Summer Food Service Program for Children: 2003 Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors*" has been developed to help sponsors identify their food service responsibilities. This publication offers menu planning and nutrition guidance along with sample menus of breakfasts, lunches and snacks. Also included are food service record-keeping requirements, food buying and storage information, and guidance in the areas of food safety and sanitation. This guide is primarily for use by sponsors who prepare meals on-site or in central kitchens for participating children.

The goal of the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is to serve nutritious breakfasts, lunches, and snacks that meet meal pattern requirements and are appetizing to children. The meal pattern requirements ensure that children receive well-balanced meals that supply the kinds and amounts of foods that they require to help meet their nutrient and energy needs. The meal patterns establish the minimum portions of the various meal components that must be served to each child in order for the participating sponsor to receive reimbursement for each meal.

Dietary Guidelines For Americans, 2000

Guidance is included to help SFSP sponsors achieve the goals of the Healthy People 2010 National Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Objectives. *The Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2000* makes ten recommendations for promoting health and may reduce the risk of developing certain chronic diseases. These guidelines are:



Aim for Fitness

- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Be physically active each day.

Build a Healthy Base

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe to eat.

Choose Sensibly

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt.

These guidelines apply to adults and children ages 2 years and older. You can download a copy of these guidelines at www.usda.gov/cnpp/Pubs/DG2000/Index.htm

Eating Habits Begin Early

If given the opportunity, children can learn good, healthy eating habits when they are young. Offering healthy meals and snacks, through the SFSP, provides the energy children need for active lives, and keeps them healthy and fit. The summer food service setting can make mealtimes pleasant. Nutrition education during meals, snacks, or at play can serve to begin a lifestyle of healthy eating.

PART I — MENU PLANNING

Meeting the Dietary Guidelines Challenge

In this section, you will learn:

- ways to add variety to your menus;
- about the importance of physical activity; and
- tips on lowering fat, salt and sugar in your menus.

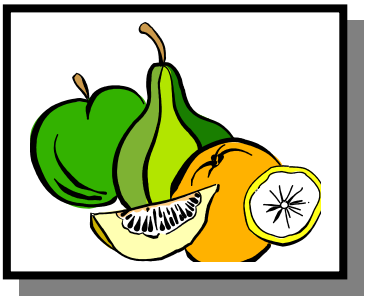
Children's eating habits begin young. We know that tastes are learned habits and are acquired at an early age. Let's help give children a healthy start.

Aim For Fitness

Guideline: Aim for a healthy weight.

The SFSP can assist children in maintaining a healthy weight. The key to good health is a lifestyle that includes sensible eating with regular physical activity. Weight gain results when more food is consumed than the body needs. Eating habits and exercise habits begin in childhood. Children are influenced by the foods you serve at meals and snacks.

Tips for Aiming for a Healthy Weight



- Serve a variety of vegetables, fruits, and grains (especially whole grains) with little added fat or sugar.
- Serve a variety of pasta, rice, breads, and cereals with little added saturated fat and a moderate or low amount of added sugars.
- If activities are part of your SFSP Program, keep children moving. They should get regular physical activity to balance the calories from the foods they eat.
- Offer children sensible portion sizes.

Overweight children need special help from health professionals. Since children still need to grow, weight loss is not recommended unless guided by a healthcare provider.

Guideline: Be physically active each day.

Encourage children to take part in vigorous activities (and join them whenever possible). Children need at least 60 minutes per day of moderate physical activity. It's important to encourage children to get in the habit of being physically active at a young age. Physical activity helps children have fun and:

- maintain a healthy weight;
- develop strong muscles, a healthy heart and lungs;
- strengthen bones;
- develop motor skills, balance, and coordination;
- develop positive attitudes; and
- improve self esteem.

Promote Physical Activity

Regular physical activity is important to maintaining health. It burns calories, helps with weight control, and assists in the prevention of certain diseases later in life. While physical activity is not an SFSP requirement, it is important, however, that children be provided a healthy environment. Children can be physically active by:

- turning up the music and dancing;
- lifting and throwing balls to use muscles;
- taking the stairs, both up and down; or
- playing children's games such as T-ball and hopscotch

Some suggestions for adults to increase their level of physical activity are:

- Walk or bike ride more, and drive less
- Walk up and down stairs instead of taking an elevator
- Clean the house
- Play actively with children

Question: How much activity should children get?

Answer: The Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends at least 60 minutes each day.

Build A Healthy Base

Guideline: Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.

When planning menus, remember different foods contain different nutrients and other healthful substances. No single food can supply all the nutrients in the amounts children need. To make sure children get all the nutrients and substances children need for health, build a healthy base by using the Food Guide Pyramid as a starting point. The USDA Food Guide Pyramid is an outline for what to eat each day based on the Dietary Guidelines.

The Food Guide Pyramid is a healthy eating pattern that has a recommended number of daily servings from each of the five major food groups. The SFSP meal pattern is consistent with the Pyramid because it includes servings of grains/breads, fruits/vegetables in addition to meat/meat alternates, and milk. The Pyramid shown in the Reference Section recommends the number of daily servings from each of the major food groups for older children and adults. In the reference section, you will find both the Food Guide Pyramid and the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children (2 to 6 years old). You can also download a copy of both Food Guide Pyramids at www.usda.gov/cnpp/pyramid2.htm.

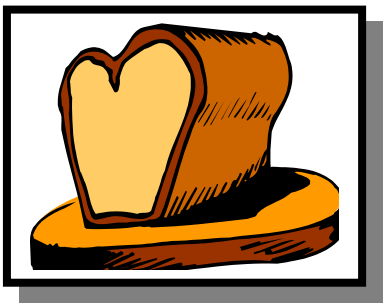
Tips for Using the Food Guide Pyramid

- Choose a variety of foods from each major food group so that children receive the nutrients needed for health.
- Serve grains, especially whole grains, and vegetables and fruits.
- Also serve low fat dairy products and low-fat foods from the meat and bean group to children over two years old.
- Allow children to enjoy fats and sweets occasionally.

Guideline: Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.

Foods from grains like wheat, rice, and oats help to form the foundation of a healthy diet. Grains provide vitamins, minerals, and carbohydrates and other substances that are important for good health. Foods made from grains are low in fat unless fat is added during processing in preparation or at the table. Vitamins, minerals, fiber, and other protective substances in whole grain foods contribute to the health benefits of whole grains. Refined grains are low in fiber and in the protective substances that accompany fiber. Eating plenty of fiber-containing foods, such as whole grains (and also many fruits and vegetables) promotes proper bowel function.

Tips for Serving a Variety of Grains

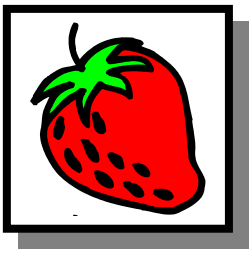


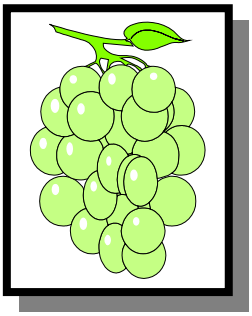
- Read the Nutrition Facts Label on foods so you can choose grain products high in fiber and low in saturated fat and sodium. For example, look for one of the following ingredients first on the label ingredient list: whole wheat, whole oats, whole rye, brown rice, oatmeal, whole grain corn, graham flour, bulgur, cracked wheat, oatmeal, and pearl barley.
- In main and side dishes, include a variety of enriched rice, macaroni, noodles, and other pasta products. Serve brown rice as well as white rice.
- Increase the proportion of grains to other ingredients. For example, serve a thicker pizza crust.
- Add grains such as pre-cooked rice and oats to ground beef in meat loaf and similar casseroles. Use bulgur or barley to thicken soups.
- Introduce children to whole-wheat bread by serving sandwiches with one slice of whole-wheat bread and one slice of white bread.
- Substitute whole-wheat flour for part of the white flour in recipes. When introducing whole grains, try starting with 10-percent whole-grain flour or grains. Gradually increase the amount each time the recipe is prepared as children learn to accept this healthy food choice.

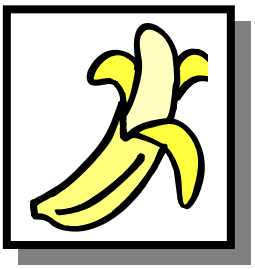
Guideline: Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.

Like grains, fruits and vegetables help form the base of the Pyramid and the foundation for a healthy diet. This food group provides essential vitamins and minerals, fiber, and other substances needed for good health. Variety is important because different fruits and vegetables are rich in different nutrients.

Tips for Including More Fruits and Vegetables in Your Menus







- Serve vegetables higher in fiber such as cooked dry beans, broccoli, tomatoes, leafy greens, potatoes with skin, and carrots.
- Serve raw vegetable salads and raw vegetables for snacks.
- Season vegetables with herbs for taste appeal.
- Serve fresh fruits for naturally sweet desserts.
- Buy fruits and vegetables in season for better prices and tastier produce.
- Serve fresh fruits higher in fiber, such as those with edible skins–like apples, pears, nectarines, peaches–and those with edible seeds, such as berries and bananas.

Guideline: Keep food safe to eat.

Safe food is food that has little risk of causing food borne illness (food poisoning). Food borne illness can be caused by harmful bacteria, toxins, parasites, viruses, or contamination by chemicals. Some foods require special care to be sure they are safe to eat: eggs, meats, poultry, fish, shellfish, milk products, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Young children are at high risk of food borne illness so be especially careful to prepare and serve foods using food safety precautions.

Follow the steps below to keep your food safe.

- Never serve unpasteurized juices, unpasteurized milk, fresh bean sprouts, or foods containing raw eggs.
- Cook meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish until completely done. The internal temperature should be 165°F, except for poultry (breast - 170°F; whole bird -180°F).
- Heat leftovers to an internal temperature of 165°F. Use leftovers only once, then throw any remaining food away.
- Reheat sauces, soups, marinades, and gravies to a rolling boil.
- Wash your hands and the children's hands often – for 20 seconds with warm, soapy water (count to 30).
- Store raw meat, poultry, eggs, fish, and shellfish in containers on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator and away from other foods. Do not prepare these foods on the same surface that you use to prepare other foods.

- Never leave raw or cooked meat, poultry, eggs, dairy products, fish, or shellfish out at room temperature for more than 2 hours, 1 hour if air temperature is above 90°F.
- Keep cold foods cold (at or below 41°F) and hot foods hot (at or above 140°F). Test temperatures with an instant-read thermometer.
- If you're not sure that food has been prepared, served, or stored safely, throw it out.

For more information, contact USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline, 1-800-535-4555, or FDA's Food Information Line, 1-888-SAFE FOOD. You can also visit www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/consedu.htm.

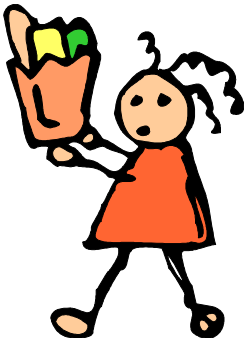
Choose Sensibly

Guideline: Offer foods that are low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.

In general, health professionals believe that food habits established in childhood are important in preventing heart disease later in life. They recommend reducing the risk of heart disease by decreasing the amount of total fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol in the diet.

Fat is an essential part of everyone's diet but it is important to choose sensibly. The Dietary Guidelines recommend that children who are 2 years of age or older aim for a total fat intake of no more than 30 percent of calories. Beginning at age 2, children should get most of their calories from grain products, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy products, and beans, lean meat and poultry, fish, or nuts (be careful, as nuts may cause choking in children under 4 years of age).

However, remember the advice of the Dietary Guidelines about limiting fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol does not apply to infants and toddlers below the age of 2 years. The American Academy of Pediatrics states, "No restriction should be placed on the fat and cholesterol content of diets of infants less than 2 years…" These early years of rapid growth and development require high-energy intakes.



Did you know?

- Some fat is necessary in the diet. It provides energy, and helps your body absorb vitamins A, D, and E. Fats, such as margarine, butter, oils, and salad dressings, add flavor to foods. They also help to provide good texture and aroma.

- Fat contains over two times the calories of an equal amount of protein or carbohydrate. There are 9 calories in a gram of fat. Compare that to 4 calories in a gram of protein. Likewise, there are 4 calories in a gram of carbohydrate.

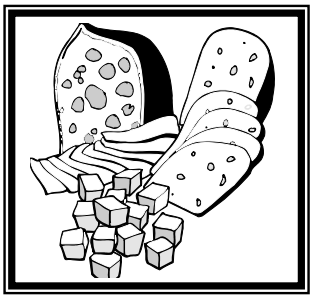
Remember: There are no good foods or bad foods! All foods, including pizza and hot dogs, can be included in nutritious menus that meet the goals of the Dietary Guidelines.

So don't eliminate. Just offer smaller amounts!

Balance higher fat foods in menus with items lower in fat. For example, offer baked fries instead of deep fat fries with chicken nuggets. Here are some ideas to lower fat when planning menus and preparing foods:

Meat and Meat Alternates

- Offer lean meats, poultry, or fish.
- Bake, broil, or roast instead of frying.
- Trim fat before and/or after cooking. When possible, remove skin from chicken.
- Drain fat from meats before serving.
- Use low-fat ground turkey or lean ground beef instead of regular ground beef.



- Serve bean-based entrees such as tacos, burritos, chili or cooked dried beans for variety.
- Chill broth from poultry or meats until fat becomes solid. Remove fat before using the broth in soups.
- Limit your service of high-fat meats such as sausage, salami, bologna and other cold cuts.
- Try lower fat varieties of cheese, such as part-skim mozzarella, low fat cottage cheese, or part-skim ricotta cheese in recipes.

- Purchase water-packed tuna instead of tuna packed in oil.

- Substitute low fat or nonfat yogurt instead of sour cream, or combine with low fat mayonnaise in tuna salads.

Vegetables and Fruits

- Steam, bake, or boil vegetables until just tender and still crisp.

- Serve fresh vegetables and fruits raw with a yogurt or other low fat dip.

- Stir-fry a variety of vegetables in a small amount of oil.

- Add little or no margarine or butter to the food.

- Use spices or herbs instead of butter or margarine for flavor. Example: Season carrots with cinnamon.

- Offer light sauces or flavorings like an orange glaze or lemon juice.

- Serve fruit for dessert in place of cookies, cakes, or ice cream.

Grains and Breads

- Serve high-fat items such as croissants, doughnuts, and pies less often.

- Use whole-grain bread and offer other breads such as pita bread, bagels, corn tortillas, and muffins made with applesauce replacing some of the fat.

- Serve jellies, jams, or honey instead of margarine on breads or rolls.

- Use lower-fat grain products such as pastas, noodles, brown rice, barley, and bulgur often.

Milk

- Offer 1% low fat or fat-free milk to children 2 years of age or older.

