

CACFP Infant Meal Pattern Birth through 11 Months

To comply with the Child and Adult Care Food Program regulations, it is the responsibility of child care centers caring for infants to purchase all required meal components on the Infant Meal Pattern according to the different age groups in care. The Infant Meal Pattern lists the minimum amount of food to be offered to infants from birth through 11 months. The infant meal must contain each of the following components in at least the amounts indicated for the appropriate age group in order to qualify for reimbursement. Food within the meal pattern should be the texture and consistency appropriate for the development of the infant and may be served during a span of time consistent with the infant's eating habits; for example, the food items for lunch might be served at two feedings between 12 noon and 2 p.m. Solid food should be introduced gradually to infants when developmentally ready and instructed by the parent.

Items on the following meal chart with a “•” indicate the items are required and must be provided to the infant in order to claim reimbursement for that meal. Items listed under “When developmentally ready” are required only when the infant is developmentally ready to accept them.

Birth through 3 months	4 through 7 months	8 through 11 months
Breakfast		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4–6 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4–8 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} <p><u>When developmentally ready</u> 0-3 T infant cereal¹</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6–8 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} and • 1–4 T fruit or vegetable or both and • 2–4 T infant cereal¹
Lunch/Supper		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4–6 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4–8 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} <p><u>When developmentally ready</u> 0–3 T infant cereal¹ and 0–3 T fruit or vegetable or both</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6–8 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} and • 1–4 T fruit or vegetable or both and • 2–4 T infant cereal¹ or in place of infant cereal you may serve a meat/meat alternate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1–4 T meat, fish, poultry, egg yolk, cooked dry beans or peas; or ½–2 oz cheese; or 1–4 oz (volume) cottage cheese; or 1–4 oz (weight) cheese food, cheese spread or you may also serve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ both the infant cereal and meat/meat alternate
Snack		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4–6 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4–6 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk^{2,3} 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2–4 fl oz formula¹ or breast milk,^{2,3} or fruit juice⁴ <p><u>When developmentally ready</u> 0–½ slice crusty bread⁵ or 0–2 crackers⁵</p>

¹Infant formula and dry infant cereal must be iron-fortified.

²Breast milk or formula, or portions of both, may be served; however, it is recommended breast milk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months.

³For some breastfed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breast milk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breast milk may be offered with additional breast milk offered if the infant is still hungry.

⁴Fruit juice must be full-strength.

⁵A serving of this component must be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour.

Listing of Creditable Bread and Crackers for 8-11 Month Old Infants

Taken from *Feeding Infants: A Guide for Use in the Child Nutrition Programs*

Bread and Crackers

Bread or crackers may be served at the snack or with meals throughout the course of the day. Consult with each baby's parent about bread and crackers being introduced at home so that you can serve the same food at the same time. At 8 or 9 months of age, babies enjoy having finger foods so they can practice picking up the foods. Also, at that age a baby's risk of having a reaction to wheat decreases. Examples of foods to serve babies include:

- Strips or small pieces of dry bread or toast or crackers,
- Plain crackers preferably low in salt such as low salt soda crackers (avoid crackers with seeds, nuts, or whole grain kernels),
- Small pieces of soft tortilla or soft pita bread, or
- Teething biscuits.

Check the food label to make sure the crackers or bread are made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour.

The types of bread and crackers that are reimbursable on the Infant Meal Pattern include:

Bread

- Breads (white, wheat, whole wheat, French, Italian, and similar breads, all without nuts, seeds, or hard pieces of whole grain kernels),
- Biscuits,
- Bagels (made without nuts, seeds, or hard pieces of whole grain kernels),
- English muffins,
- Pita bread (white, wheat, whole wheat),
- Rolls (white, wheat, whole wheat, potato),
- Soft tortillas (wheat or corn).

Crackers

- Crackers - saltines, low salt crackers, or snack crackers made without nuts, seeds, or hard pieces of whole grain kernels;
- Graham crackers made without honey.

Only serve bread or crackers if the parent, in consultation with the baby's doctor, agrees for them to be served and after they have previously been introduced to the baby with no problems. If any of the above foods are served, prepare them in a form that a baby can eat without choking.

AVOID

Do not feed babies these foods, which present a choking risk:

- Snack potato or corn chips, pretzels, or cheese twists,
- Cookies or granola bars,
- Crackers or breads with seeds, nut pieces, or whole grain kernels such as wheat berries, and
- Whole kernels of cooked rice, barley, or wheat; these should be finely ground or mashed before feeding to babies.

CACFP Meal Pattern Requirements—Children (Age 1 through 12)ⁱ

The meal must contain, at a minimum, each of the components listed in at least the amounts indicated for the specific age group in order to qualify for reimbursement.

