

What is a Reimbursable Meal?

The National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program are regulated by the United States Department of Agriculture. A complete meal, meeting nutrient content and portion size requirements, allows a school to receive benefits (money and USDA foods) and is referred to as a “a reimbursable meal.” School meals offer parents a convenient way to provide nutritious meals for their children at the lowest possible price.

The following are school meal components:

- Milk (fat-free or 1%, flavored milk or unflavored)
- Meat/meat alternate
- Bread/grains
- Fruit*
- Vegetables*

MAKE A MEAL



*Students are required to take 1/2 cup of a fruit or vegetable to make a meal at breakfast and lunch.

The most nutritious meals contain all of the components, however students have the option to decline items they do not want to eat, which is referred to as “Offer vs. Serve.” If students feel they don’t get enough to eat, make sure they understand they can take all components and the choices that are available to them. School nutrition staff are trained to help students build a reimbursable, balanced meal!

Breakfast	Lunch
<p>Schools are required to offer 4 items and students must select 3 of the items to make a meal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entree (2 items) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 2 grain OR ○ 1 grain and 1 meat/meat alternate • Fruit/Vegetable* • Milk <p>*Vegetables are not a required component at breakfast, but can be served in place of the required fruit component</p>	<p>Schools are required to offer 5 components and students are required to take 3 of the 5 components to make a meal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread/Grain • Meat/meat alternate • Fruit • Vegetable • Milk
<p><i>Examples a Reimbursable Breakfast</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg sandwich and 100% juice • Cereal, graham crackers, milk, and fruit 	<p><i>Examples of a Reimbursable Lunch</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chili, Cinnamon Roll, and orange wedges • Hamburger on bun, side salad, and milk

Age Groupings

There are different requirements for different age groups for certain components as outlined in the chart below. Each component and vegetable sub-group provides different nutrients students need for a healthy diet.

Breakfast and Lunch Meal Patterns

Amount of Food for a 5-Day Week (minimum daily)

Food Components	Breakfast Meal Pattern			Lunch Meal Pattern		
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruits (cups)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	2 ½ (½)	2 ½ (½)	5 (1)
Vegetables (cups)	0	0	0	3 ¾ (¾)	3 ¾ (¾)	5 (1)
Dark Green	0	0	0	½	½	½
Red/Orange	0	0	0	¾	¾	1 ¼
Beans/Peas (legumes)	0	0	0	½	½	½
Starchy	0	0	0	½	½	½
Other	0	0	0	1	1	1 ½
Additional Vegetables (to reach total)	0	0	0	1	1	1 ½
Grains (oz eq)	7-10 (1)	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	8-9 (1)	8-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Meat/Meat Alternate (oz)	0	0	0	8-10 (1)	9-10 (1)	10-12 (2)
Fluid Milk (cup)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)	5 (1)
Min-max calories (kcal)	350-500	400-550	450-600	550-650	600-700	750-850
Saturated Fact (% of total calories)	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10	<10
Sodium	≤540	≤600	≤640	≤1,230	≤1,360	≤1,420
Trans fat	0	0	0	0	0	0

School Nutrition Contact Information:

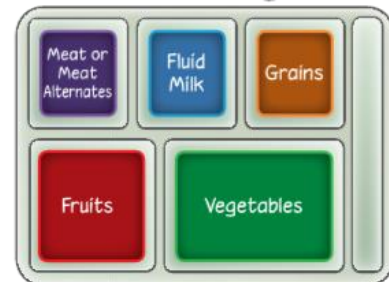
Webpage:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

Social Media:



Resources/References

- [School Nutrition Programs](#): In Iowa, the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs are administered by the Iowa Department of Education.
- [School Meal Communications Tools](#): Iowa Department of Education has a collection of tools to communicate to parents, staff, and students about school nutrition programs.
- [USDA Nutrition Standards for School Meals](#): provides regulation, policy memos, and technical assistance and guidance materials.

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