- Replace whole milk in baking with low fat, fat-free, buttermilk, or reconstituted nonfat dry milk.

Guideline: Choose beverages and foods that moderate your intake of sugars.

Offer and use sugars in moderation. Sugars and many foods that contain them in large amounts supply calories, but they may be limited in vitamins and minerals. Eating sugars can promote tooth decay, especially when eaten between meals.

Intake of a lot of foods high in added sugars, like soft drinks or fruitades, is of concern. Consuming excess calories from these foods may contribute to weight gain or lower intake of more nutritious foods. Offer children water as a drink. Use the list below to identify the most commonly eaten foods that are high in added sugars (unless they are labeled "sugar free" or "diet"). Limit your use of these beverages and foods:

- Soft drinks
- Cakes, cookies, pies
- Fruitades and drinks such as fruit punch and lemonade
- Dairy desserts such as ice cream
- Candy

When made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour, sweet foods such as toaster pastries, coffee cake, doughnuts, sweet rolls, cookies, or cakes can be used to meet the grain/bread requirement as specified in the Grains and Breads Chart of the Grains/Bread Instruction (FNS 783-1). This instruction can be found in the reference section of this handbook.

Foods contain sugars in various forms. Read ingredient labels for clues on sugar content. A food is likely to be high in sugars if one of these names appears first or second in the ingredient list or if several of these names are listed:

- *Sucrose*
- *Glucose*
- *Maltose*
- *Dextrose*
- *Lactose*
- *Fructose*
- *Honey*
- *Fruit juice concentrate*
- *Brown sugar*
- *Corn sweetener*
- *Corn syrup*
- *High fructose corn syrup*
- *Invert sugar*
- *Malt syrup*
- *Molasses*

- *Raw sugar*
- *Syrup*
- *Table sugar*

Tips For Using Less Sugar

- Use seasonal fresh fruits when possible. Avoid adding sugar or honey to fresh fruits.
- Use fruits packed in light syrup or juice. Since these are already sweet, there is no need to add sugar.
- Use fresh or frozen fruits in snacks.
- Limit the use of sweet snacks and sweet breakfast foods.
- Modify recipes for sweet snacks and sweet breakfast items to reduce sugar without sacrificing quality.

Guideline: Choose and prepare foods with less salt.

Table salt contains sodium and chloride. Both are essential in the diet. However, most Americans consume more salt and sodium than they need. Many people can reduce their chances of developing high blood pressure by consuming less salt. Consuming less salt or sodium is not harmful and can be recommended for the healthy, normal person. It is a good idea to do both of the following:

- Serve foods lower in sodium.
- Reduce salt during food preparation.

Foods containing salt provide most of the sodium in the diet. Much of it is added during processing or during preparation. Foods with added salt include cured and processed meats; cheeses; ready-to-eat snacks; prepared frozen entrees and dinners; packaged mixes; canned soups; salad dressings and pickles. If you are planning to serve any of these foods, check the sodium content and select foods that have less sodium.

Tips for Moderating Salt Intake

- When purchasing foods high in salt, read the label and select those that have less sodium.
- During food preparation, season foods lightly with salt or add none at all.
- Use herbs or onions (fresh or dried) instead of bouillon cubes or powdered meat base to season recipes.
- Limit the number of times you serve salty snacks, such as crackers or pretzels.
- Read food labels carefully and choose foods lower in sodium.
- Serve smaller amounts of salty condiments, such as mustard, catsup,

relish, and salad dressing, or serve them less often.

- Do not add salt when cooking pasta and rice.

Meal Pattern Requirements

In this section, you will find information on:

- meal pattern requirements for the meals you serve;
- ways to add variety to your menus;
- foods and their nutrient contributions;
- how to make substitutions for children with special needs;
- serving vegetarian meals; and
- what to do about food allergies.

The goal of SFSP is to serve meals that meet the child's nutritional needs. The SFSP provides foods for good health that are appetizing to children, and are consistent with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Meal pattern requirements assist the menu planner in providing well-balanced, nutritious meals that supply the kinds and amounts of foods that help children meet their nutrient and energy needs. The chart on the following page shows the required food components for breakfast, lunch, and snacks, with the minimum required serving sizes.

SFSP sponsors that serve meals prepared in schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) or School Breakfast Program (SBP) may be approved by the State Agency to substitute the meal requirements outlined in the NSLP and SBP regulations for the SFSP meal pattern requirements.

Summer Food Service Program Meal Patterns

Food Components	Breakfast	Lunch or Supper	Snack[1] (Choose two of the four)
Milk			
Milk, fluid	1 cup (8 fl oz)[2]	1 cup (8 fl oz)[3]	1 cup (8 fl oz)[2]
Vegetables and/or Fruits			
Vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s)	½ cup	3/4 cup total[4]	3/4 cup
or			
Full-strength vegetable or fruit juice or an equivalent quantity of any combination of vegetables(s), fruit(s), and juice	½ cup (4 fl oz)		3/4 cup (6 fl oz)
Grains and Breads[5]			
Bread	1 slice	1 slice	1 slice
or			
Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc.	1 serving	1 serving	1 serving
or			
Cold dry cereal	3/4 cup or 1 oz[6]	3/4 cup or 1 oz[6]	3/4 cup or 1 oz.[6]
or			
Cooked pasta or noodle product	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
or			
Cooked cereal or cereal grains or an equivalent quantity of any combination of grains/breads	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup
Meat and Meat Alternates	(Optional)		
Lean meat or poultry or fish	1 oz	2 oz	1 oz
or			
Cheese	1 oz	2 oz	1 oz
or			
Eggs	1/2 large egg	1 large egg	1/2 large egg
or			
Alternate Protein Product [7]	1 oz	2 oz	1 oz
Cooked dry beans or peas	¼ cup	½ cup	¼ cup
or			
Peanut butter or soynut butter or other nut or seed butters	2 tbsp	4 tbsp	2 tbsp
or			
Peanuts or soynuts or tree nuts or seeds	1 oz	1 oz= 50%[8]	1 oz
or			
Yogurt, plain or sweetened and flavored	4 oz or ½ cup	8 oz or 1 cup	4 oz or ½ cup
or			
An equivalent quantity of any combination of the above meat/meat alternates			

For the purpose of this table, a cup means a standard measuring cup.

Indicated endnotes can be found on the next page.

Endnotes

1. Serve two food items. Each food item must be from a different food component. Juice may not be served when milk is served as the only other component.

2. Shall be served as a beverage, or on cereal, or use part of it for each purpose.

3. Shall be served as a beverage.

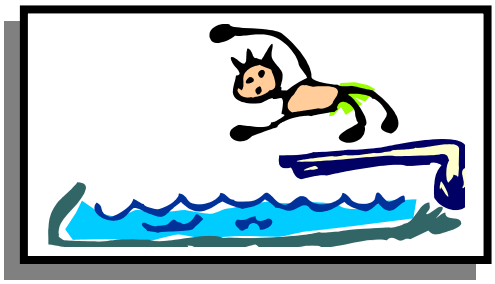
4. Serve two or more kinds of vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s) or a combination of both. Full-strength vegetable or fruit juice may be counted to meet not more than one-half of this requirement.

5. All grain/bread items must be enriched or whole-grain, made from enriched or whole-grain meal or flour, or if it is a cereal, the product must be whole-grain, enriched or fortified. Bran and germ are credited the same as enriched or whole-grain meal or flour.

6. Either volume (cup) or weight (ounce) whichever is less.

7. Must meet the requirements in Appendix A of the SFSP regulations.

8. No more than 50 percent of the requirement shall be met with nuts or seeds. Nuts or seeds shall be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the requirement. When determining combinations, 1 ounce of nuts or seeds is equal to 1 ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish.



Components and Nutrient Contributions

Meat and Meat Alternates

Meal Components	Examples	Nutrients
Meat, fish, poultry, and eggs	Beef, chicken, fish, ham, pork, turkey, luncheon meats (per FNS 279), sausages, and eggs	Protein, iron, phosphorus, potassium, B vitamins, and zinc; contain fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol
Cheese	Swiss, ricotta, part-skim mozzarella, cottage cheese, American cheese, cheddar, and other cheeses	Protein, calcium, phosphorus vitamins A and B-12; contain fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol
Dry beans and peas (Can also count as a vegetable, but not in the same meal.)	Lentils, Navy beans, black beans, lima beans, kidney beans, pinto beans, black-eyed peas, refried beans, chickpeas, and soy beans	Protein, iron, complex carbohydrates, potassium, dietary fiber, magnesium, phosphorus, and folate;
*Peanut butter and other nut butters *Nuts and seeds	Peanut butter, almond and other nut butters Walnuts, peanuts, almonds, soy nuts, other nuts, and seeds	Protein, dietary fiber, vitamin E, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, and niacin; Contain fat
Yogurt	Commercially produced yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	Protein, carbohydrate, calcium, phosphorus, potassium, and vitamin A.
Alternate Protein Product (APP)	APP is mixed/made into such food items as ground beef patties, meat loaf, tuna salad, chicken nuggets, pizza toppings, etc.	Protein, and other nutrients vary depending on the type of APP used

*** Caution**: Children under 4 years of age are at the highest risk of choking. Young children should not be fed spoonfuls or chunks of peanut butter or other nut butters. Instead, USDA recommends that peanut butter and nut butters be spread thinly on bread or crackers. Also, nuts and/or seeds should be served to children in a prepared food and be ground or finely chopped. (See additional information on choking risks on page 114 of this publication.)

Menu Ideas to Increase Variety

- Try pita bread sandwiches or "pita pockets" stuffed with tuna, lettuce, and tomato, or chicken salad with celery and carrots.
- Make a vegetarian pita pocket with favorite veggies, chickpeas, and plain yogurt.
- Serve peanut butter with apple chunks on whole wheat bread.
- Serve lean meats, skinless poultry, and lower fat cheeses.
- Try an ethnic favorite: taco, gyro, pirogue, or calzone.
- Mix ground meat with ground turkey for hamburgers or taco filling.
- Make a submarine sandwich with roast turkey or ham and cheese.
- Try lentils or navy beans in a soup.

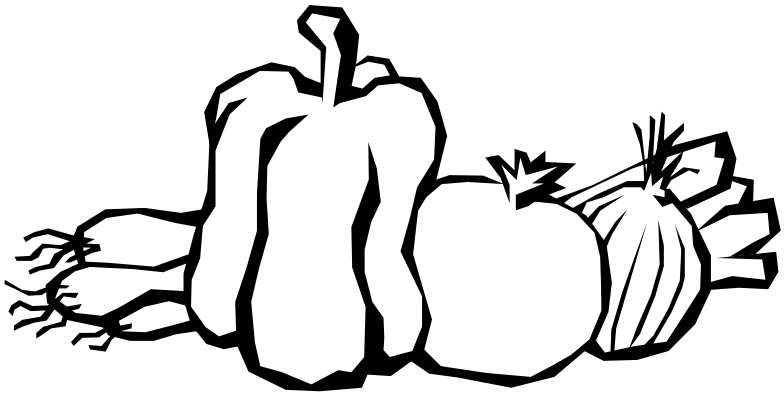
Vegetables

Meal Components	Examples	Nutrients
Vegetables (dark green, deep yellow)	Broccoli, carrots, collard greens, green pepper, kale, pumpkin, spinach, sweet potato, winter squash	Vitamins A and C, fiber, iron, vitamin B-6, folate, potassium, dietary fiber, magnesium, and riboflavin
Vegetables (starchy)	Potatoes, black-eyed peas, corn, lima beans, green peas	Complex carbohydrate, fiber, iron, folate, vitamin C, potassium, and magnesium
Vegetables (other)	Cabbage, cauliflower, celery, cucumbers, green beans, lettuce, okra, onions, summer squash, tomatoes, vegetable juice, zucchini	Dietary fiber, vitamin C, folate, potassium, and magnesium
Dry beans and peas (can also count as a meat alternate, but not in the same meal.)	Black beans, chickpeas, kidney beans, lentils, Navy beans, peas, pinto beans, soy beans	Protein, complex carbohydrate (starch and dietary fiber), iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium and folate

Menu Ideas To Increase Variety

- Top baked potatoes with broccoli and cheese.
- Dip raw carrots and cauliflower in low fat yogurt dip or low fat salad dressing.
- Encourage children to try vegetables such as eggplant, yellow squash, turnips, and spaghetti squash.
- Use spinach and other greens for salads.
- Serve seasonal fresh vegetables.

Caution must be used when giving raw vegetables to young children because of the risk of choking. (See additional information on choking risks on page 114 of this publication.) Vegetables, however, provide a good flavor and texture variety to the menu.

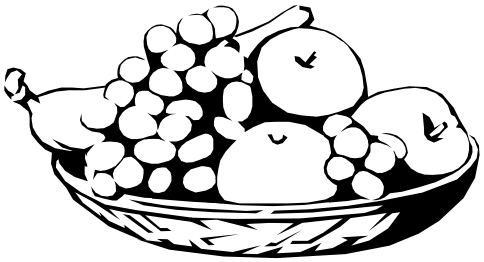


Fruits

Meal Components	Examples	Nutrients
Citrus fruits, melon, berries	Oranges, grapefruit, citrus juices, cantaloupe, watermelon, strawberries	Carbohydrate, dietary fiber, potassium, folate, and vitamin C; deep yellow fruit source of vitamin A
Other fruit	Apple, apricot, banana, cherries, fruit juice, grapes, peach, pear, pineapple, plum, prunes, raisins	Carbohydrate, dietary fiber, potassium, vitamin C; deep yellow fruit source of vitamin A

Menu Ideas To Increase Variety

- Serve fresh fruits in season for the area of the country where you live, such as cantaloupe, peaches, watermelon, strawberries, plums, raspberries, blueberries, pears, grape halves and pineapple.
- Offer canned fruits packed in light syrup or in natural juices, such as fruit cocktail, peaches, and pears.
- Buy frozen mixed fruit and add fresh banana slices.
- Choose a fruit to top a dessert like pudding or gelatin.
- Try using an orange glaze on chicken breasts.
- Introduce unfamiliar fruits such as kiwi, papaya, mango, apricots, dates, and figs.