	Age 1 & 2	Age 3, 4, & 5	Age 6 through 12 ⁱ
BREAKFAST			
1. Milk, fluid	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
2. Juice, ^a fruit or vegetable or Fruit(s) or vegetable(s)	1/4 cup 1/4 cup	1/2 cup 1/2 cup	1/2 cup 1/2 cup
3. Grains/Breads: ^b			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc ^b	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
Cereal:			
Cold dry	1/4 cup or 1/3 oz ^c	1/3 cup or 1/2 oz ^c	3/4 cup or 1 oz ^c
Hot cooked	1/4 cup total	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Cooked pasta or noodle products	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
LUNCH OR SUPPER			
1. Milk	1/2 cup	3/4 cup	1 cup
2. Meat or meat alternate:			
Meat, poultry, fish, cheese	1 oz	1+1/2 oz	2 oz
Alternate protein products ^g	1 oz	1+1/2 oz	2 oz
Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	4 oz or 1/2 cup	6 oz or 3/4 cup	8 oz or 1 cup
Egg	1/2 egg	3/4 egg	1 egg
Cooked dry beans or peas	1/4 Cup	3/8 cup	1/2 cup
Peanut butter or other nut or seed butter	2 Tbsp.	3 Tbsp.	4 Tbsp.
Peanuts or soynuts or tree nuts or seeds	1/2 oz = 50% ^d	3/4 oz = 50% ^d	1 oz = 50% ^d
3. Vegetable and/or fruit ^e (at least two)	1/4 cup total	1/2 cup total	3/4 cup total
4. Grains/Breads: ^b			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc ^b	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
Cereal, hot cooked	1/4 cup total	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
Cereal, cold, dry	1/4 cup or 1/3 oz ^c	1/3 cup or 1/2 oz ^c	3/4 cup or 1 oz ^c
Cooked pasta or noodle products	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
SNACK			
Select two of the following four components:			
1. Milk	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1 cup
2. Juice, a,f fruit or vegetable or Fruit(s) or vegetable(s)	1/2 cup 1/2 cup	1/2 cup 1/2 cup	3/4 cup 3/4 cup
3. Grains/Breads: ^b			
Bread	1/2 slice	1/2 slice	1 slice
Cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc ^b	1/2 serving	1/2 serving	1 serving
Cereal:			
Cold dry	1/4 Cup or 1/3 oz ^c	1/3 cup or 1/2 oz ^c	3/4 cup or 1 oz ^c
Hot cooked	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/2 cup
4. Meat or meat alternate			
Meat, poultry, fish, cheese	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Alternate protein products ^g	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Egg, Large ^h	1/2 egg	1/2 egg	1/2 egg
Cooked dry beans or peas	1/8 Cup	1/8 cup	1/4 cup
Peanut butter or other nut or seed butter	1 Tbsp.	1 Tbsp.	2 Tbsp.
Peanuts or soynuts or tree nuts or seeds	1/2 oz	1/2 oz	1 oz
Yogurt, plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened	2 oz or 1/4 cup	2 oz or 1/4 cup	4 oz or 1/2 cup

a Must be full strength fruit or vegetable juice.

b Bread, pasta or noodle products, and cereal grains shall be whole grain or enriched, cornbread, biscuits, rolls, muffins, etc., shall be made with whole grain or enriched meal or flour.

c Either volume (cup) or weight (oz), whichever is less.

d No more than 50% of the requirement shall be met with tree nuts or seeds. Tree nuts and seeds shall be combined with another meat/meat alternate to fulfill the requirement. For purpose of determining combinations, 1 oz. Of nuts or seeds is equal to 1 oz. of cooked lean meat, poultry or fish.

e Serve 2 or more kinds of vegetable(s) and/or fruit(s). Full strength vegetable or fruit juice may be counted to meet not more than one-half of this requirement.

f Juice may not be served when milk is the only other component.

g Alternate protein products may be used as acceptable meat alternates if they meet the requirements on the following page.

h One-half egg meets the required minimum amount (one-ounce or less) of meat alternate.

i Youth ages 13 through 18 must be served minimum or larger portion sizes than those specified for ages 6 through 12.

Alternate Protein Products

- A. What are the criteria for alternate protein products used in the Child and Adult Care Food Program?
1. An alternate protein product used in meals planned under the provisions in Sec. 226.20 must meet all of the criteria in this section.
 2. An alternate protein product whether used alone or in combination with meat or meat alternate must meet the following criteria:
 - a. The alternate protein product must be processed so that some portion of the non-protein constituents of the food is removed. These alternate protein products must be safe and suitable edible products produced from plant or animal sources.
 - b. The biological quality of the protein in the alternate protein product must be at least 80 percent that of casein, determined by performing a Protein Digestibility Corrected Amino Acid Score (PDCAAS).
 - c. The alternate protein product must contain at least 18 percent protein by weight when fully hydrated or formulated. ("When hydrated or formulated" refers to a dry alternate protein product and the amount of water, fat, oil, colors, flavors or any other substances which have been added).
 - d. Manufacturers supplying an alternate protein product to participating schools or institutions must provide documentation that the product meets the criteria in paragraphs A.2. through c of this appendix.
 - e. Manufacturers should provide information on the percent protein contained in the dry alternate protein product and on an as prepared basis.
 - f. For an alternate protein product mix, manufacturers should provide information on:
 - (1) The amount by weight of dry alternate protein product in the package;
 - (2) Hydration instructions; and
 - (3) Instructions on how to combine the mix with meat or other meat alternates.
- B. How are alternate protein products used in the Child and Adult Care Food Program?
1. Schools, institutions, and service institutions may use alternate protein products to fulfill all or part of the meat/meat alternate component discussed in Sec. 226.20.
 2. The following terms and conditions apply:
 - a. The alternate protein product may be used alone or in combination with other food ingredients. Examples of combination items are beef patties, beef crumbles, pizza topping, meat loaf, meat sauce, taco filling, burritos, and tuna salad.
 - b. Alternate protein products may be used in the dry form (nonhydrated), partially hydrated or fully hydrated form. The moisture content of the fully hydrated alternate protein product (if prepared from a dry concentrated form) must be such that the mixture will have a minimum of 18 percent protein by weight or equivalent amount for the dry or partially hydrated form (based on the level that would be provided if the product were fully hydrated).
- C. How are commercially prepared products used in the Child and Adult Care Food Program?
- Schools, institutions, and service institutions may use a commercially prepared meat or meat alternate product combined with alternate protein products or use a commercially prepared product that contains only alternate protein products.