

GRAB AND GO LESSON

Breastmilk and Infant Formula

Compliance | CACFP Meal Pattern

Purpose: This handout provides a review the CACFP requirements for serving breastmilk and infant formula.

Good nutrition is necessary for a child's overall healthy growth and development during infancy. When infants are provided with good sources of nutrients, the risk of illness decreases tremendously. Infants who receive good nutrition during the first year are less likely to experience childhood obesity as they age. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) recognizes the importance of good nutrition during the first year and promotes it by outlining ways for serving breastmilk and infant formula.

Breastmilk

Breastmilk is the best food for infants. It contains the optimal source of nutrients for healthy growth and development. Generally, it is the only source needed for healthy growth and development during the first six months of life. As a result, breastmilk or infant formula is the only required food component for infants from birth through the end of five months. You may also serve breastmilk to children of all ages as part of a reimbursable meal.

The CACFP infant meal pattern promotes breastfeeding by allowing a parent or guardian to provide expressed milk and by allowing a mother to breastfeed her infant on-site. If a mother chooses to breastfeed her infant on-site, you may claim reimbursement for the meal. When recording these meals, you may write on the menu that the infant was offered breastmilk. For example, writing "breastfed on-site," "mother on-site," or similar statements to indicate a mother breastfed her infant. For the best way to report the infant was breastfed, refer to your State agency or sponsoring organization.

As you are feeding expressed milk to infants, always feed on demand and not a strict schedule. Feed infants during a time that is consistent with their eating habits. You may find that some infants consume less than the minimum serving size of 4 to 6 ounces of breastmilk. In these cases, avoid force-feeding the infant. In situations where there are leftovers, always properly store the breastmilk based on your local health and safety requirements.

Formula

Iron-fortified formula is the most appropriate alternative for breastmilk. The choice of formula is a decision made by the parent or guardian and the infant's doctor. As a child care provider, you must offer at least one type of formula that meets that CACFP requirements.

All infant formula must be regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to be creditable in the CACFP. The FDA regulates any iron-fortified infant formula purchased in stores in the U.S. The FDA may not regulate formula purchased outside the U.S., and these may not be creditable in the CACFP. In addition to being regulated by the FDA, the formula must:

- List "iron-fortified infant formula" or a similar statement on the front of the package. All iron-fortified infant formula must have this type of statement on the package.
- List 1 milligram of iron per 100 calories on the Nutrition Facts label.
- Not be a Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Exempt Infant Formula. These types of formulas are labeled explicitly for infants who have inborn errors of metabolism or low birth weight, or another unusual medical or dietary need.

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When serving formula, some infants may not consume the entire serving. As long as you offer the minimum serving size, the meal is reimbursable. In situations where there are leftovers, always properly store the formula based on your local health and safety requirements.

Special Nutritional Needs

Some infants may not be able to consume certain foods due to a disability. In these situations, you must make accommodations. For example, if an infant has a disability that doesn't allow him to consume iron-fortified formula, you will need to make accommodations.

You will need a written medical statement signed by a recognized medical authority, such as a physician, who is authorized to write medical prescriptions under State law. The medical statement should feature:

- Enough information about the disability for you to fully understand how it affects the infant's diet
- Recommendations of alternate food items to ensure you know what you can serve to the infant

If the meal modification aligns with the meal pattern, then a medical statement is not required. For example, an infant is allergic to apples. Instead of serving apples, you could serve another fruit in its place. This type of meal modification would not require a medical statement because the alternative meets the meal pattern requirements.

As you serve breastmilk and infant formula to infants, record each meal or snack on the appropriate forms. For additional information, contact your State agency or sponsor.

References

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2019). *CACFP meal pattern requirements training*. University, MS: Author.

U.S. Department of Agriculture/Food and Nutrition Service. (2020). *Child and Adult Care Food Program*. <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/child-and-adult-care-food-program>

World Health Organization. (2018). *Session 1: The importance of infant and young child feeding and recommended practices [Report]*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK148967/>

This project was funded using U.S. Department of Agriculture grant funds. The USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

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For more information and the nondiscrimination statement in other languages:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/cr/fns-nondiscrimination-statement>

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Suggested Reference Citation:

Institute of Child Nutrition. (2020). *Grab and go lesson: Breastmilk and infant formula*. University, MS: Author.

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