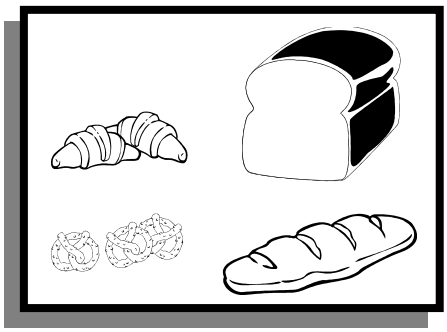


Grains and Breads

Meal Components	Examples	Nutrients
Enriched breads, cereals, pasta	Bagels, cornbread, grits, crackers, pasta, corn muffins, noodles, pita bread, ready-to-eat cereal, white bread, rolls	Source of complex carbohydrate (starch), thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, iron; some contain added fat
Whole-grain breads, cereal, pasta	Brown rice, corn tortillas, oatmeal, whole-grain rye bread, whole-grain ready-to-eat cereal, whole-wheat pasta, crackers, bread, rolls	Source of complex carbohydrate (starch and dietary fiber), copper, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin; some contain added fat

Menu Ideas To Increase Variety

- Use a variety of breads such as pita pockets, pizza crust, focaccia bread, bagels, corn bread, tortillas, and English muffins.
- Use round crackers, rye crackers, soda crackers, and whole-wheat squares.
- Pastas also now come in different colors and flavors: tomato, spinach, and whole wheat. Try different pasta types such as macaroni, twists, spaghetti, or rigatoni in a cold pasta salad.
- Add smaller pastas such as bowties, alphabet letters, and small shells in soups.
- Try rice, oats, barley, bulgur and couscous for a change!

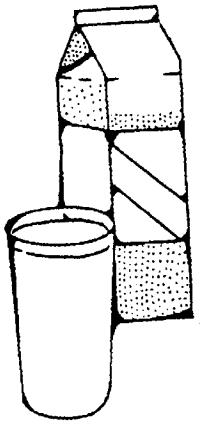


Milk

Meal Components	Examples	Nutrients
Milk, fluid	Pasteurized, unflavored or flavored low fat milk, skim milk, buttermilk, lactose-reduced milk, acidophilus milk, whole milk	Calcium, protein, riboflavin, phosphorus, carbohydrate, potassium, vitamins B-12 and A, and if fortified, Vitamin D; most contain fat, saturated fat, cholesterol

Menu Ideas To Increase Variety

- Offer only whole milk to children up to the age of 2. Try offering skim or low fat milk to children ages 2 and above.
- Try different low fat or reduced fat varieties, such as 1 percent or 2 percent fat white, chocolate, or strawberry flavored milk.
- Offer tastes of skim milk, with little or no fat (0 to .5 percent).
- Try buttermilk sometimes!
- For children who require it, serve alternative types of milk (a reduced-lactose milk or acidophilus) if available.
- Try shelf-stable milk, too!



Facts About Meal Pattern Requirements

Meat and Meat Alternates

- Must be served at lunch and supper.
- May be served as part of the snack.
- May be served as additional items at breakfast.
- Include a serving of cooked lean meat (beef, pork, lamb, veal), poultry, fish, cheese, cooked dry beans or peas, eggs, alternate protein product, peanut butter or other nut or seed butters (almond, sesame, sunflower), or nuts or seeds, yogurt, or any combination.
- Serve the meat/meat alternate as the entree (main dish) or as part of the main entree and in one other menu item.

Nuts and seeds may fulfill:

(1) all of the meat/meat alternate requirement for the snack; and
(2) up to one-half of the required portion for lunch or supper.

Nuts and seeds must be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the lunch or supper requirement. For determining combinations, 1 ounce of nuts or seeds is equal to l ounce of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish. The nuts and seeds that may be used as a meat alternate include peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts (almonds, walnuts, and pecans), and seeds (sunflower, sesame, and pumpkin).

Caution: Children under 4 are at the highest risk of choking. USDA recommends that nuts and/or seeds be served to them ground or finely chopped in a prepared food. Refer to the "You Can Help Prevent Choking" and the "Infant & Child Lifesaving Steps" pages in the Reference Section.

Yogurt is very popular with children. It has a smooth texture, and can be flavored for children's tastes. Plain yogurt may be used as a topping on potatoes (instead of butter or sour cream). Flavored yogurt goes well with fruit and fresh vegetables at meals. Plain, flavored, or sweetened yogurt, made with whole or low fat milk, provides additional sources of calcium. Commercially prepared yogurt may be served as a meat/meat alternate.

For breakfast and snack you may serve 4 oz (weight) or ½ cup (volume) of plain, sweetened or flavored yogurt to equal 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternate component. For lunch and supper you may serve 8 oz. (weight) or 1 cup (volume) yogurt to equal 2 ounces of the meat/meat alternate component. For younger children, 2 ounces (weight) or ¼ cup (volume) fulfills the equivalent of ½ ounce of the meat/meat alternate requirement.

Homemade yogurt, frozen yogurt or other yogurt flavored products (i.e., yogurt bars, yogurt-covered fruit and/or nuts) or similar products may not be credited. (Fruit-flavored yogurt is credited equally as plain or sweetened yogurt.)

Question: Is the fruit flavoring within yogurt creditable towards the fruit component?

Answer: No, the fruit within yogurt whether blended, mixed, or presented on top cannot be credited towards the fruit requirement. It is considered part of the creditable yogurt. Extra fruit provided, i.e. fresh strawberries, canned peaches, or banana slices can count towards the fruit component.

Vegetables and/or Fruits, as a food group, provide most of the vitamin C and a large share of the vitamin A in meals as well as dietary fiber and carbohydrates for long-lasting energy.

- At breakfast, a serving of fruit or vegetable or full-strength (100-percent) fruit or vegetable juice is required. Breakfast is a good time to serve foods containing vitamin C, such as citrus fruits and juices, like oranges or grapefruit. Other foods containing vitamin C are tomato juice, strawberries, and cantaloupe.

- Consider using dried fruits, such as dried apricots, raisins, and prunes, to provide variety in menus. (Look for the "Sources of Nutrients" chart in the Reference Section that suggests foods containing vitamin A, vitamin C, and iron).

- For lunch and supper, serve two or more kinds of vegetables and/or fruits at each meal. Up to one-half of the total requirement may be met with full-strength (100-percent) fruit or vegetable juice. For variety, serve full-strength (100-percent) fruit or vegetable juices, fruits, or vegetables for midmorning and mid-afternoon snacks.

- Cooked vegetables means a serving of drained cooked vegetables.

- Cooked or canned fruit means a serving of fruit and the juice it's packed in.

- Thawed frozen fruit includes fruit with the thawed juice.

- Select canned fruits that are packed in fruit juice, water, light syrup, or natural juices.

- Juice may not be served if milk is the only other component for the snack.

- Juice drinks with at least 50-percent-strength juice are permitted but discouraged because double the volume is needed to meet Program requirements. Beverages containing less than 50-percent-strength juice, such as fruit punches, ades, or drinks made with fruit-flavored powders and syrups, do not meet program requirements.

Try not to serve juice to meet the fruit/vegetable requirement too many times throughout the week. It may fill up the children and take the place of foods that provide other needed nutrients.

Examples of Full-Strength Juices:

Apple	Pineapple
Grape	Prune
Grapefruit	Tangerine
Grapefruit-Orange	Tomato
Orange	Vegetable

Any blend or combination of these full-strength juices meet Program requirements.

Grains/Breads must be whole-grain or enriched or made from whole-grain or enriched flour or meal or if it is a cereal, the product must be whole-grain, enriched or fortified. Bran and germ are credited the same as whole-grain or enriched meal or flour. Grains/breads provide carbohydrates, some B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, and niacin), minerals (such as iron), protein, and calories. Whole-grain products supply additional vitamins, minerals, dietary fiber, and a variety of tastes and textures.

- At breakfast, choose from a serving of enriched or whole-grain breads, biscuits, rolls, or muffins or a serving of enriched, whole-grain or fortified cereal, or a combination of both.

- For midmorning and mid-afternoon snacks, choose from a serving of: enriched or whole-grain bread; enriched, whole-grain, or fortified cereal; cooked enriched or whole-grain rice, bulgur, or macaroni; cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, crackers, or cookies made of enriched or whole-grain meal or flour. Hot breads, such as rolls, biscuits, cornbread, or muffins, or raisin bread add variety and appeal as well as nutrients.

- At lunch or supper, choose from a serving of: enriched or whole-grain bread, or cooked whole-grain or enriched rice, bulgur, or cornbread; or enriched or whole-grain noodles, macaroni, or other pasta products. An equivalent serving of grains/breads made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour may be substituted.

For more information, look at the Grains and Breads Chart in the Reference Section.

Reminders:

- Non-sweet snack products such as hard pretzels, hard bread sticks, and chips made from enriched or whole-grain meal or flour can be used to meet the bread requirement.
- Grain-based sweet snack foods should not be served as part of a snack more than twice a week.
- Some bread items or their accompaniments may contain more sugar, fat, or salt than others. Keep this in mind when considering how often to serve them. Read the "Nutrition Facts" panel on food labels to compare products.

Milk

- At breakfast or for snacks, milk can be served as a beverage, on cereal, or as a beverage and on cereal. At lunch or supper, milk must be served as a beverage in accordance with SFSP meal pattern requirements.
- Use additional milk (fluid, evaporated, or nonfat dry milk) to prepare soups, casseroles, puddings, bakery items, or other baked or cooked products to add calcium and improve the nutritional quality of the meal.

Serve Other Foods: Add Variety to Meals

In addition to the foods required in the meal patterns for children, "other foods" may be served at meals to help improve acceptability and to satisfy children's appetites. Other foods provide additional energy, and, if wisely chosen, increase the variety of nutrients offered.

For example, you may serve small amounts of honey, jam, jellies, and syrup to add flavor and variety to pancakes, toast, English muffins, etc. Items such as mayonnaise, salad dressings, margarine, and oils should be used sparingly.

Additional foods served as desserts at lunch and supper help to meet the calorie needs of growing children by supplying extra food energy and other important nutrients. Baked products made from whole-grain or enriched flour supply additional amounts of iron and some B vitamins. Desserts made with milk, such as puddings, provide calcium along with other nutrients.

Remember, too, that "other foods" are often a source of hidden fat and salt. Be aware and limit the frequency and the amounts you serve of foods such as chips, ice cream, and pastries.

Meal Substitutions for Children with Special Needs

A child with a disability that restricts his or her diet is entitled to receive special meals at no extra charge, when that need is supported by a statement signed by a licensed physician. However, sponsors are not expected to make accommodations that are so expensive or difficult that they would cause the institution undue hardship. In most cases, children with disabilities can be accommodated with little extra expense or involvement. A statement from the child's physician is required to ensure that the substitutions in foods meet nutrition standards that are medically appropriate for that child, and to justify that the modified meal is reimbursable. The physician's statement must identify:

- the child's disability and an explanation of why the disability restricts the child's diet;
- the major life activity affected by the disability; and
- the food or foods to be omitted from the child's diet, and the food or choice of foods that must be substituted.

Sponsors are not required to make food substitutions based solely on individual or personal opinions regarding a healthful diet. Food substitutions may be made, at a sponsor's discretion, for an individual child who does not have a disability, but who is medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need. Such determinations are only made on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by a statement that indicates which foods to avoid and to substitute. This type of statement must be signed by a recognized medical authority (e.g., physician, physician assistant, nurse practitioner, or registered nurse) or other health professional specified by the State agency.

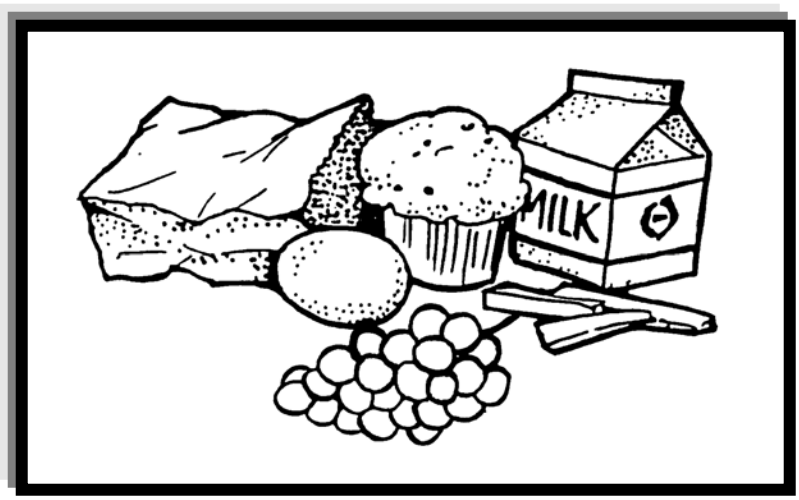
Vegetarian Meals

For parents concerned about religious food restrictions or preparing vegetarian meals, the meal pattern currently allows for flexibility and menu management if personal preference is given in advance.

Food Allergies and Intolerances

A food allergy is an abnormal response of the body's defense – the immune system – to an otherwise harmless food. Although any food may cause an allergic reaction, six foods are responsible for most of these reactions in children. These foods are peanuts, eggs, milk, tree nuts, soy, and wheat. When in a physician's assessment food allergies may result in severe, life-threatening reactions (anaphylactic reactions), the child would meet the definition of "having a disability", and the food service personnel must make the substitutions prescribed by a licensed physician.

A food intolerance is an adverse food-induced reaction that does not involve the body's immune system. Lactose intolerance is one example of food intolerance. A person with lactose intolerance lacks an enzyme that is needed to digest milk sugar. When that person eats dairy and milk products, gas, bloating, and abdominal pain may occur. Sponsors are not required to make food substitutions for a person with food intolerances, as food intolerances are not considered disabilities. However, food substitutions may be made, at a sponsor's discretion, for an individual child who is medically certified as having a special medical or dietary need such as a food intolerance. Such determinations are only made on a case-by-case basis and must be supported by a statement signed by a recognized medical authority that indicates which foods to avoid and to substitute.



Good Summer Menu Planning

In this section, you will find tips on:

- how to plan your menus;
- how to create a cycle menu;
- how to calculate serving sizes and costs;
- how to check your budget, inventory and labor;
- sample summer menus; and
- healthy snacks and easy salad ideas.

Good menu planning for summertime involves several food service considerations. Most importantly, the menu should meet a child's nutritional needs. Children's preferences, recipes, serving location, food costs, food safety and handling, equipment, and labor must be considered, too.

Planning menus means thinking about what foods to serve together. A healthful diet offers a variety of foods, is low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and moderate in total fat, salt and sugar. Moderation means offering foods with caution as to the number of times used.

Be practical. If food is to be served outside or delivered to a playground or campsite, make the menu practical and appealing. Consider the location, delivery of food, and ways to keep food safe to eat.

How to Plan A Summer Lunch Menu

Begin with the main dish or entree: consider a source of protein from the meat or meat alternate group. Sometimes, grains, vegetables, or fruits may be part of the main dish, such as a taco, burrito, or chef's salad. Choose a combination of a fruit and a vegetable that go together. Include a grain/bread that is rich in fiber. Add milk as the beverage.

Be sure the meal offers a variety of colors, textures, and tastes; includes children's "likes and dislikes"; and meets SFSP's meal pattern requirements. Consider Dietary Guidelines recommendations for variety, lowering fat and increasing the use of whole-grains, fresh fruits, and vegetables. Complete the Summer Menu Checklist in this section to evaluate menus.

