

Manager's Corner

Menu Substitutions for Vegetables

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Improve the operation of child nutrition programs through research, education and training, and information dissemination.

VISION

Lead the nation in providing research, education, and resources to promote excellence in child nutrition programs.

MISSION

Provide relevant research-based information and services that advance the continuous improvement of child nutrition programs.

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Table of Contents

Professional Standards	1
Introduction	1
Lesson Overview.....	2
Questions for Staff.....	2
Activity: Menu Substitution	3
References.....	7

Manager's Corner: Menu Substitutions for Vegetables

Professional Standards

MENU PLANNING – 1100

Employee will be able to effectively and efficiently plan and prepare standardized recipes, cycle menus, and meals, including the use of USDA Foods, to meet all Federal school nutrition program requirements, including the proper meal components.

1150 – Menu Analysis

Analyze menus for school meal pattern requirements.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: Menu Substitutions for Vegetables is designed to empower managers to use in training their staff. Each lesson is roughly 15 minutes. This lesson plan contains:

- Learning objective
- Statement explaining the importance of the topic
- List of materials
- Instructions on how to present the information
- Questions to ask staff
- An activity to strengthen or refresh the knowledge of the staff

Lesson Overview

Instructions for lesson:

- Review the lesson objective and background information.
- Review why it is important.
- Ask staff the questions.
- Facilitate the activity outlined.
- Provide time for staff to ask questions.

Objective: Identify menu substitutions for the vegetable component that meet meal pattern requirements.

Background information: Menu substitutions may be needed for a variety of reasons. Staff must ensure both the daily and weekly minimum of vegetables being offered is met to ensure reimbursable meal pattern compliance.

Why it is important: By having an understanding of the vegetable requirements, staff can effectively make menu substitutions that meet meal pattern requirements.

Questions for Staff

What are some reasons you may need to make a menu substitution?

Possible Answers:

- A vendor did not deliver the product that was ordered.
- A recall has been issued due to food safety concerns.
- The vendor is late due to inclement weather and will not arrive on time.
- The product delivered was of poor quality and needed to be rejected.

Are you required to replace the menu item with another item within the same vegetable subcategory?

Answer:

- Menu items can be replaced with another item that is not within the same subgroup, so long as both the daily and weekly minimums are met.
 - For the menu to be within the regulations, it must meet both the daily and the weekly minimum of vegetables being offered. The daily minimum refers to the total amount of creditable servings of vegetables on the menu each day. The weekly minimum is broken into two parts; the total creditable servings from each subgroup on the menu as well as the total serving amount of creditable servings, from all subgroups, offered during the week.

What is the daily minimum and weekly serving amount for (select age group appropriate for your serving site) K-5th grade, 6-8th grade, and 9th-12th grade?

- K-5th grade- Daily $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup, Weekly 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ Cups
- 6th-8th grade- Daily $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup, Weekly 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ Cups
- 9th-12th grade- Daily 1 Cup, Weekly 5 Cups

Activity: Menu Substitution

Activity materials included in this document:

- **Menu Substitution** (handout and worksheet)

Materials provided by the school nutrition operation:

- Copies of handouts
- Writing utensils

Activity Instructions:

- Print the handouts and worksheets.
- Individually or in teams, complete the activity worksheet.
- Participants are asked to complete the activity based on the scenario provided.

Menu Substitution

Instructions: In this activity, you will practice your ability to identify appropriate vegetable substitutions based on the scenario provided. You will be provided with a planned menu, a scenario outlining the circumstances requiring the need to make menu substitutions, a list of items that are in your inventory as well as a list of items that will not be delivered in time for meal service, and a vegetable subgroup reference chart. Your task is to make sure your menu meets meal pattern compliance by identifying which items your site will not be able to serve and replacing those items with appropriate substitutions. There are multiple answers to this activity; the objective is to make sure the site meets daily and weekly meal pattern contributions for both total numbers of servings and subgroups minimum servings.

Note: The foods on-hand and the foods that will not be received yield the same number of servings.

Scenario:

Due to inclement weather, your site will not receive the weekly fresh produce delivery, scheduled for Monday morning. The next delivery to your site will be at 5 A.M. on Thursday morning. You will need to identify menu substitutions for Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday.

