



## Menu Planning: Healthy Summer Meals

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to make sure that children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. SFSP can help children eat a variety of foods and beverages rich in nutrients. Because eating habits begin at a young age and because it is important that children receive healthy meals all year, here are some tips you can use to make SFSP meals healthier. These tips can go a long way in creating healthy habits for kids that can last a lifetime.

### Nutrition Tips

#### Go for whole grains

- Choose foods that name a whole-grain ingredient *first* on the list. For example, “whole wheat,” “brown rice,” “oatmeal,” “whole oats,” “whole rye,” “whole-grain cornmeal,” “bulgur,” “buckwheat” or “wild rice.”
- Remember whole-grains cannot be identified based on the color of the food. Read the nutrition facts label and ingredient list to choose whole-grain foods.
- Make simple switches by substituting a whole-grain product for a refined-grain product. For example, try 100% whole-wheat bread in place of white bread.
- Try whole-wheat versions of grain products you already serve, such as brown rice or whole-wheat pasta.

#### Offer a rainbow of color

- Brighten meals by serving dark green, orange, yellow, red and purple fruits and vegetables.
- Buy fruits and vegetables that are in season when they are less expensive and at the peak of their flavor.
- Check the freezer aisle. Frozen vegetables are quick and easy to use and are just as nutritious as fresh vegetables.
- Stock up. Buy canned vegetables or canned fruit in water or 100% juice so you always have a supply on hand.
- Choose whole or cut-up fruit more often than fruit juice to get the added benefit of fiber.

#### Choose lower-fat foods

- Serve only low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk. Lower-fat dairy products have just as much calcium, potassium and other essential nutrients compared to whole-fat dairy products but with less fat.
- Offer a variety of protein foods in your menu. Choose lean or low-fat cuts of meat and poultry, or serve fish, beans (pinto, black, white beans, chickpeas, etc.) or nuts instead.



- Limit or avoid fried and pre-fried foods. Instead, offer baked, broiled or grilled chicken, fish or vegetables.

### **Offer unsweetened or naturally sweetened foods**

- Serve fruit as a naturally sweet desert.
- Use fruit to sweeten plain yogurt.
- Serve unflavored milk.
- Read the nutrition facts label to select food products lowest in sugar.

### **Avoid too much sodium**

- Limit or avoid processed meats (ex. deli/luncheon meats, hot dogs, etc.).
- Choose fresh foods which generally are lower in sodium. When using canned vegetables with added salt, rinse them before serving them.
- Use herbs to season foods instead of salt.
- Cut back on salt little by little so children’s taste buds will adjust and their taste for salt will lessen over time.
- Look for foods labeled “low sodium,” “reduced sodium,” or “no salt added.”

## **Menu and Snack Ideas**

Here are some sample menus to get you started:

### **Breakfast**

Sample menu 1:

- Whole-grain cereal
- Fat-free milk
- Fresh or frozen berries (no sugar added)

Sample menu 2:

- Whole-wheat English muffin
- Peanut butter
- Banana
- Fat-free milk

### **Lunch or Supper**

Sample menu 1:

- Southwest chicken wrap (whole-wheat tortilla wrap, chicken, lettuce, salsa)
- Black beans (no added fat)
- Pineapple chunks
- Fat-free milk



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### Sample menu 2:

- Whole-wheat pasta with tomato sauce
- Canned tuna
- Broccoli
- Seasoned peas
- Fat-free milk

### Snacks

Kids like to eat finger foods that are different shapes, colors, sizes, are fun and easy to pick-up and explore. They can be dipped in a sauce, offer new tastes and allow children to learn about new foods.

### Sample menu 1:

- Red and yellow pepper strips, carrots and cherry tomatoes
- Hummus
- Water

### Sample menu 2:

- Fat-free plain yogurt
- Fresh or frozen mango
- Whole-grain granola



Summer Food Rocks!

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You can also use the chart below to pick items from the various required food components when planning snacks:

<b>Meat or Meat Alternates</b>	<b>Vegetables</b>	<b>Fruits</b>	<b>100% Full-strength Juices</b>	<b>Grains and Breads</b> (Go for whole-grain)	<b>Dips and Sauces</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-fat or fat-free cheese cubes or sticks</li> <li>• Low-fat or fat-free yogurt</li> <li>• Peanut butter</li> <li>• Almond butter</li> <li>• Turkey rollups</li> <li>• Canned salmon or tuna</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Baby carrots</li> <li>• Celery sticks</li> <li>• Snow peas or snap peas</li> <li>• Bell pepper slices</li> <li>• Peas</li> <li>• Cauliflower</li> <li>• Yellow squash</li> <li>• Radishes</li> <li>• Cucumber</li> <li>• Cherry tomatoes</li> <li>• Tomato slices</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Corn</li> <li>• Turnip sticks</li> <li>• Zucchini sticks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bananas</li> <li>• Grapes</li> <li>• Orange or apple slices</li> <li>• Cubed watermelon, pineapple, honey dew or cantaloupe</li> <li>• Kiwi slices</li> <li>• Nectarines</li> <li>• Papaya</li> <li>• Berries</li> <li>• Pitted cherries</li> <li>• Peach or mango slices</li> <li>• Dried fruits (apricots, cranberries, prunes, raisins, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orange</li> <li>• Apple</li> <li>• Pineapple</li> <li>• Grape</li> <li>• Prune</li> <li>• Grapefruit</li> <li>• Tangerine</li> <li>• Grapefruit-orange</li> <li>• Tomato</li> <li>• Vegetable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pita bread triangles</li> <li>• Crackers</li> <li>• Baked tortilla chips</li> <li>• Graham crackers</li> <li>• Bagel bites</li> <li>• Low-fat Granola</li> <li>• Whole-grain cereals</li> <li>• Rice cakes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-fat or fat-free yogurt dip</li> <li>• Salsa</li> <li>• Guacamole</li> <li>• Cucumber sauce</li> <li>• Hummus</li> </ul>