If you have on-site cooking facilities, use standardized recipes, when available. (A standardized recipe is a recipe that gives the same good results every time.) Think about preparation time, labor, equipment, delivery, and costs. Note extra needs and resources, such as ice, straws, garbage bags, and can liners.

Cycle Menus

Plan your menus in advance. One way to do this is to develop a cycle menu. A cycle menu is a set of planned menus that are repeated in the same order for a period of time, usually 2, 3 or 4 weeks. The menu is different every day during the cycle. A cycle menu offers variety and is flexible to allow for substitutions. It is the master plan of meal planning.

Adjust cycle menus as follows:

- Replace foods not available.
- Observe birthdays and other special occasions.
- Introduce new foods and try new recipes.
- Take advantage of seasonal foods or best buys.
- Use leftovers wisely.
- Reflect food acceptability.

When planning your menus include a schedule for food purchases, cost control, food preparation time and delivery.

Calculate Serving Sizes and Costs

Calculate serving sizes and food cost by following these steps:

1. Select recipes.
2. Determine the serving size.
3. Determine how many meals to prepare.
4. Adjust the recipes for number of servings.
5. Calculate the amount of food for the total number of meals.
6. Estimate the total food cost.

Check the Budget

Compare the estimated cost of the menu with the food budget. If this cost is too high for the food budget, replace some of the foods in the menu with less costly ones.

Check the Inventory

Based on the estimated amounts of foods needed to prepare the menus, determine the amount of food you have on hand in your storeroom and refrigerators. Decide which foods you need to purchase.

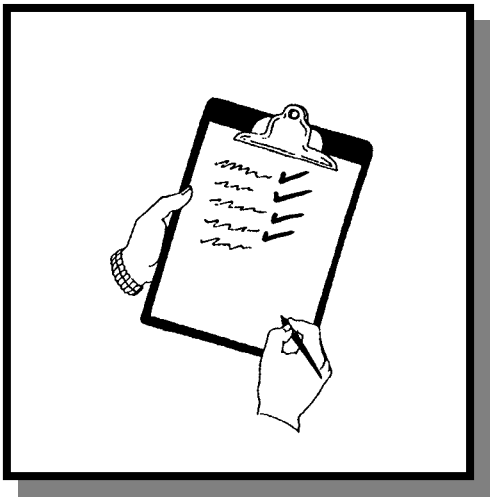
Check Labor And Equipment

Schedule production time, equipment usage, and develop work schedules. Do not over-schedule or under-schedule!

Worksheets

- Record menus on a worksheet.
- Prepare quantity food production records.
- Maintain food inventory control sheets.

See sample worksheets in the Reference Section of this guide.



Summer Menu Checklist

Evaluate menus on a weekly and monthly basis.

		Yes	No
1.	Have you included all food components in the minimum portion sizes as specified by the USDA?	____	____
2.	Have you varied foods from day to day and week to week?	____	____
3.	Are foods containing vitamin A, vitamin C, and iron offered frequently?	____	____
4.	Do meals include a variety of foods with a balance of color, texture, shape, flavor, and temperature?	____	____
5.	Have you included fresh fruits and vegetables often, as well as whole grain or enriched bread or cereal products?	____	____
6.	Have you included "other foods" to satisfy the appetites and to help meet the nutritional needs of the children?	____	____
7.	Have you considered the children's likes and dislikes, cultural, and ethnic practices?	____	____
8.	Have you chosen foods lower in fat?	____	____
9.	Have you chosen foods moderate in sugars?	____	____
10.	Have you chosen foods lower in salt?	____	____
11.	Do meals provide adequate number of calories?	____	____

Sample Summer Menus

The following is a sample 6-day cycle menu. You may change any of the meals shown, rearrange the order, or make substitutions within a meal. Be sure each new menu offers the food components that the USDA meal pattern requires.

Note the variety of foods, lower fat selections, and culturally diverse menu suggestions. These sample menus are primarily for on-site preparation. Some suggestions can be used for off-site service at playgrounds or campsites.

	Day 1	Day 2
Breakfast	English Muffin –25 gm or 0.9 oz with 1 tbs Jelly Fresh Fruit Cup - ½ cup (Grapes, Melon, Strawberries) Milk - 1 cup (8 fl oz)	Ready-to-Eat Cereal – ¾ cup Sliced Pears - ½ cup Milk - 1 cup (8 fl oz)
Snack	Grape Juice - ¾ cup "Ants on a Log" (*Celery Sticks ½ cup, with Peanut Butter – 2 tbs and *raisins – 2 tbs)	Soft Pretzel – 25 gm or 0.9 oz Orange Juice - ¾ cup
Lunch	Chicken Nuggets - 2 oz with BBQ Sauce or Honey - 1 tbs Peas and carrots - ½ cup Whole Wheat Dinner Roll – 25 gm or 0.9 oz Apple Slices - ¼ cup Milk - 1 cup (8 fl oz)	Turkey Burger (cooked, 2 oz) on Whole Wheat Roll – 25 gm or 0.9 oz Lettuce and Tomato (optional) Baked Potato Wedges - ½ cup Green Beans - ¼ cup Chocolate Milk - 1 cup (8 fl oz)

* Extra food added; not required to meet meal pattern requirements.

	Day 3	Day 4
Breakfast	Bagel – 25 gm or 0.9 oz with Lowfat Cream Cheese – 1 tbs Citrus Sections – ½ cup Milk – 1 cup (8 fl oz)	Granola Cereal with Raisins (3/4 cup or 1 oz) Fresh Banana slices – ½ cup Milk – 1 cup (8 fl oz)
Snack	Low fat Raspberry Yogurt – 4 oz or ½ cup Granola Bar, Plain – 50 gm or 1.8 oz Water	Tortilla Triangles – 25 gm or 0.9 oz (with Cheese Centers – 1 oz) *Cherry Tomato Halves – ½ cup Water
Lunch	Submarine Sandwich (Hoagie) (Ham – ½ oz, Turkey – ½ oz Lowfat Cheese – 1 oz Lettuce and Tomato – ¼ cup Italian Hoagie Roll – 25 gm or 0.9 oz Watermelon Cubes – ½ cup Milk – 1 cup (8 fl oz) * Vanilla Pudding	Tuna Chef's Salad Tuna – 2 oz. Lettuce, Tomato, Broccoli, Celery, Cucumbers – ¾ cup Pumpernickel Roll – 25 gm or 0.9 oz Milk – 1 cup (8 fl oz)

* Extra food added; not required to meet meal pattern requirements.

	Day 5	Day 6
Breakfast	Blueberry Muffin – 50 gm or 1.8 oz Sliced Peaches- ½ cup Milk – 1 cup (8 fl oz)	Waffle – 31 gm or 1.1 oz with Light Maple Syrup – 1 tbs Blueberries - ½ cup Milk – 1 cup (8 fl oz)
Snack	Raw Vegetable Medley - ¾ cup Broccoli, Carrot Sticks, Celery Sticks and Cherry Tomatoes Plain Yogurt - ½ cup Water	Fresh Fruit Cup - ¾ cup Milk - 1 cup (8 fl oz)
Lunch	Mexican Pizza – 1 (Corn Tortilla – 25 gm or 0.9 oz 1/8 cup of *Tomato Sauce, Refried Beans -¼ cup and Lowfat Cheddar Cheese 1 oz) Garden Salad – ½ cup Pineapple Tidbits – ¼ cup Milk - 1 cup (8 fl oz)	Chicken Pita pocket (2 oz Chicken, Pita Bread –25 gm or 0.9 oz, Lettuce and Tomato – ¼ cup) Coleslaw – ½ cup *Grape Halves – ½ cup Milk - 1 cup (8 fl oz)

* Extra food added; not required to meet meal pattern requirements.

Healthy Snack Ideas

Kids like to eat finger foods because they're easy to handle, have different shapes, colors, and sizes, and are fun to pick up and explore. They can be dipped in a sauce, offer new tastes, and enable children to learn about new choices.

Choose items from the following food groups when planning snacks. Make use of fresh fruits and vegetables. Offer a selection of sauces and dips for children to choose.

Meat or Meat Alternates

Cheese cubes
Cheese sticks
Turkey rollups
Beef cubes
Peanut butter
Almond butter
Yogurt

Vegetables (light steaming or cooking may increase acceptability of some of the following)

Asparagus spears
Carrot coins
Carrot sticks
Celery sticks
Broccoli
Cabbage wedges
Corn
Green pepper sticks
Mushrooms
Snow peas
Peas
Radishes
Sweet potato cubes
Tomato wedges
Turnip sticks
Zucchini sticks

Fruits

Fresh fruit wedges
such as peach, pear,
watermelon, plum,
pineapple, and cantaloupe
Pitted prunes
Berries (in season)
such as blueberries,
raspberries, and
strawberries
Cherries, pitted
Dried fruits
Kiwi slices
Nectarines
Papaya
Banana slices
Grape halves
Honeydew cubes
Raisins
Tangelos
Tangerine sections
Melon balls

Full-Strength Juices

Apple	Pineapple
Grape	Prune
Grapefruit	Tangerine
Grapefruit-orange	Tomato
Orange	Vegetable

Any blend or combination is acceptable.

Grains and Breads (Whole grain or enriched)

Pita bread triangles	English muffin cubes
Crackers (all varieties)	Cheese toast strips
	Croutons
Graham crackers	Oyster crackers
Bread cubes	Pizza sticks
Bagel bites	Waffle squares
Cereals, dry (any variety)	Tortilla pieces
Granola	Wafers

Dips and Sauces

Yogurt dip	Fruit-based dip
Salsa and refried bean dip	Cheese, melted
Sweet and sour sauce	Cucumber sauce
Barbecue sauce	

Caution: Children under 4 years old are at the highest risk of choking on food and remain at high risk until they can chew better. Items such as whole grapes, corn, peas, hot dogs, and hard raw vegetables should be sliced or diced for children to swallow more easily.

Easy Salad Ideas

Give children a choice of low-fat dressings in which to dip their carrot, celery, cucumber, and zucchini sticks.

Salad Dressings:

- Make a quick Russian dressing with low fat mayonnaise and catsup, and serve it over cut-up lettuce.
- Use lemon juice instead of vinegar when making a homemade Italian dressing. It tastes less harsh to children.
- Make a quick and tasty French dressing in the blender with tomato soup, onion, sugar, vinegar, and oil.
- Bottled reduced fat coleslaw dressing makes a great-tasting white French dressing.

- Make a quick ranch dressing: 1 cup each of low fat mayonnaise, low fat yogurt, buttermilk; flavor with oregano and dried parsley.

- Vary the look of your pasta salads with a combination of pastas: wagon wheels, shells, twists, and elbows, all in the same salad!

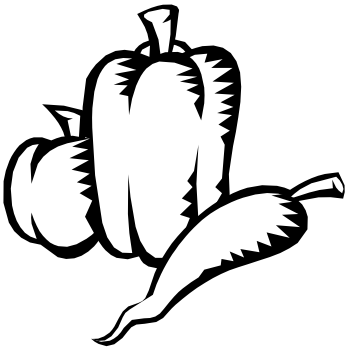
- Instead of pasta salad, how about "rice" salad?

- To save time in making pasta salad, use thawed frozen vegetables. (There's no need to cook; they're blanched already).

- Try an antipasto lunch. Arrange on a small plate: chunks of tuna, wedge of hard cooked egg, slices of beet, halved cherry tomatoes, cooked green beans, cooked potato slices. Include a small cup with Italian dressing.

- Add color and extra vitamins to coleslaw with red cabbage (as well as white), green pepper dices, and grated carrot.

- Make a honey dressing for fruit: low fat yogurt, honey, and orange juice concentrate for flavor.



The Eating Environment

In this section, you will find information on:

- how to make mealtime at your site a pleasant experience;
- the importance of nutrition education for the children; and
- tips on fun nutrition education activities.

A pleasant eating environment is another important key to healthy eating. Bringing children and foods together in a happy meal setting is as important as what children should eat. Pleasant eating experiences form habits and attitudes that can last a lifetime.

Making Mealtime A Happy Time

Encourage good experiences with food and eating by:

- Getting to know each child's personality and reaction to foods.
- Allowing children to take their own time to eat. Let them follow their own "time clock". Eating in a hurry may spoil the pleasure of eating.
- Not forcing children to eat. They can be picky eaters.
- Offering a variety of foods in different ways.

The Physical Environment

If you are serving food inside a building:

- Make sure the room or setup is attractive and clean.
- Use bright colors and decorations that children like.
- Offer good lighting and proper air circulation.
- Provide chairs, tables, dishes, glasses, plastic ware, and serving utensils that are appropriate for children.
- Arrange food on plates and garnish serving lines to make meals attractive.
- Avoid delays so children do not have to wait.
- Have children help set the table, carry food to the table, or help clean up after eating.

If you are serving food outdoors:

- Be sure food is safe to eat by providing ice or refrigeration for cold foods, and warmers for hot foods.
- If you are transporting food to outdoor sites, look into using refrigerated trucks and/or warmers. Proper temperature maintenance is necessary and must be accommodated if food is to be transported. For more information, refer to the section on Food Safety, beginning on page 71.
- It's important to check food on delivery for proper temperatures. Make sure thermometers are available to check on food. Keep hot food at 140 °F or above and cold food at 41 °F or below.
- Remember, nutrition is important but extra "other foods" can be served that provide additional energy on a hot day, such as ice-cold fruit pops or ice milk treats.

A Healthy Atmosphere

- Provide a quiet time just before meals so that mealtime can be relaxed.
- Encourage a friendly atmosphere.
- Talk about foods, the colors, the shapes, the sizes, and where they come from.
- Encourage children to talk about their food experiences—how the food tastes and smells.
- Allow enough time for children to eat and experience healthy eating.
- Offer nutrition education activities.

Nutrition Education

Nutrition education is learning about foods and how they are important to health. Nutrition knowledge helps children adopt healthy eating habits.

Nutrition education is an important part of serving meals to children participating in SFSP. Encourage your staff to provide a variety of activities to help children:

Nutrition education is learning about foods and how they are:

- important to health. Nutrition knowledge helps children adopt healthy eating habits;
- develop positive attitudes toward nutritious meals;
- learn to accept a wide variety of foods;
- establish good food habits early in life; and
- share and socialize in group eating situations.

Promote Nutrition Education Activities

The teaching of nutrition principles is most effective when you combine concepts with other learning experiences. Learning is reinforced when children have an opportunity to practice what you teach them.

Introducing new foods to children can be an educational experience. Foods, like a bright orange, a rosy apple, or a bright green pepper, can be an introduction to new colors, different shapes, textures, and smells. A child may reject a food simply because it is unfamiliar. Seeing, touching, tasting new foods, and preparing familiar foods in a different way, can lead to better acceptance. Organize tasting parties to offer children a taste-test of a variety of food items.

