



Mealtime Memo

for Child Care

What About Those Fabulous Fruits

Fruits have always been a part of the CACFP Meal Pattern, but the updated meal pattern separates the fruits from the vegetables. They are no longer considered one component. Separating the fruits from the vegetables will help increase the variety and the consumption of both. Fruits and vegetables can be offered at lunch and supper, as well as a snack.

Fruits are sweet, beautiful in color, and generally appeal to children. All forms of fruit matter. They provide texture, as well as fiber. Fruit tastes great and provides many nutrients that will help a child's body to grow. Fruits are naturally low in calories and provide nutrients such as potassium, folate, and magnesium.

Taking children to a farm to show them where food comes from is an added value. Perhaps the children will get to see strawberries, blueberries, or watermelons being grown. This is a great time to share with the children that some fruits grow on a vine, some grow in a tree, and some grow on the ground. Teaching children how fruit is grown helps them connect the cycle of fruit to table. To help them get a better understanding of the growth cycle of fruit, have children plant seeds outside (or inside). Choose fruit that grows on a vine or a plant and will mature quickly. After the growth of the fruit, have the children eat what they have grown. It is a great experience they will never forget, and they may choose to continue to grow fruit, as well as other foods as they get older.

Let's talk about the CACFP requirement for serving fruit juice. Juice has essential nutrients; however, it does not contain fiber. Any juice must be pasteurized and full strength. It must be a 100% fruit or vegetable blend or juice or puree. Juice may be served only one time per day and may be used to meet the vegetable or fruit requirement at one meal per day, including snack. If a child is served juice at breakfast, the juice takes the place of the fruit or vegetable component you would normally serve at that meal. It will credit to the food component (vegetable or fruit) that has the larger amount of juice or puree. For example, if it has more fruits than vegetables, then it would credit as a fruit. If it has more vegetables than fruit, it would credit as a vegetable. Infants can no longer be served juice.



Options for offering fruit at breakfast, lunch, or snack (3-5 years old)

Breakfast	Lunch	Snack
Serving Size ½ cup	Serving Size ¼ cup	Serving Size ½ cup
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May use fruit only (½ c serving size) Or Portions of fruits and vegetables (¼ c each) If serving fruit juice, the juice may only be used one time per day so this would be the only occasion to serve juice for that day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May serve ¼ c fruit (this would be with ¼ c vegetables) Or You have the option to serve two different vegetables and not serve fruit at all. The serving size would be ¼ c each. This would be ½ c total, which meets the requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fruit ½ c Juice is limited to one serving per day against all meals. Fruits and vegetables are encouraged to be used as snack items.

High sources of fiber contains 5 grams or more fiber



Apples



Blackberries



Pears



Raspberries

Good sources of fiber contain at least 2.5 grams but less than 5 grams fiber



Bananas



Blueberries



Dates



Figs - regular



Figs - dried



Guavas



Kiwifruit



Oranges

Meal time is a good time to talk about fruits, the nutrients they provide, and what the nutrients do for the body. When children have colorful plates in front of them, it is a wonderful time to present nutrition education to them. Ask them, “What color are the fruits?” and “How do they taste (sweet, tangy)?” Tell the children what nutrients the fruit provides and what the nutrients do for their body.

Remember, for young children under 4 years of age, some foods must be cut into small pieces to reduce the risk of choking.

See the examples of fruit below, along with their color and nutrients.

Color	Food	Nutrients
Blue/Purple	Concord Grapes	Manganese
	Blueberries	vitamin C
	Plums	vitamin C
	Purple Figs	Potassium, dietary fiber
Yellow/Orange	Yellow Apples	Dietary fiber
	Apricots	vitamin A and vitamin C, potassium, and dietary fiber
	Mangos	vitamin A and vitamin C
	Pineapples	vitamin C
	Oranges	vitamin C
Red	Red Apples	Dietary fiber
	Blood Oranges	vitamin C
	Strawberries	vitamin C, folate
	Red Pears	Dietary fiber, vitamin C
Green	Green Apples	Dietary fiber
	Kiwifruit	Dietary fiber, vitamin C, vitamin E, potassium
	Limes	vitamin C

Fruits provide dietary fiber, folate, manganese, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C, and vitamin E. These nutrients help decrease the risk of coronary heart disease, reduce brain or spinal cord defects, heal wounds, and keep teeth and gums healthy.

Get Children to Help with Fruit Preparation

Children are more likely to eat fruit if they help plant and grow it. Start by showing them seeds, then have them plant and water the seeds for an indoor or outdoor garden. Follow with having them pick, wash, and taste the food they have grown.

Helpful Hints When You Shop at the Grocery Store:

- Make a list of the fruit you wish to purchase. This tip will help to keep you on track with the menu you have planned.
- Plan to purchase fruit that is seasonal or on sale. Remember, you may have to use it quickly so it won't go bad.
- Purchase a variety of colorful fruit.



Other Helpful Hints

- Fruit can be fresh, frozen, dried, or canned (in its own juice).
- Use fresh fruit in your refrigerator before you use canned.

References

Produce for Better Health Foundation. (2017). *Fruit & veggies more matters*.

Retrieved from <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>

USDA Food and Nutrition Service. (2017, Jan 1). *Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) nutrition standards for CACFP meals and snacks*. Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/meals-and-snacks>

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