### Age-Appropriate Meals

A sponsor may be pre-approved by his/her State agency to serve meal portion sizes that are appropriate for various age groups.

#### Infants

An infant's dietary needs are unique and may be more complicated than toddlers and older children. All meals served to infants must comply with the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) infant meal pattern requirements in Section 226.20(b) of the CACFP regulations. Your State agency can help you make sure that your meals comply with these requirements if you serve infants.



## Children 1 through 6 years old

A sponsor may offer smaller portion sizes to younger children by demonstrating to the State agency that he/she can control portion sizes and follow the CACFP age-appropriate meal pattern requirements for children in Section 226.20(c) of the CACFP regulations.

## Children 12 to 18 years old

Because teenagers have greater food needs, sponsors may serve adult-size portions to older children. Adult-size portions may be found in Section 226.20(c) of the CACFP regulations.

As a reminder, extra food, beyond the food needed to meet the meal pattern minimum requirements, may always be served to improve the nutrition of participating children.

## USDA Resources

### Regulations and Policies

- **SFSP Procurement standards, 7 CFR 225.17**  
[http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=b39b4490ac1b2ddf51e5ba68d268ef63&n=pt7.4.225&r=PART&ty=HTML#se7.4.225\\_117](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/retrieveECFR?gp=&SID=b39b4490ac1b2ddf51e5ba68d268ef63&n=pt7.4.225&r=PART&ty=HTML#se7.4.225_117)
- **CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements, 7 CFR 226.20**  
[http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?c=ecfr;sid=553783de6b03f54438b9832197592d52;rgn=div5;view=text;node=7%3A4.1.1.1.5;idno=7;cc=ecfr#se7.4.226\\_120](http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?c=ecfr;sid=553783de6b03f54438b9832197592d52;rgn=div5;view=text;node=7%3A4.1.1.1.5;idno=7;cc=ecfr#se7.4.226_120)

### Handbooks and Other Tools

- **Nutrition Guidance for Sponsors**  
This handbook made just for sponsors includes a summer menu checklist, record keeping worksheets, sample cycle menu, snack ideas.  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/NutritionGuide.pdf>
- **USDA What's Cooking? Recipe Bowl**  
A one-stop shop for recipes created for USDA food programs.  
<http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>
- **MyPlate Ten Tips Nutrition Education Series** provides high-quality and easy to follow tips for healthy eating. The tips are available in English and Spanish  
<http://choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html>
- **Healthy Meals Resource System**  
The Healthy Meals Resource System is an online information center for USDA Child Nutrition Programs. <http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/menu-planning/usda-food-commodity-resources>



## Summer Meals Toolkit

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- **Team Nutrition**

Find recipes, menu planning, food preparation, and nutrition materials in the Team Nutrition Library. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition>

### Toolkit Pages:

- **Menu Planning: How to Serve a Reimbursable Meal**  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cnd/SMT-ReimbursableMeal.pdf>
- **Menu Planning: Planning Your Menu**  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cnd/SMT-PlanningYourMenu.pdf>
- **Meal Service Best Practices**  
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/cnd/SMT-MealServiceBestPractices.pdf>

### Partner Organizations Resources

- **Smart Food Shopping** by We Can!  
Shopping for healthy foods is easier when you know what types of food to shop for in the store. This page includes tips on how to make shopping for healthier foods easier. <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/smart-food-shopping.htm>
- **We Can! Recipes** by We Can!  
Find healthy and culturally diverse recipes here:  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/tools-resources/nutrition.htm#recipes>
- **Healthy Snacks** by We Can!  
This resource includes a list of healthy, easy to put together snacks you can try out at your summer site.  
<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/downloads/hundredcalories.pdf>

### Additional Information

Sponsors and the general public should contact the appropriate State agency for additional guidance. State agencies should contact their FNS Regional Office for additional guidance.

List of FNS Regional Offices: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/fns-regional-offices>

List of State Agencies: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Contacts/StateDirectory.htm>

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