Activities:

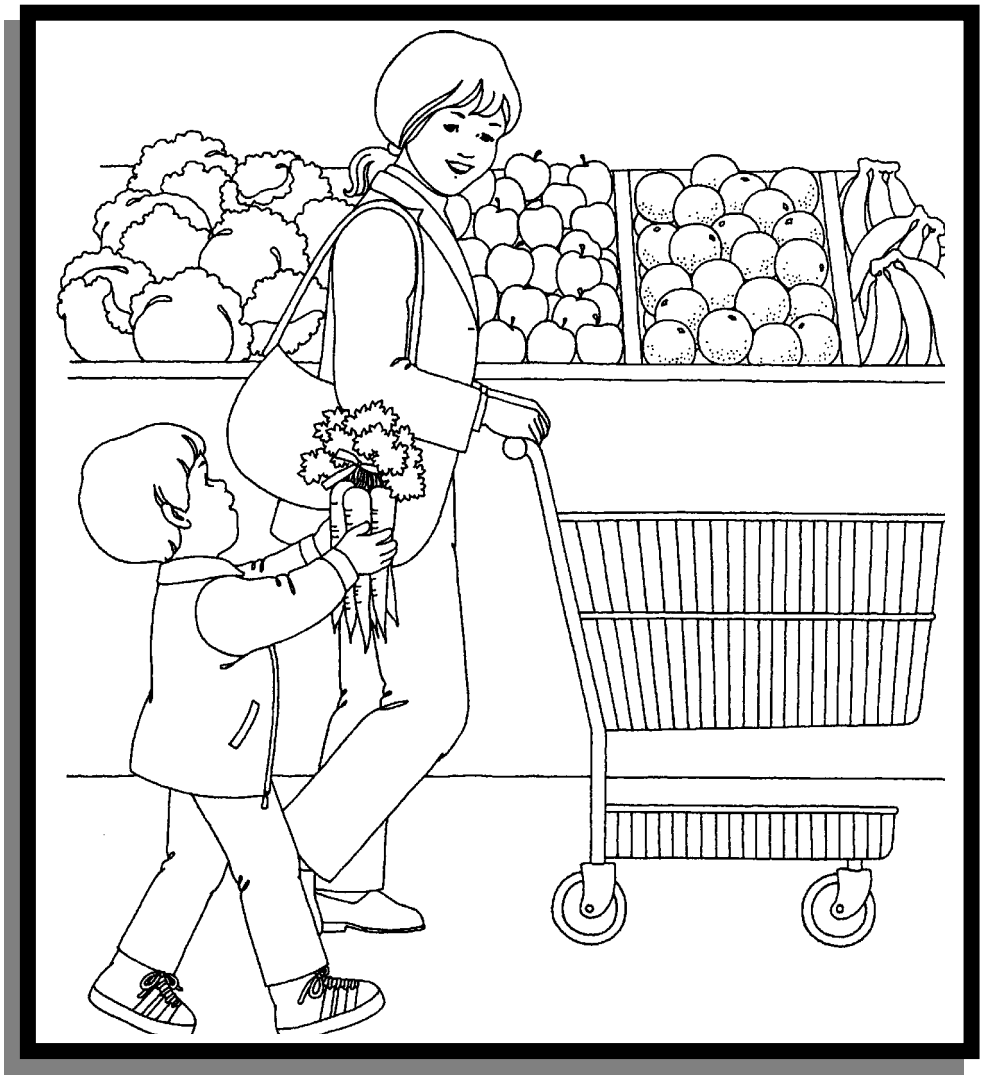
What's the Mystery Food? Place the child's hand in a paper bag containing a fruit or vegetable and ask him or her to identify it. If he or she can't, select several children to peek into the bag and provide clues.

Food Match: Ask the children to name as many vegetables as they can that are green…purple…yellow, or start with the letter B, etc.

Involve children in preparing meals and snacks:

- Have children measure ingredients with kitchen measuring cups and spoons.
- Teach children the origin of foods and the events that lead up to serving a meal.
- Plant a garden, inside or out, or create an edible landscape with herbs.

Field Trips: Children can learn many things from field trips. They can discover how food is produced, prepared, and sold. If possible, plan excursions to a farm, market, grocery store, dairy, or bakery. After the trip, have children role-play to recall what they learned. Promote other recreational activities such as food drawings, stories, puppet plays with food characters, songs, and games to help children develop wholesome attitudes toward nutritious foods.



Menu Promotions

In this section, you will find information on:

- how to “merchandise” your meals; and
- a few interesting “theme” menus.

Introducing New Recipes

New recipes should be introduced gradually, so consider trying one per week. Try a new recipe at snack time – a time for "something extra", a time of surprises. Always have an alternate choice so no one feels left out if he or she doesn't care to try the new item. Give just a taste: one fourth of a serving, then nothing will be wasted.

Merchandising Meals

Advertise: put up posters and pictures to illustrate what is currently being served.

Dress in costume for an occasion or special activity.

Surround the meal with "go withs" that are commonly accepted: i.e., cornbread, pork and beans. Go ethnic all the way!

Let every Monday or Thursday, be "New Recipe Day": something to look forward to....

Serve lunch in a paper bag and let each child sit where he/she chooses, like at a picnic. Spread a blanket....

Dream up a new way to serve a familiar food: cut sandwiches into triangles, fingers. Flavor and color milk pink with pureed strawberries. Let children drink their milk from straws. Serve spaghetti or chow mein in a Chinese carry out bucket. Use colored plastic spoons. Garnish soup with popcorn or homemade croutons made from leftover bread (note that this could be a choking hazard for children under 4). Offer variety wherever possible: choice of toppings for a hamburger (self-serve style, of course!), choice of toppings for ice cream, choice of toppings on pizza...

Talk about a new food beforehand: a little education goes a long way. How were the foods grown? Where were they grown? How do the foods look when they are raw? Compare it to another food that is already familiar. What makes it nutritious? What are other names for this food (or dish)? Why is it called what it is? From what culture did it originate? In what culture is it found today?

Self-Serve Style Children generally eat what "they" choose.

SUMMER FRUIT SALAD BAR

peeled kiwi chunks
canned pineapple chunks
fresh orange chunks
banana wheels
canned pear chunks or peach slices
grapes or berries (if in season)
honey dressing
pita bread circles
tortilla rounds

BAKED POTATO BAR

whipped margarine
plain low-fat yogurt
sautéed mushrooms
sliced green onions
steamed diced broccoli
cooked bacon crumbles
shredded American cheese
mild salsa
chili con carne
baked potatoes

YOGURT SUNDAES
(For Snack Fun)

plain low-fat vanilla yogurt
fruit flavored low-fat yogurt
granola
brown sugar
crushed canned pineapple
any fresh fruit in season
fruit salad
chocolate syrup
frozen, thawed strawberries

TACO SALAD BAR

tortilla pieces
warm taco meat mixture
kidney beans or refried beans
diced fresh tomatoes
shredded lettuce
grated American cheese
mild salsa
baked potatoes

TOP-YOUR-OWN PIZZA BAR

red sauce
sliced mushrooms
diced green peppers
steamed broccoli florets
shredded mozzarella cheese
grated parmesan cheese
pita bread circles
cooked ground beef crumbles
pizza crust
tortilla rounds

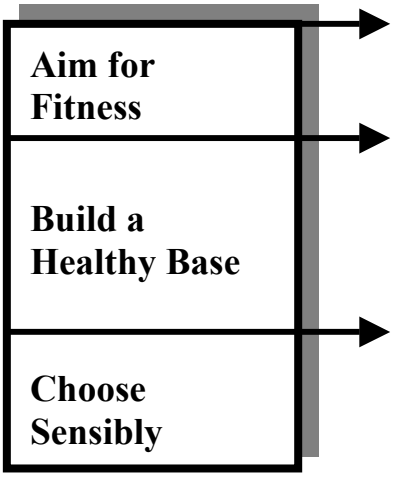
TOP-YOUR-OWN HAMBURGER PATTIE

pineapple slices (Hawaiian)
mild salsa (Mexican)
pizza sauce (Italian)
teriyaki sauce (Japanese)
barbecue sauce (American)
tomato slices
shredded lettuce
low-fat mayonnaise
sliced cheese triangles

Questions and Answers

1. Why do I need to know about the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*?

Children learn healthy eating habits at an early age. You have a unique opportunity to help them learn how to eat a more healthy diet, ensuring their future nutritional health. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* promote 3 basic messages: Aim for Fitness, Build a Healthy Base, and Choose Sensibly. These guidelines are intended for healthy children (ages 2 years and older) and adults of any age. The Dietary Guidelines for Americans are:



- Aim for a healthy weight.
- Be physically active each day.

- Let the Pyramid guide your food choices.
- Choose a variety of grains daily, especially whole grains.
- Choose a variety of fruits and vegetables daily.
- Keep food safe to eat.

- Choose a diet that is low in saturated fat and cholesterol and moderate in total fat.
- Choose beverages and foods to moderate your intake of sugars.
- Choose and prepare foods with less salt.

2. What can I do to lower the amount of fat in the meals I serve to the children?

There are many things you can do while preparing meals. For instance, you can bake or broil instead of frying; you can drain fat off meats before serving, or try combining beans with meat for variety. Serve fresh fruits and vegetables, or steam, bake or boil them until they're crisp or "al dente". Use margarine, butter and oil sparingly, and use herbs and spices for flavor. Use whole grain breads and other breads such as pita bread, bagels, muffins, and pancakes more often instead of higher fat items such as croissants, doughnuts, and sweet rolls. Further, offer low fat or non-fat milk to children over two years of age, and replace whole milk with low-fat, buttermilk or reconstituted nonfat dry milk during food preparation.

3. What is a meal pattern requirement?

A meal pattern requirement is a listing of food components and serving sizes you are required to serve the children in the SFSP. Each component in each meal must be present in order for you to receive reimbursement for that meal. When the meal pattern requirements are followed, not only do you receive proper reimbursement, but the child eating the meal receives a well-balanced, nutritious meal that supplies the kinds and amounts of foods that will meet their nutrient and energy needs. You can find the SFSP Meal Pattern Requirements in this part of the handbook, beginning on page 13.

4. I have a few children in my Program that need special meals. What should I do?

Sometimes children have a disability or life-threatening food allergy that prevents them from eating the same foods as the other children. Such children are still entitled to receive modified meals from the Program. You are required to provide those modified meals, provided the preparation of those meals does not cause your organization undue hardship. For children with disabilities and life threatening food allergies that require specially prepared meals, you should receive and have on file a physician's statement. This statement, as a minimum, should outline the child's disability or allergy, the major life activity affected by the disability or allergy, and the food or foods that should be omitted or substituted. This statement should also be signed by the licensed physician.

5. I keep hearing about "cycle menus" – what are they, and how do I set one up?

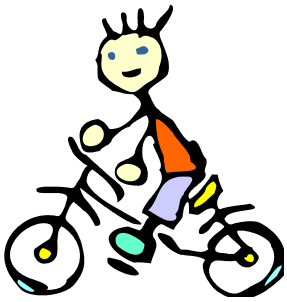
A cycle menu is a set of planned daily menus that are repeated in the same order for a period of time—usually 2, 3, or 4 weeks. The menu is different every day during the cycle. A cycle menu offers you variety and flexibility. Some of the things you can do to adjust a cycle menu is to replace foods that are not available; observe birthdays and other special occasions; introduce new foods or try new recipes; take advantage of seasonal foods or good buys, and use leftovers. A sample cycle menu can be found in this handbook.

6. How can I make mealtime more "fun" for the children I serve?

There are a lot of things you can do to make the eating experience a more pleasant one. The first thing to know is the children themselves. Each child reacts differently to different foods, and eats in his or her own way. Remember to never force a child to eat, and to give them enough time to eat. The environment you provide is important: a clean area with bright colors, age-appropriate seating, tables and utensils, and presenting attractive meals at the proper temperatures helps. Giving the children quiet time before meals and having them help clean up afterwards can also help children have a positive meal experience.

7. How can I "merchandise" my meals to the children?

You can do all sorts of things to make the children look forward to the meal service! Advertise the meal with posters and pictures or dress in costumes for a special occasion or activity. Adding "go-with" food items to standard menus, or serving ethnic foods are ways to "spice up" a meal as well as an opportunity for an education lesson. Serving a familiar food in a new way, or serving the meal in a different setting can also make mealtime fun! There are additional ideas for promoting your meals in this Part.



PART II — NUTRITION SERVICES

Food Service Staff

In this section, you will find information on:

- how to hire and manage the staff necessary to run your food service; and
- what you should do to prepare and train those staff members.

Selecting Staff

Sponsors who prepare meals on-site or in a central kitchen are responsible for choosing staff, including a food service manager, food production staff and general kitchen help. The number of food service employees will depend on the number and type of meals prepared. The following staffing schedule is provided as a guide for a Program serving lunches and snacks.

Number of Meals	Hours of Labor	Staff Needs
up to 50	6 to 8	1 full-time employee
51 to 100	8 to 10	1 full-time employee* 1 part-time employee**
101 to 200	12 to 20	2 full-time employees* 1 part-time employee**
201 to 300	20 to 24	3 full-time employees* 1 part-time employee**

* These full-time employees can be scheduled for only the hours they are needed and may not be required to work an 8-hour day.

** These part-time employees may be optional or as needed, based on menu requirements.

The range of hours for labor varies based on the skills of the food service employees and the convenience foods used in the menus. If the sites serve breakfast, add 1 hour of labor for each 50 breakfasts prepared. Sites require less time for labor when serving snacks than when serving breakfast or lunch.

- Determine the number of staff you will need. The type of employee and the amount of experience will vary with the duties each will perform.
- For the position of food service managers, consider someone with a food production or nutrition background with food service experience.

- Use qualified volunteers to help you operate the Program. Parents or supervisory adults may offer help during the service of the food. Parent involvement should be encouraged. They often see it as a benefit too!
- All food service employees should meet the health standards set by local and State health authorities.

Training Staff

Once you have selected your food service staff, plan to train them in Program operations. Introduce staff to each other and help them to understand:

- goals of SFSP;
- meal pattern requirements;
- importance of preparing nutritious meals that meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans;*
- food safety rules and sanitation guidelines;
- food production records;
- operation of food service equipment; and
- developing and following standardized recipes.

Develop a job description for each food service position. Job descriptions identify duties and responsibilities for each position. A sample position description for a cook is provided in the Reference Section.

Food production employees will have food preparation duties and must be shown how to fill out the necessary food production records. They must know how to use recipes and meet the necessary meal pattern requirements.

Other personnel will have food service or cleanup duties and responsibilities. Write down the requirements of the job and go over the schedule of activities.

Offer training on a formal or informal basis. Have regular meetings. Get input from your staff on an on-going basis. Encourage new ideas on how to improve the current menu, food production, and food service areas. Ask employees what they would like to see to make their jobs better.

