



2015 Position Paper

Reauthorization of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act

Maintain the Target 1 sodium level reductions and suspend implementation of further targets.

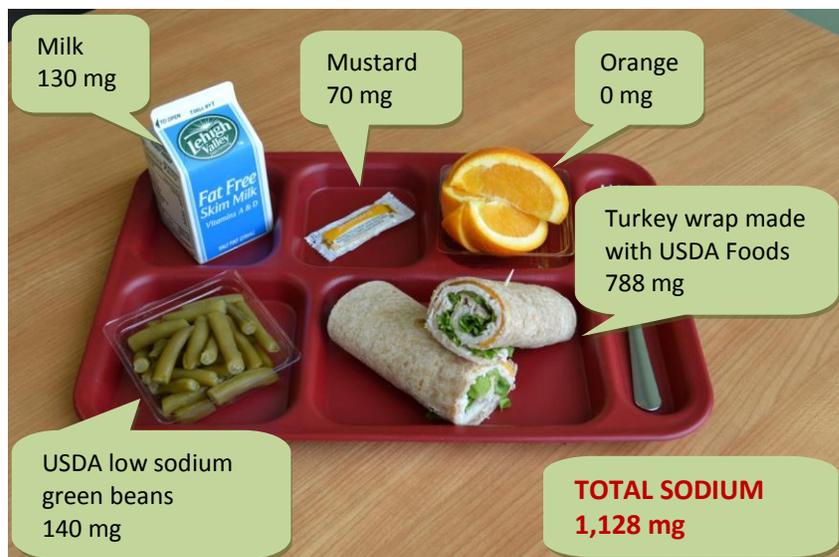
Schools made significant sodium reductions to meet Target 1, effective July 2014. Before advancing to Target 2, the Institute of Medicine recommended assessing the impact of Target 1 “on student participation rates, food cost, safety and food service operations to determine a reasonable target for the next period...**reducing the sodium content of school meals as specified and in a way that is well accepted by students will present major challenges and may not be possible.**” (*School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children*)

Naturally occurring sodium present in milk, meats and other foods will force schools to take nutritious choices off the menu, and drive more students away from healthy school meals. Studies have shown school meals are more nutritious than packed lunches or lunches purchased from fast food restaurants. Despite these benefits, student lunch participation is down by 1.4 million per day since 2012, when the new standards took effect.

The [Government Accountability Office](#) affirmed that the new standards influenced this decline in participation and warned that forthcoming limits on sodium would remain problematic with cost and product availability making sodium targets difficult for many schools to implement.

The health benefits to students choosing nutritious school lunches within Target 1 sodium limits is clear. Additional sodium reductions, at the risk of decreasing student participation, are not merited based on the inconclusive evidence on the benefits of sodium reduction for children.

This healthy lunch exceeds Target 2 sodium limits.



National School Lunch Program Sodium Reduction Targets

| Grades | Target 1 July 2014 | Target 2 July 2017 | Final Target July 2022 |
|--------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| K-5: | ≤1,230 | ≤935 | ≤640 |
| 6-8: | ≤1,360 | ≤1,035 | ≤710 |
| 9-12: | ≤1,420 | ≤1,080 | ≤740 |