Menu Planning Worksheet: K-5 Elementary School

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Weekly Total
Vegetable:	¾ cup daily	¾ cup daily	¾ cup daily	¾ cup daily	¾ cup daily	3¾ cups weekly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dark/Green ½ cup weekly 	½ C Fresh Spinach	½ C Chopped Romaine Lettuce	½ C Green Leaf Lettuce	½ C Roasted Broccoli	½ C Sautéed Kale	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red/Orange ¾ cup weekly 	½ C Baby Carrots	½ C Roasted Acorn Squash	½ C Red Pepper Slices		½ C Cherry Tomatoes	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beans, Peas (Legumes) ½ cup weekly 	¼ C Garbanzo Beans		¼ C Edamame	¼ C Black Beans		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starchy ½ cup weekly 	½ C Corn on the Cob- Fresh	¼ C Jicama Sticks		½ C Roasted Red Potatoes	¼ C Steamed (Frozen) Corn	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other ½ cup weekly 		¼ C Cucumber Slices	¼ C Zucchini Sticks	¼ C Fresh Cauliflower Florets	¼ C Celery Sticks	
Daily Total						

Food Items that you will not receive on Monday	Food items on-hand that you may use
Baby Carrots	Broccoli Florets – Frozen
Corn on the Cob	Butternut Squash – Frozen
Cucumbers	Green Beans – Canned
Fresh Spinach	Green Peas – Frozen
Jicama	Russet Potatoes
Red Bell Peppers	Spinach – Frozen
Romaine Lettuce	Sweet Potatoes

Vegetable Subgroup Chart

Dark Green	Red/Orange	Starchy	Legume	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bok choy • Broccoli • Collard greens* • Dark green leafy lettuce* • Kale* • Mesclun* • Mustard greens • Romaine lettuce* • Spinach* • Turnip greens* • Watercress* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acorn squash • Butternut squash • Carrots • Hubbard squash • Pumpkin • Red peppers • Sweet potatoes • Tomatoes • Tomato juice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cassava • Corn • Fresh cowpeas, field peas, or black-eyed peas (not dry) • Green bananas • Green peas • Green lima beans • Jicama • Potatoes • Taro • Water chestnuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black beans • Black-eyed peas (mature, dry) • Edamame (immature soy beans) • Garbanzo beans (chickpeas) • Kidney beans • Lentils • Navy beans • Pinto beans • Soy beans • Split peas • White beans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artichokes • Asparagus • Avocado • Beets • Brussels sprouts • Cabbage • Cauliflower • Celery • Cucumbers • Eggplant • Green beans • Green bell peppers • Iceberg (head) lettuce* • Mushrooms • Okra • Onions • Turnips • Wax beans • Zucchini

* Raw leafy greens (including iceberg lettuce) credit at half the volume- 1-cup servings credits as ½ cup. Cooked leafy greens credit at the volume served, ½ cup cooked credits a ½ cup.

** Beans and peas (legumes) are a special subgroup. They can credit toward the vegetables or meat/meat alternative component. A menu item containing beans and peas (legumes) can only credit toward one meal component *not* both. However, a school may offer two distinct servings of beans and peas (legumes) in one meal, if they are contained in two separate dishes

Menu Substitution

On occasion, forces outside of your control may require you to identify a menu substitution. When making a menu substitution, it is important to ensure the change complies with meal pattern requirements. It is equally important to make sure the substitution is compatible and complementary to the rest of the menu. Vegetables can be one of the more common meal components that may need to be replaced.

The Dietary Guidelines specify that healthy eating patterns include a variety of vegetables from all of the five vegetable subgroups—dark green, red/orange, legumes (beans and peas), starchy, and other. The National School Lunch Program meal patterns reflect this guidance. Vegetables are important sources of many nutrients, including dietary fiber, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin K, copper, magnesium, vitamin E, vitamin B6, folate, iron, manganese, thiamin, niacin, and choline.

Each of the vegetable subgroups contributes different combinations of nutrients, making it important for individuals to consume vegetables from all the subgroups.

Here are six ways to make sure your menu meets meal pattern requirements:

- At lunch, provide $\frac{3}{4}$ cup daily for grades K-5 and 6-8 and 1 cup daily for grades 9-12.
- Meet subgroup weekly requirements across the menu week.
- The smallest creditable amount for the vegetables component is $\frac{1}{8}$ cup.
- Credit raw leafy greens at half the volume.
- Credit beans and peas (legumes) as legumes subgroup or as meat/meat alternate, but not both for the same menu item.
- Limit 100% vegetable juice to half or less of vegetables component weekly, including vegetables credited in smoothies.

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