Training Resources

Contact the State administering agency for training materials promoting nutrition education, food safety information, recipes, etc. Video packages are available for group training or self-study. Check the Information resources list provided in the Resource Section.

Food Purchasing and Receiving

In this section, you will find information on:

- where to buy your food;
- what food to buy and how much;
- how to use the Food Buying Guide; and
- receiving food from vendors.

Getting the most for the food dollar takes careful planning and buying. Careful use of food buying power will not only help control your food costs, but will also reduce waste and help upgrade the quality of meals.

Success in food buying depends on getting good-quality foods in the proper quantities at the best possible prices. The proper quantities of foods to buy depends on the number of children eating at the site, the menus and recipes you use, the amount and kind of storage space available, inventory on hand, perishability of the food, and the length of time the order covers. In addition to this guide, ask for a copy of USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (PA-1331) from your administering agency.

Where To Buy Foods

Consider where to buy foods:

- Find out which food companies (suppliers) in the area offer foods that will help you meet the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines, can supply foods you will use frequently, and will provide the services you require (prompt and frequent delivery, credit, discounts).

- Buy from suppliers who provide the best quality foods at the most reasonable prices.

- Follow a strict code of business ethics when you purchase foods for the Program. Know what the food suppliers expect, and let them know what you expect of them.

To help you decide what to buy:

- Read the label and be familiar with nutrients and ingredients.

- Buy federally inspected meats and poultry.

- Purchase only pasteurized milk and milk products that meet State and local standards.

- Purchase bread and bread products that are properly wrapped or kept in paper-lined containers with covers to keep them fresh and wholesome. Check dates on packages of bread and bread products to be sure that they are fresh.

- Purchase frozen foods that have been kept frozen solid. Do not accept delivery of frozen foods that are, or have been, thawed or partially thawed.

- Purchase perishable foods that have been kept under refrigeration.

Developing Food Specifications

A food specification is a detailed or specific list of the desired characteristics of a food product. How you plan to use the food determines both the form and quality that you should buy. Consider the product's style, size, count, container, and packing medium. Also, buy seasonally and locally to help keep food costs lower, e.g., farmers markets.

- Provide the supplier with clear specifications for each food item ordered.

- Upon delivery of the order, check to see that the food meets the specifications and is in good condition.

Specification Criteria

- Name of product or Standard of Identity

- Grade, brand, type

- Size of container

- Unit size

- Description

- Delivery requirements

- Sanitation conditions expected

- Provisions fair to seller and protective to buyer

- Tolerance level accepted

- Estimated product usage

- Condition of the product

Sample Specification Bid

Peaches, Cling

Purchase Unit: Number 10 can, 6 cans per case

Style: Halves, Slices

Type: Yellow, Cling

Grade: U.S. Grade B (Choice)

Count: 36-54 Halves

Packing Medium: Light Syrup

Net Weight: 108 ounces

Drained Weight: 66½ ounces

Yellow cling peaches should have reasonably uniform color that is practically free from any brown color due to oxidation. They should be reasonably uniform in size and symmetry and be reasonably free from defects such as blemished, broken, crushed units, and peel. Units should be reasonably tender and have texture typical of properly ripened fruits, not more than slight fraying.

Watch for: Off-color or wide-color variation. Excessive variation in size, symmetry, and thickness. Discoloration, excessive softness, or hard units. Crushed or broken pieces, presence of excessive loose pits, stems, and leaves.

For more in-depth information and a detailed guide to writing food specifications, you can order *Choice Plus: A Reference Guide for Foods and Ingredients* from the National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI). For contact information, see the Information Resources section, page 115.

How Much to Buy

- Review the cycle menu.
- Determine the recipes to use.
- Calculate the quantities of food you need to meet meal pattern portions.
- Compile the "grocery list" of foods and quantities you will need to buy.

- Check your inventory to determine what is on hand and subtract that from the list of foods to purchase.

- Keep in mind the size of the storage facilities and buy only the quantities of food that you can store properly.

- Buy only the products you need.

When to Buy Food

The following guidelines can help you decide when to buy each type of food.

- Buy bread, milk, and produce every day or every 2 days if storage allows.

- Buy perishable foods, such as meat, fish, poultry, and frozen foods, in quantities that can be stored in the refrigerator and freezer. Check the Refrigerated and Frozen Foods Chart in the Food Safety Section for length of time to keep perishables in the refrigerator or freezer.

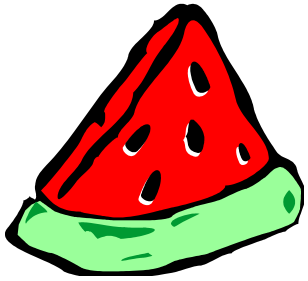
- Buy canned foods and staples monthly or twice a month if dry storage is available.

You will find Buying Calendars for Fresh Fruits and Fresh Vegetables featured in the Reference Section.

How To Use The Food Buying Guide

USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs,* PA-1331, has been designed to help determine quantities of food to purchase for use in preparing meals for children.

Use the *Food Buying Guide* and the following steps to determine how much food to buy:



1. Determine the serving size and the total number of servings needed for each food item as follows:

   For *meat, poultry, fish or cheese,* multiply the number of servings times the serving size (in ounces) to get total ounces needed.

   For *vegetables and fruits*, the *Food Buying Guide* lists amounts to buy based on ¼ cup servings. Therefore, to calculate the amount to purchase, convert your serving size to the number of ¼ cup servings. This is done by dividing the serving size by ¼ and then multiplying the result by the number of servings to get the total number of ¼ cup-servings needed. See examples below.

2. Divide the amount needed (total ounces of meat or total number of ¼ cup servings of the vegetable or fruit) by the number of servings per purchase unit (from column 3 of the *Food Buying Guide* for the food you want to use).

$$\frac{\text{Amount needed}}{\text{No. of servings per purchase unit}}$$

Example A: Canned-Sliced Cling Peaches

1. Serving size: ½ cup
   Number of servings: 50

2. Calculate the number of ¼ cup servings:
   ½ ÷ ¼ = 2 x 50 = 100 ¼ cup servings

3. $\frac{\text{Amount needed (no. of ¼ cup servings)}}{\text{Servings per purchase unit}}$ = 100 ÷ 47.5* = 2.1 cans

   * Servings per purchase unit is the number of servings per can = 47.5.

Example B: Carrot Sticks

1. Serving size: ¼ cup
   Number of servings: 50

2. No conversion is needed because the serving size is ¼ cup.

3. $\frac{\text{Amount needed (no. of ¼ cup servings)}}{\text{Servings per purchase unit}}$ = 50 ÷ 10.3* = 4.85 or 5 lbs.

   * Servings per purchase unit is the number of servings per pound = 10.3.

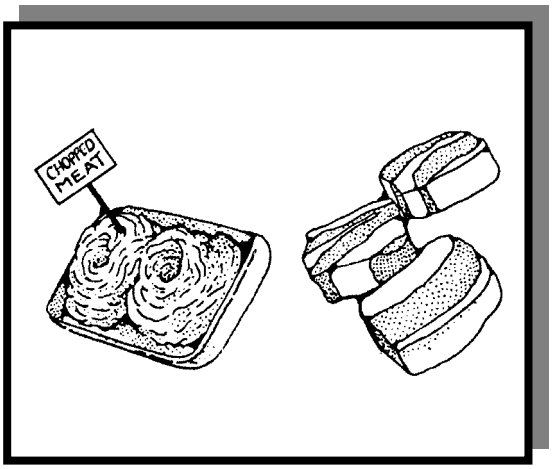
Example C: Ground Beef, market style, no more than 20% fat

1. Serving size: 1½ oz
   Number of servings: 50

2. Number of servings x serving size = total ounces needed
   50 servings x 1½ ounces = 75 ounces

3. $\frac{\text{Amount needed (total ounces)}}{\text{Servings per purchase unit}}$ = 75 ÷ 11.8* = 6.4 pounds

   * Servings per purchase unit is the number of 1 oz. servings per pound = 11.8.



Receiving Food

When receiving food deliveries from vendors, use the following guidelines:

- When the delivery truck arrives, make sure that it looks and smells clean, and is equipped with the proper food storage equipment.

- Examine all food upon delivery to be sure it is not spoiled, dirty, infested with insects, or opened.

- Do not accept foods that fail to meet your food specifications.

- Do not accept foods that are not on the order form or are in poor condition.

- Check the temperature of all refrigerated and frozen foods to ensure that they are within proper ranges.

- All perishable foods (milk, eggs, cheese, fresh meats, poultry, fish, lunch meats, etc.) should have either an expiration date or a "sell by" date on the packaging.

  ⇒ If the food has an expiration date, do not accept it if the date has passed.

  ⇒ If the food has a "sell by" date, check it to make sure that you will be able to use the product within a reasonable amount of time.

- Make sure that frozen foods are in airtight, moisture-proof wrappings.

- Do not accept foods that have been thawed and refrozen. Signs of this are large ice crystals, large areas of ice, or excessive ice in containers.

- Do not accept frozen foods that have started to thaw.

- Do not accept cans that have any of the following: no labels, swollen sides or ends, flawed seals or seams, dents or rust.

- Do not accept dairy, bakery and other foods delivered in flats or crates that are dirty.

- If applicable, check the manufacturer's "use by" or "best before" dates for non-perishable items to ensure that you will be able to use the products within a reasonable amount of time.

Food Service Quality

In this section, you will find information on:

- how to prepare foods;
- menu production records;
- how to work with quantity recipes; and
- common measures and portion control.

Food Production

Serving acceptable and nutritious foods depends not only on good planning, selection, and storage, but also on good food preparation using standardized recipes whenever possible. Determine how much food to prepare by (1) examining the menu (which shows the kinds of foods to prepare and the serving size of each), (2) determining the total number of children you will serve, and (3) becoming familiar with food yields (the number of servings you can obtain from a purchase unit). Charts in the Reference Section provide information on serving sizes, yield of servings, and yield of selected foods.

Tips for Food Preparation

- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables with water (no soap) and use a brush if necessary to remove soil. Trim carefully to conserve nutritive value. Remove damaged leaves, bruised spots, peels, and inedible parts. Use a sharp blade when trimming, cutting, or shredding to avoid further bruising and loss of nutrients.
- Steam or cook vegetables in small batches for best quality. Cook until tender-crisp, avoid over cooking, using as little water as possible to help retain vitamins and minerals.
- Add only a small amount of salt, if any, to water or to foods when cooking.
- Add only a small amount of salt, if any, to water or to foods when cooking.
- Cook potatoes in their skins to help retain their nutritive value.
- Trim visible fat from meats and meat products.
- Cook cereals and cereal grains according to cooking directions.
- There is no need to rinse or drain the cereals or cereal grains such as rice after cooking.
- Use seasonings sparingly. Think of children's tastes and preferences.
- Follow standardized recipes exactly. Measure and weigh ingredients precisely and follow procedures carefully. This includes using equipment, time, and temperature as specified in the recipe.
- Serve portion sizes as specified in the recipes and menus. Use correct serving utensils to portion foods.

Menu Production Records

Maintain *daily* menu production records to document the types and quantities of foods prepared to meet USDA requirements for the number of meals claimed for reimbursement. The Reference Section of this guide includes a sample Daily Menu Production Worksheet for this purpose and instructions for its use.

Using Standardized Recipes

A standardized recipe is a recipe that gives the same good results every time. It specifically describes the amount of ingredients and the method of preparation needed to produce a consistently high-quality product. A sample standardized recipe is included in the Reference Section. It specifies number of portions and sizes of serving utensils for correct portions.

Contact your State agency for copies of recipes for use in the Program. Other recipes from associations, the food industry, and reliable cookbooks may provide variations for you to use from time to time.

How to Use Quantity Recipes

To use quantity recipes properly, follow these steps:

1. Read the entire recipe carefully before beginning preparation and follow directions exactly.

2. Adjust the food quantities in the recipe to provide the number of servings you require.

3. Determine the amount of food needed for preparing the recipe. (Refer to the section on *How To Use the Food Buying Guide.*)

4. Collect the necessary utensils and ingredients.

5. Weigh and measure ingredients accurately. Weigh ingredients whenever possible since weighing is more accurate. If you must measure ingredients, use standard measuring equipment.

6. Follow directions carefully for combining ingredients and cooking the product.

7. Serve portion size according to recipe.

Abbreviations Used in Recipes

AP----as purchased	qt----quart
EP----edible portion	gal---gallon
Cyl---cylinder	oz----ounce
pkg---package	fl oz--fluid ounce
tsp---teaspoon	No.----number
Tbsp--tablespoon	wt----weight
lb----pound	incl--including
pt----pint	excl--excluding

Equivalent Measures

1 tablespoon	= 3 teaspoons	1 cup	= 16 tablespoons
1/8 cup	= 2 tablespoons or 1 fluid ounce	1/2 pint	= 1 cup or 8 fluid ounces
1/4 cup	= 4 tablespoons	1 pint	= 2 cups
1/3 cup	= 5 1/3 tablespoons	1 quart	= 4 cups
3/8 cup	= 6 tablespoons	1 gallon	= 4 quarts
1/2 cup	= 8 tablespoons	1 peck	= 8 quarts (dry)
2/3 cup	= 10 2/3 tablespoons	1 bushel	= 4 pecks
3/4 cup	= 12 tablespoons	1 pound	= 16 ounces

Portion Control

- Serve each meal as a unit.
- Serve all of the required food items in the proper amounts.
- Use proper serving utensils (Example: a #16 scoop makes a 1/4 cup serving).
- Train employees to recognize proper portion sizes.
- Provide a sample plate containing the proper amounts of food as an appealing example.

Measures for Portion Control

Scoops, ladles, and serving spoons of standard sizes provide dependable measures and help serve food quickly.

Scoops

The number of the scoop indicates the number of scoopfuls required to make 1 quart. The following table shows the level measure of each scoop in cups or tablespoons:

Scoop No.	Level Measure
6	2/3 cup
8	½ cup
10	3/8 cup
12	1/3 cup
16	¼ cup
20	3 1/3 tablespoons
24	2 2/3 tablespoons
30	2 tablespoons
40	1 2/3 tablespoons

Use scoops for portioning such foods as drop cookies, muffins, meat patties, and some vegetables and salads.

