

Manager's Corner

School Meals Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements

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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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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.

1110 – Nutrition Requirements

Plan menus that meet USDA nutrition requirements for reimbursable meals, including calculating meal components.

Introduction

Manager's Corner: School Meals Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements 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 meats/meat alternates (M/MA) component requirements for a reimbursable school lunch.

Background information: Meats/meat alternates is a required lunch component but not at breakfast.

Why it is important: It is important to correctly identify and understand the M/MA requirements in order to meet daily and weekly standards for a reimbursable meal.

Questions for Staff

- **What foods are part of the M/MA component?**

Answer: Foods that are considered to be creditable for the M/MA component include - cooked, skinless, canned, and unbreaded portion of beef, fish, pork, or poultry. Meat alternates that are creditable are tofu, yogurt, cheese, eggs, dry beans or peas, and cooked beans.

Additionally, nuts and seeds, such as sunflower seeds, almonds, walnuts, and hazelnuts, as well as nut and seed butters, like almond butter, cashew nut butter, peanut butter, reduced-fat peanut butter, sesame seed butter, soy nut butter, and sunflower seed butter, are creditable for the M/MA component. In order for a food to contribute to the M/MA component, it must contain a minimum of 0.25 oz of a M/MA.

- **When are M/MA components required to be served?**

Answer: The M/MA component is only required to be served at lunch.

- **What are the minimum daily and weekly M/MA component requirements for lunch?**

Answer: M/MA have both daily and weekly required minimum serving amounts for lunch. The daily required minimum serving amounts vary by grade group. The chart below summarizes daily and weekly minimum requirements.

Reimbursable Lunch Meats/Meat Alternates Component		
Grades	Daily Minimum Requirements	Weekly Minimum Requirements
K-5	1 ounce equivalent	8-10 ounce equivalents
6-8	1 ounce equivalent	9-10 ounce equivalents
9-12	2 ounce equivalents	10-12 ounce equivalents

- **Can cooked, skinless, and unbreaded portion of beef, fish, or poultry, as well as cheese, eggs, and cooked legumes be used to meet the whole M/MA component requirement?**

Answer: Yes, cooked, skinless, canned, and unbreaded portion of beef, fish, pork, or poultry can be used to meet the entire M/MA component requirement. One ounce of cooked, skinless, and unbreaded portion of beef, fish, or poultry equals one ounce of the M/MA component requirement. Additionally, a one-ounce portion of cheese credits as one-ounce meat/meat alternate equivalent.

Eggs may be used to meet the entire or partial requirement for the M/MA component. Whole eggs are expressed in large egg equivalents (1 large egg = 2 oz equivalent meat alternate) and ½ large egg equivalent (½ large egg = 1 oz equivalent meat alternate). A ¼ cup of cooked legumes must be served to equal one ounce of M/MA.

- **Can nuts and seeds be used to meet the whole M/MA component requirement?**

Answer: No, nuts and seeds may be used to meet no more than one-half of the M/MA component requirements. In order to meet the full requirements, it must be combined with another M/MA food item.

- **Can nut and seed butters be used to meet the whole M/MA component requirement?**

Answer: Yes, nut and seed butters can be used to meet the whole or partial requirement of the M/MA component. The meal pattern states that two tablespoons of nut or seed butter equal one ounce of the M/MA component.

- **What criteria determines tofu's creditability for the M/MA component for a reimbursable lunch?**

Answer: Commercially prepared tofu must be 2.2 ounces (by weight) with at least five or more grams of protein to equal one ounce of the M/MA component requirement. Tofu should be easily recognizable as a meat substitute.

- **What criteria determines yogurt's creditability for the M/MA component for a reimbursable lunch?**

Answer: Commercially prepared plain, flavored, unsweetened, or sweetened yogurt may be used to meet the entire M/MA component. Four ounces (by weight) or ½ cup (by volume) of soy or dairy yogurt is equal to one ounce of the M/MA requirement.

- **Are dry mature beans/peas credited as a M/MA component or vegetable component?**

Answer: Dry mature beans/peas may be credited as either an M/MA component or a vegetable component. However, a serving of the same type of beans or peas may not be counted towards both components in the same meal.

Activity: Meats/Meat Alternates Requirements

Activity materials included in this document:

- **School Meals Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements**
- **School Meals Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements Answer Key**

Materials provided by the school nutrition operation:

- ICN Meal Plan Mini Posters Meat/Alternative Requirements (located at <https://theicn.org/icn-resources/>). Select Meal Pattern Mini-Posters and choose the mini-poster from the listing. Copies of handouts
- Pens/Pencils

Activity Instructions:

- Print the handouts and worksheets.
- Distribute handouts and pens/pencils.
- Ask staff to complete the **School Meals Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements** using the ICN Meal Plan Mini Posters Meat/Alternative Requirements mini-poster.
- At the conclusion of the activity, review the **School Meals Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements Answer Key**.

School Meals Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements

Instructions: Using the **ICN Meal Plan Mini Posters Meat/Alternative Requirements** mini-poster answer the following questions.

Are Meats/Meat Alternates a required component for school breakfast and lunch? Why or why not?

