



## Nutrition Standards for School Meals

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 required the US Department of Agriculture to update federal nutrition standards for school meals. The [new regulations](#) went into effect on July 1, 2012. The changes require:

**More fruits and vegetables:** Schools must offer students fruits and vegetables with every lunch and increase the portion sizes. Vegetable choices at lunch must include weekly offerings of: legumes, dark green, and red or orange vegetables. Every school breakfast must offer students a full cup of fruits or vegetables. Students are required to take at least one half-cup serving of fruits or vegetables with every school breakfast and lunch.

**Whole grains:** All grains offered with school meals must be whole grain-rich (51% whole grain). *Some schools have been granted temporary waivers permitting them to offer a few menu items that do not meet this standard.*

**Sodium limits:** Schools must gradually reduce sodium levels in school meals over a ten year period to meet the following limits:

**Sodium Reduction Target Timeline for School Meals**

Grades	Target 1 (July 1, 2014)	Target 2 (July 1, 2017)	Final Target (July 1, 2022)
School Breakfast Program			
K-5:	≤540 mg	≤485 mg	≤430 mg
6-8:	≤600	≤535	≤470
9-12:	≤640	≤570	≤500
National School Lunch Program			
K-5:	≤1,230	≤935	≤640
6-8:	≤1,360	≤1,035	≤710
9-12:	≤1,420	≤1,080	≤740

**Calorie limits:** School meals must meet age-appropriate calorie minimums and maximums:

Grades	Breakfast	Lunch
K-5:	350-500 calories	550-650 calories
6-8:	400-550	600-700
9-12:	450-600	750-850

**Limits on unhealthy fat:** Meals cannot contain added trans-fat and no more than 10 percent of calories can come from saturated fat.

**Low-fat and fat-free milk:** Every school meal offers one cup of fat-free or 1% milk. Flavored milk must be fat-free. To meet calorie limits, milk processors have developed flavored milk with less added sugar.

**Free water:** Free drinking water must be available in the cafeteria during lunch and breakfast.