Ladles

Use ladles to serve soups, stews, sauces, and other similar products. The following sizes of ladles are most often used for serving meals:

Number on Ladle	Approximate Measure
1 fluid ounce	1/8 cup
2 ounces	¼ cup
4 ounces	½ cup
6 ounces	¾ cup
8 ounces	1 cup
12 ounces	1½ cups

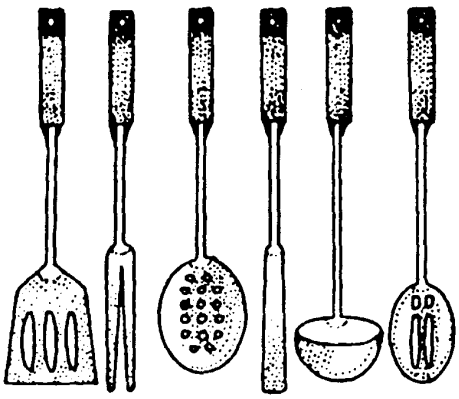
Serving Spoons

You could use a serving spoon (solid or perforated) instead of a scoop. Since these spoons are not identified by number, you must measure or weigh the quantity of food from the various sizes of spoons you use in order to obtain the approximate serving size you need. You may want to keep a list of the amount of food each size spoon holds as an aid for the staff serving the food.

Food Service

Even when food is ready to serve, food service staff must continue their efforts to maintain food quality and avoid food contamination.

- Maintain foods at proper temperatures before and during service. Hot foods must be 140 °F or above and cold foods must be at 41 °F or below. Use food thermometers to determine temperatures.
- Use correct serving utensils to get the correct portion size. Be consistent in portion sizes.
- Serve meals as a unit with only one meal served per child.
- Keep an accurate count of the number of children and adults you serve.
- Encourage a pleasant eating environment that will support mealtime as a learning experience.



Food Storage

In this section, you will find tips on:

- how to properly store your food; and
- how to keep food inventory records.

Storage Facilities

Good storage facilities – dry, frozen, and refrigerated – help keep food safe, fresh, and appetizing. Food products must be in excellent condition when they arrive at the receiving area. They must be kept that way as you store, prepare, and serve them.

Food must be kept dry and stored off the floor in dry storage areas. Cold refrigerated or frozen storage must maintain proper temperatures.

Guidelines for Proper Storage

- Examine all food upon delivery to be sure it is not spoiled, dirty, infested with insects or opened. Do not accept or use bulged or unlabeled cans. Do not accept frozen foods that have started to thaw. Send these items back.

- Store all food off the floor on clean racks, dollies, or other clean surfaces. Pallets and dollies should be at least 6 inches off the floor to permit cleaning under them.

- Keep storage rooms clean, sanitary, and free from rodent infestations. Clean on a rotating schedule.

- Protect foods such as flour, cereals, cornmeal, sugar, dry beans, and dry peas from rodents and insects by storing them in tightly covered containers.

- Use foods on a "first-in, first-out" basis. Arrange foods so that older supplies will be used first. Label shelves if necessary.

Food Inventory Records

Keep accurate and up-to-date inventory records which include:

- date you order the food
- name of the supplier
- date receive
- condition on arrival
- price paid
- amount left

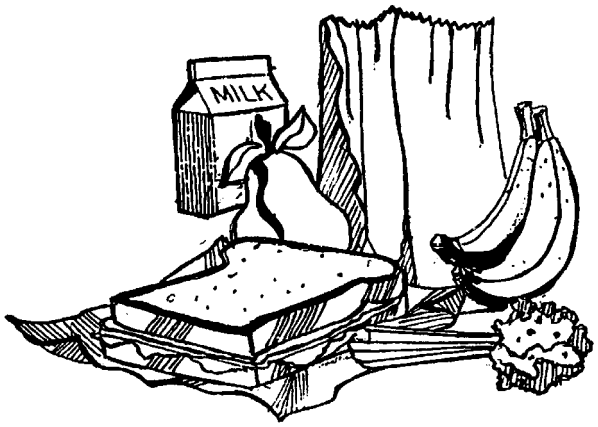
These records are helpful in planning future food purchases and menus. Records on the cost of food are important for claiming reimbursement.

A sample inventory form is provided in the Reference Section of this guide. Use this form as a guide for determining the value of foods used during a reporting period. This may be obtained by taking a physical count of foods on hand (closing inventory), obtaining the value of these foods from invoices, and calculating the total value of food on hand.

Quantity x Unit Cost = Total Value

Take an inventory of any stock you have on hand at the beginning of Program operations as "beginning inventory." Beginning inventory of a given period is the same as the ending inventory of the preceding period.

Cost of food used is the beginning inventory plus food received, minus the ending inventory. The dollar value of food received is obtained from the receipts or invoices for the reporting period. Report the cost of the food you **used**. Do *not* report the cost of all the food **purchased**.



Food Sanitation

In this section, you will find information on:

- some common-sense rules on food sanitation; and
- tips on dishwashing, cleaning, and sanitizing.

Sanitation ensures a safe and clean environment for serving food to children. Proper cleaning can reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

Food Sanitation Rules

Follow these rules:

- **Wash hands** thoroughly with soap and warm running water for 20 seconds before handling food or utensils. **Wash hands** after each visit to the restroom (this also applies to children).

- **Wash hands** and **sanitize** utensils, cutting boards, and work surfaces thoroughly after each contact with raw eggs, fish, meats, and poultry. **Sanitize** between use for raw and cooked, or use separate plates or equipment (See page 69 for how to sanitize).

- Thoroughly rinse with water all fresh fruits and vegetables before cooking or serving. Do not use soap, as it can leave residue.

- Properly **clean** and **sanitize** serving and cooking utensils, and equipment.

- Handle serving utensils and plates without touching the eating surface.

- Use disposable plastic gloves, as required by local health codes. Use gloves for only one task and throw away.

- Keep hands off face and hair. Wash hands if touched.

- Wear clean uniforms and hair restraints.

- Food service staff with open cuts, sores, colds, or other communicable diseases should not prepare or serve food.

- Properly **clean** and **sanitize** all food preparation and service areas; wipe up spilled food immediately.

- Empty garbage cans daily. They should be kept tightly covered and thoroughly cleaned. Use plastic or paper liners.

- Meet health standards set by your State and local health department.

Cleanup

Give careful attention to cleanup procedures following food preparation and service. If you use disposable ware (dishes, trays, utensils, glasses, etc.), promptly and carefully remove the disposable items from the site. If you use permanent ware, you must make sure to wash and sanitize them after each use.

Dishwashing Procedures

Whether washing dishes by hand or by machine, minimum procedures include the following:

- Scrape and pre-rinse before washing.
- Wash with detergent solution in hot water (100 °F to 120 °F if washing by hand; 150 °F if washing by machine).
- Rinse with clear, hot water between 120 °F to 140 °F.
- Sanitize with a final rinse of at least 170 °F for 30 seconds or a final rinse containing a chemical sanitizing agent.
- Air dry on a clean rack.
- Store in a clean area, protected from contamination.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

In addition to the cleanup of disposable or permanent ware, you must properly clean and sanitize food preparation and service areas (equipment, floors, etc.). A cleaning schedule should be part of the overall work schedule to assure that the site is cleaned regularly. If serving meals outdoors, clean picnic tables, serving tables, or cover with disposable table cloths.

What's the difference between cleaning and sanitizing? Cleaning is removing food, grease, sauces, dirt and dust, etc., from a surface generally with a detergent and water. **Sanitizing** is the reduction of bacteria and viruses that may be on a surface with a special solution. Household bleach is a sanitizer that is inexpensive and is approved by your local health department. Make sure to sanitize food preparation areas, tables, countertops, cutting boards, drying racks, and sinks.

How to Sanitize

1. **Mix 1.5 teaspoons to 1 tablespoon** (do not exceed 1 tablespoon) of bleach to one gallon of **warm** water. Label mixture in a spray bottle. For maximum effectiveness, mix fresh bleach solution every day. Any leftover solution should be discarded at the end of the day.

2. Clean surface with warm soapy water.

3. Rinse with water.

4. Spray with sanitizing solution and wipe with paper towel(s).

5. Air dry (no need to rinse off the sanitizing solution).

Food Safety

In this section, you will find information on:

- the importance of food safety;
- safe food temperatures;
- food borne illnesses and E. coli; and
- cooking with microwave ovens.

Importance of Food Safety

What is food borne illness? Food borne illness is sickness that is caused by certain forms of bacteria and other disease agents that are present in our environment. Food handling errors made in food service institutions or at home may also cause food borne illness.

Recent outbreaks of food borne illness have caused several children to get sick and even die from food containing *E. coli* bacteria. Read the *E. Coli Report* contained in this section. In general, children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those who have chronic illnesses, or compromised immune systems are most at risk for developing food borne illness. Proper food handling and cooking is the best way to prevent this from happening in your summer food service setting. If you suspect cases of food borne illness at your SFSP site(s), follow the procedures outlined in the Reference Section.

Keep Food Safe

Food borne illness is caused by bacteria that multiply rapidly within the Danger Zone (41 °F to 140 °F). It is important to keep food safe, that is, to keep the internal temperature of cooked foods that will be served hot at 140 °F or above. Foods served cold should be kept at 41 °F or below.

When cooking, using methods such as boiling, baking, frying, and roasting, internal temperatures of food need to reach 165 °F to kill bacteria that can cause food borne illness. Microwave heating requires the temperature to be 165 °F or higher. As soon as possible, but no longer than 2 hours after cooking, refrigerate (41 °F or less) leftovers in pans 2" deep or less to halt the growth of most, but not all, of the bacteria that may have contaminated the food after cooking. Never let perishable food remain any longer than necessary in the danger zone (41 °F to 140 °F). Freezing food at 0 °F or less can stop bacterial growth but will not kill bacteria that are already there. Reheat foods at or above 165 °F to kill the bacteria.

To prevent food contamination, be sure that everything that touches food during preparation and service is clean. Fresh fruits and vegetables also need to be clean. Wash fresh produce under cold running tap water to remove any lingering dirt. If there is a firm surface, such as on apples or potatoes, the surface can be scrubbed with a brush. Cut away any damaged or bruised areas. Use food thermometers while cooking,

holding, and serving food. Also, place appliance thermometers in the refrigerator and oven.

Using a Food Thermometer

Using a food thermometer is the only sure way to tell if the food has reached a high enough temperature to destroy harmful bacteria. Always check the temperature of foods to make sure that they are thoroughly cooked (see page 74 for minimum temperatures).

- Use a metal-stemmed, numerically scaled thermometer, accurate to plus or minus 2 °F.
- Sanitize the thermometer before each use with a sanitizing solution (see page 69).
- Check the food temperature in several places, especially in the thickest parts.
- To avoid getting a false reading, be careful not to let the thermometer touch the pan, bone, fat or gristle.
- For poultry, insert the tip into the thick part of the thigh next to the body.

For additional information, visit www.fsis.usda.gov/thermy/index.htm

The Danger Zone
Food Temperature and Bacterial Growth

	(Freezing) 0 - 32 °F	Some bacteria survive, but no growth occurs. Freezer should be set at 0 °F.
The Danger Zone	32 - 40 °F	Refrigerator temperature permits slow growth of some spoilage bacteria.
	41 - 60 °F	Some growth of food poisoning bacteria.
	60 - 125 °F	DANGER: Rapid growth of bacteria; some will produce toxin.
	125 - 140 °F	Many bacteria survive; some may grow.
	140 - 165 °F	High cooking and holding temperatures prevent most bacterial growth.
	165 - 212 °F	High temperatures destroy all known bacteria. Beware of toxins that may have already formed from improper handling.

MINIMUM INTERNAL COOKING TEMPERATURES

Now comes the part that is most important: the minimum INTERNAL temperatures that food must *reach* to be considered safe to eat, no matter how you prepare them.

Fresh ground beef, veal, lamb, pork …….……165 °F

Beef, veal, lamb-roasts, steaks, chops
- Medium rare…….145 °F
- Medium……160 °F
- Well done…….170 °F

Fresh pork-roasts, steaks, chops
- Medium……160 °F
- Well done…….170 °F

Ham
- Cook before eating……...……160 °F
- Fully cooked, to reheat…….140 °F

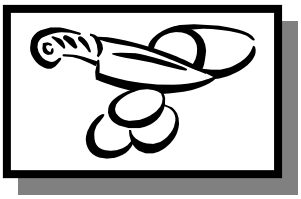
Poultry
- Ground Chicken, Turkey…….165 °F
- Whole Chicken, Turkey……...180 °F
- Breasts, roasts ……...…….170 °F
- Thighs and wings ……Cook until juices run clear

Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)…….165 °F

Egg dishes, casseroles …….160 °F

Leftovers (including micro-waved foods)……..……...165 °F

Resource: Food Safety and Inspection Service
United States Department of Agriculture



Common Foodborne Illness from Bacteria

Clostridium Perfringens	**Cause**: From undercooked, leftover, or poorly cooled meat products, bacteria grow in the danger zone when food is left out at room temperature or food is reheated and served again. **Symptoms**: In 8 to 24 hours, diarrhea and gas pains, ending within 1 day.
Salmonella	**Cause:** Poor hand washing practices after using the bathroom; undercooked poultry or raw eggs; use of improperly sanitized utensils used previously on raw meat, poultry, or other foods. **Symptoms:** In 12 to 36 hours, diarrhea, fever, and vomiting, ending in 2 to 7 days.
Staphylococcus Aureus (Staph)	**Cause:** Usually from food handlers who are sick. They may sneeze or cough or have skin infections that come in contact with food. **Symptoms**: Within 2 to 8 hours after eating, vomiting and diarrhea lasting about 1 to 2 days.
Campylobacter Jejuni	**Cause:** Drinking untreated or unpasteurized milk; or eating raw or undercooked meat, poultry, or shellfish; or pets become infected and spread it to others. **Symptoms:** In 2 to 5 days, severe, even bloody diarrhea, cramping, fever, and headache lasting 2 to 7 days.
Clostridium Botulinum	**Cause:** From dented cans, loose jar lids, poorly processed canned foods. **Symptoms**: Within 12 to 48 hours, the nervous system reacts (double vision, difficulty speaking, swallowing, droopy eyelids). **Can be fatal if not treated.**

E. Coli Report

According to USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS):

- Children under the age of 5 are particularly susceptible to *E. coli 0157:H7* bacteria.
- While the bacteria can be spread through food, it can also be transmitted by person-to-person contact. Adults or children with diarrhea caused by *E. coli 0157:H7*, can easily spread the illness to others. It only takes a few *E. coli 0157:H7* bacteria to make people sick.
- *E. coli 0157:H7* has been most frequently linked to improperly cooked ground beef, but it has also been found in a variety of other foods including unpasteurized milk, unpasteurized apple cider and vegetables. It has also been traced to a variety of sites other than restaurants.
- Approximately 5 percent of those who become ill as a result of *E. coli 0157:H7*, especially children, progress to a life-threatening blood disorder called hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). About 15 percent of these patients die or suffer chronic kidney failure.

From USDA/FSIS, Food Safety Education Branch

What You Can Do

Remember this: One symptom of *E. coli 0157:H7* food poisoning is bloody diarrhea. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) notes that young children and their playmates who are not toilet trained are especially likely to spread the infection. Medical treatment for the child is necessary. Consult the health department for advice on preventing the spread of infection if a child develops bloody diarrhea.