Do all grade levels have the same daily meats/meat alternates requirements for a reimbursable lunch? If different, how so?

Do all grade levels have the same weekly meats/meat alternates requirements for a reimbursable lunch? If different, how so?

School Meals Meats/Meat Alternates Component Requirements Answer Key

Instructions: Using the **ICN Meal Plan Mini Posters Meat/Alternative Requirements** mini-poster, answer the following questions.

Are Meats/Meat Alternates a required component for school breakfast and school lunch?

No, the Meats/Meat Alternates component is only required for a reimbursable school lunch. Meats/Meat Alternates may be included as an item for breakfast but are not a required component at breakfast.

Do all grade levels have the same daily meats/meat alternates requirements for a reimbursable lunch?

No, grades K-8 are required to serve 1-ounce equivalent per day for lunch, while Grades 9-12 are required to be served 2-ounce equivalents per day for lunch. School meals daily requirements are determined by the grade levels.

Do all grade levels have the same weekly meats/meat alternates requirements for a reimbursable lunch?

No, grades K-8 are required to serve 8-10 ounce equivalents per week for lunch. Grades 9-12 are required to serve 10-12 ounce equivalents for lunch. School meals weekly requirements are determined by the grade levels.

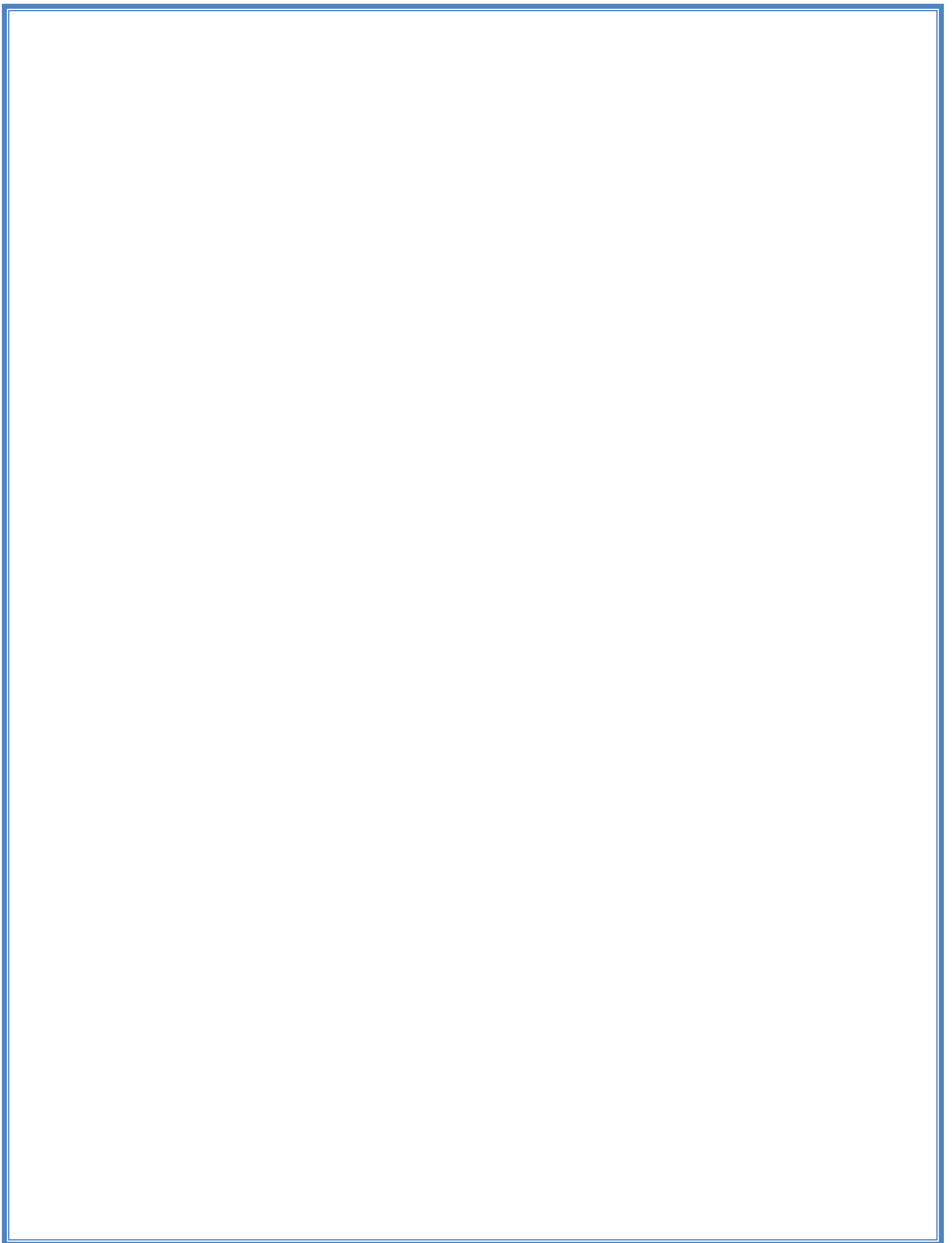
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