Proper hand washing procedures for both food preparers and children are extremely important. **For children:** careful hand washing with soap and warm water for 20 seconds will reduce the risk of spreading the infection. **For young children, frequent supervised hand washing with soap is particularly important. Children should always wash their hands before eating.**

For food preparers: wash your hands with warm soapy water for 20 seconds (count to 30) before you handle food or food utensils. Wash your hands after handling or preparing food, especially after handling raw meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, or eggs. Right after you prepare these raw foods, clean the utensils and surfaces you used with hot soapy water. Replace cutting boards once they have become worn or develop hard-to-clean grooves. Wash raw fruits and vegetables under running water before eating. Use a vegetable brush to remove surface dirt if necessary. Always wash your hands after using the restroom.

USDA is committed to ongoing modernizing and improving of the Federal inspection systems for meat and poultry, while the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has responsibility for seafood inspections and safety. However, since foods are not sterile and need to be handled with care at all links in the food safety chain, your help is needed to assure food safety.

Federal Government Food Safety Hotlines

Questions about food safety and sanitation?

For inquiries about meat and poultry:
Call **USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline** at
1-800-535-4555
202-720-3333 in the Washington DC Area
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, Eastern Time

For inquiries about food safety, nutrition, labeling, additives, and biotechnology:
Call: Food and Drug Administration,
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
Outreach Information Center
Toll free number
1-888- SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366)
10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, Eastern Time

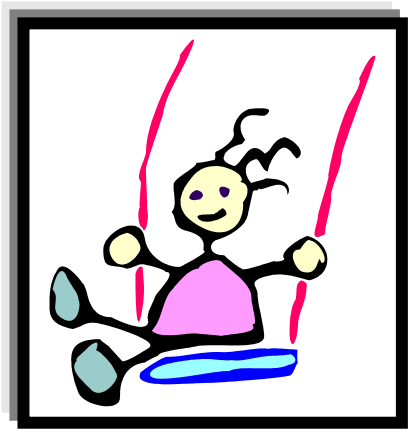
For inquiries about Seafood:
Call **FDA's Seafood Hotline** at
1-800-332-4010
202-205-4314 in the Washington DC Area
12 p.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays, Eastern Time.

Microwave Cooking

Some summer food service sponsors are making use of microwave cooking in kitchens. Microwave ovens heat the surfaces of food quickly, but leave food with "cold spots" that could support the growth of harmful bacteria. It is recommended that large cuts of meat **not** be prepared in the microwave.

It is important to become familiar with the manufacturer's information so that food cooks thoroughly and evenly in the microwave. In addition, follow these microwave safety tips:

- Cover food to hold in moisture, cook evenly, and keep microwave clean.
- If microwave does not have a turntable, stir food several times during heating.
- Allow food cooked in the microwave to stand covered for 2 minutes after heating.
- Check the internal temperature of food in several places to verify that food has reached a safe internal temperature:
  - ⇒ red meat: 160 °F
  - ⇒ whole poultry: 180 °F
  - ⇒ fish should flake with a fork
  - ⇒ leftovers: 165 °F



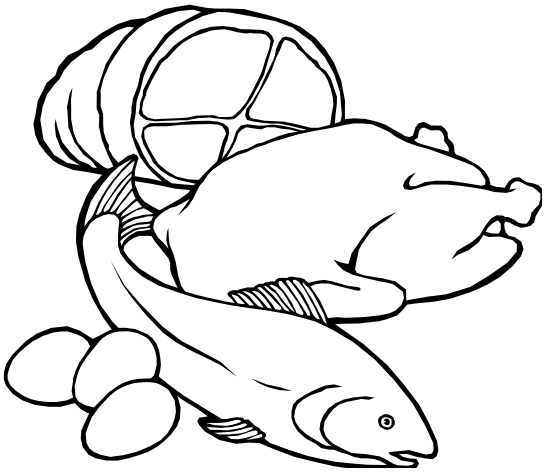
Storage Recommendations for Refrigerated Foods

Food Item	Refrigerator	Comments
Meat		
Roasts, steaks, chops	3 to 5 days	Wrap loosely
Ground and stewing	1 to 2 days	Wrap loosely
Variety meats	1 to 2 days	Wrap loosely
Whole ham	7 days	May wrap tightly
Half ham	3 to 5 days	May wrap tightly
Ham slices	3 to 5 days	May wrap tightly
Canned ham	1 year	Keep in can
Frankfurters	1 week	Original wrapping
Bacon	1 week	May wrap tightly
Luncheon meats	3 to 5 days	Wrap tightly when opened
Leftover Cooked Meats	1 to 2 days	Wrap or cover tightly
Gravy, Broth	1 to 2 days	Highly perishable
Poultry		
Whole chicken, turkey	1 to 2 days	Wrap loosely
Giblets	1 to 2 days	Wrap separate from bird
Stuffing	1 to 2 days	Covered container separate from bird
Chicken, turkey parts	1 to 2 days	Cover
Cut-up cooked poultry	3 to 4 days	Cover
Fish		
Fatty fish	1 to 2 days	Wrap loosely
Fish—not iced	1 to 2 days	Wrap loosely
Fish—iced	3 days	Don't bruise with ice
Eggs		
Eggs in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Do not wash. Remove from container
Leftover yolks/whites	2 to 4 days	Cover yolks with water
Dried eggs	1 year	Cover tightly
Reconstituted eggs	1 week	Same treatment as eggs in shell
Hard cooked	1 week	
Cooked Dishes with Eggs, Meat, Milk, Fish, Poultry	Serve day prepared	Highly perishable

Food Item	Refrigerator	Comments
Dairy Products		
Fluid milk	5 to 7 days after date on carton	Keep covered and in original container
Butter	2 weeks	Waxed cartons
Hard cheese (cheddar, Parmesan, Romano)	6 months	Cover tightly to preserve moisture
Cottage cheese	3 days	Cover tightly
Other soft cheeses	7 days	Cover tightly
Evaporated milk	1 year unopened	Refrigerate after opening
Dry milk (nonfat)	1 year unopened	Refrigerate after opening
Reconstituted dry milk	1 week	Treat as fluid milk
Yogurt	7-14 days	
Sour Cream	7-21 days	
Fruit		
Apples	2 weeks	Room temperature till ripe
Avocados	3 to 5 days	Room temperature till ripe
Bananas	3 to 5 days	Room temperature till ripe
Berries, cherries	2 to 5 days	Do not wash before refrigerating
Citrus	1 month	Original container
Cranberries	1 week	
Grapes	3 to 5 days	Room temperature till ripe
Pears	3 to 5 days	Room temperature till ripe
Pineapples	3 to 5 days	Refrigerate (lightly covered) after cutting
Plums	1 week	Do not wash before refrigerating
Vegetables		
Sweet potatoes, mature onions, squashes, rutabagas	1 to 2 weeks at room temperature 3 months at 60°F	Ventilated containers for onions
Potatoes	30 days	Ventilated containers
All other vegetables	5 days maximum for most; 2 weeks for cabbage, root vegetables	Unwashed for storage

Storage Recommendations for Frozen Foods

Food Item	Freezer	Food Item	Freezer
Meat		**Fruit**	8 – 12 months
Beef, ground and stewing	3 – 4 months	**Fruit Juice**	8 – 12 months
Pork, ground	1 – 3 months	**Vegetables**	8 months
Ham, hot dogs, bacon, luncheon meats	2 weeks (freezing not recommended)	**French-fried potatoes**	2 – 6 months
Leftover cooked meats	2 – 3 months	**Pre-cooked combination dishes**	2 – 6 months
Gravy, broth	2 – 3 months		
Sandwiches with meat filling	1 – 2 months	**Baked Goods**	
		Cakes, prebaked	4 – 9 months
Poultry		Cookies	6 – 12 months
Whole chicken, turkey, duck, goose	12 months	Yeast breads & rolls, prebaked	3 – 9 months
Giblets	3 months	Yeast breads & rolls, dough	1 – 1 ½ months
Cut-up cooked poultry	4 months		
Fish	6 months	**Ice Cream**	3 months



Keep These Food Safety Rules in Mind

- Keep hot foods HOT! (Keep food at 140 °F or above). Maintain proper holding temperatures of 140 °F or above.
- Keep cold foods COLD! (Refrigerate or chill food at 41 °F or below)
- Keep frozen food in a freezer at 0 °F or lower.
- Be sure thermometers are available and use them properly.
- Cook potentially hazardous foods to proper internal temperatures. Use a meat thermometer.
- Do not partially cook food one day and complete cooking the next day.
- Prepare sandwiches and salads with a minimum amount of handling. Follow local health regulations for using disposable plastic gloves.
- Promptly refrigerate or freeze leftovers. Divide large quantities into smaller containers or use shallow pans, and cover loosely for quick cooling. Once cooled, tightly cover and date leftovers.
- Reheat leftovers to at least 165 °F.
- Thaw poultry and meat in a refrigerator and not on counters. Refreeze only if ice crystals are still present.
- Do not let perishable food remain at room temperature between 41 °F and 140 °F any longer than possible.
- Keep meals and milk not being served at the time in the refrigerator or cooler at a temperature of 41 °F or below. Hot meals should be in a warming unit or insulated box at a holding temperature of 140 °F or more.
- Empty garbage cans daily. They should be kept tightly covered and thoroughly cleaned. Use plastic or paper liners.
- Remember that you cannot determine food safety by sight, taste, odor, or smell. If there is *any* doubt, throw the food away.
- Follow instructions exactly on how to use and clean kitchen equipment.
- Train food service employees on the safe use of all types of equipment and on personal hygiene.
- Keep a fire extinguisher and first-aid kit handy and instruct all personnel in their use.

Questions and Answers

1. I have to hire staff to operate the kitchen. What are some of the things I have to take into consideration?

Before you hire your meal service staff, you will have to first determine the number and the type of meals you will be serving. From there, you can determine how many staff you need to hire. Take into consideration their experience, and don't be afraid to utilize qualified volunteers in your operations. Also make sure they meet health standards outlined by your local and State authorities. Once you have selected your food service employees, ensure they understand, as a minimum, the goals of the SFSP, the meal pattern requirements, the importance of serving meals that meet the Dietary Guidelines and food safety and sanitation rules. You can contact your State administering agency for training resources.

2. I want to get the most for my food dollar. How can I accomplish that?

Careful planning and buying are the keys to getting the most from your food dollar. Getting good quality food in the proper amounts at the best possible price is what it's all about! Buy food from suppliers who provide the best quality product and offer food that will help you meet the Dietary Guidelines, and at a reasonable price. When deciding what to buy read the labels carefully, buy federally inspected meats and poultry, check packaging and expiration dates, purchase only pasteurized milk and milk products and make sure perishable foods have been kept under refrigeration and that frozen food has been kept frozen. Review your cycle menu to see what recipes you'll use and the items needed. Check your inventory and be sure to follow a grocery list when you make your purchases. USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* will help you determine the quantities of food to purchase.

3. Do you have any tips on how to prepare quality meals for the children?

How you prepare your food plays a big part in serving nutritious and acceptable meals. When using standardized recipes, follow them exactly. When preparing fresh fruits and vegetables, wash them in water and carefully trim away any bruised or inedible spots. Steam or cook in small batches to retain most of their vitamins and minerals. Trim visible fat from meats when preparing them for cooking. Don't overcook cereals and grains, and don't over-season foods - remember children's tastes and preferences.

4. How can I determine how much food to give to a child?

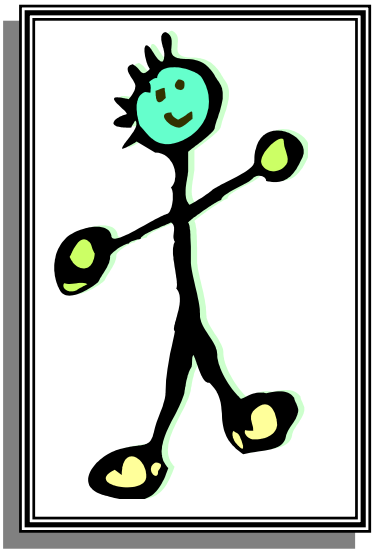
By using scoops, ladles, and serving spoons of standard sizes, you can provide dependable measures of food items which will ensure the children are getting the proper amount of food as outlined in the SFSP meal pattern requirements. Scoops can be used for portioning such foods as drop cookies, muffins, meat patties and also some ready to eat vegetables and salads. Use ladles to serve soups, stews, sauces and other similar products. Serving spoons can be used instead of a scoop. However, you must measure or weigh the quantity of food from the various sizes of spoons you use in order to determine the serving size you need. Further, train your kitchen staff to recognize and use the proper serving size spoons, scoops and ladles and provide a sample plate containing the proper amounts of foods for that day's meal service.

5. How should I store the foods I purchase?

Proper storage will keep the foods you buy safe, fresh, and appetizing. Check the condition of all foods once they reach your receiving area, and store them in the proper environment. Dry foods must be stored in a dry area, off of the floor, and refrigerated/frozen foods must be stored in refrigerators or freezers under the proper temperatures. It's important to keep all food storage areas orderly, clean, sanitary and free from rodent or insect infestation, and to rotate your foods on a "first-in, first out" basis. Keeping food inventory records will also help you in knowing what foods you have on hand, what you'll need to buy, as well as tracking food costs.

6. I want to be sure I maintain a clean kitchen. How can I accomplish this?

Proper sanitation will go a long way in preventing or reducing the risk of food borne illnesses. Washing hands thoroughly with warm, soapy water before handling foods or utensils is absolutely necessary. You should wash and sanitize all dishes, utensils, equipment and work surfaces. Wearing clean uniforms and hairnets, using disposable gloves, and adhering to local and state health codes are important things to keep in mind. Be sure to immediately clean up any spilled foods, and empty garbage cans daily. Make sure those cans have covers and are lined with plastic or paper.

7. Do I need to be concerned with food safety?

Yes! It is extremely important for you to take every precaution against food borne illness - a sickness spread by bacteria growing in food that has not been properly handled. Food stored, cooked, held, or handled at improper temperatures allow bacteria to grow to dangerous levels. The best way to combat food borne illness is to make sure foods are stored, handled, and cooked at the right temperature - making sure cold foods are kept cold (at or below 41 °F), and that hot foods are kept hot (at 140 °F or above). Never let perishable foods remain in the danger zone temperature (41 °F to 140 °F) any longer than necessary. Ensure that all food preparation surfaces and utensils are clean at all times, and use food thermometers to check foods when cooking, handling, and serving food. USDA has a Meat and Poultry Hotline (1-800-535-4555 or 202-720-3333) that you can call to get more information on food safety. The Food and Drug Administration also has two hotlines with regard to food safety: 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366), handled by the Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition; and the Seafood Hotline at 1-800-332-4010.