



Wake Up to a Healthy Start with **School Breakfast!**

Many Americans are not consuming an adequate breakfast daily. Poor breakfast habits are not confined to any particular area or economic group. Many children come to school without eating breakfast. Others arrive with only a candy bar or soft drink in their stomach. Some ride the bus for a long time and are hungry again when they get to school. Eating a nutritious breakfast is a good start for the day. A student who has eaten breakfast is more alert and better able to learn. Test scores often improve and there are also fewer discipline problems among students who eat a good breakfast. Additionally, school breakfast allows students an opportunity to socialize with peers in the morning.

Schools must follow a food-based menu-planning approach with portion sizes based on specific grade groups and meet USDA's nutrient standards. Breakfast menus do not need to be difficult to prepare and schools are not required to offer a hot breakfast. Students like many quick-to-fix and quick-to-eat foods!

The School Breakfast Program is administered nationally by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and locally by the Nebraska Department of Education – Nutrition Services. All public and private schools may participate in the School Breakfast Program. Breakfast is available to all students attending a participating school.

Schools participating in the School Breakfast Program receive federal reimbursement for each meal served that meets USDA meal pattern requirements. A higher reimbursement is provided for students eligible for free and reduced-price breakfasts. For the most up to date reimbursement rates, please visit [Reimbursement Rates – Nebraska Department of Education](#).

Breakfast Meal Pattern - Effective July 1, 2021

	Required Grade Groups¹ Minimum Amount of Food ² per Day & Week		
Food Component	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
Fruit: ^{3, 4} Dried Fruit - 1/4 cup serving is equal to 1/2 cup of fruit	1 cup per day 5 cups per week	1 cup per day 5 cups per week	1 cup per day 5 cups per week
Vegetables: ^{3, 5} Not required to be served	0	0	0
Grains: Grains-Breads Chart ⁶ All of the grains offered during the week must be whole grain-rich.	1 oz eq per day 7 oz eq per week	1 oz eq per day 8 oz eq per week	1 oz eq per day 9 oz eq per week
Meat/Meat Alternate: Not required to be served. (Imitation cheese, canned or powdered cheese/sauce and bacon do not credit.) Meat/Meat Alternate Examples:	0	0	0
Meat, poultry, fish (cooked wt), cheese (aged or processed)	1 oz	1 oz	1 oz
Egg (large)	1/2 large egg	1/2 large egg	1/2 large egg
Cooked dry beans/peas ⁵	1/4 cup	1/4 cup	1/4 cup
Yogurt & Soy Yogurt (commercially prepared)	4 fl oz or 1/2 cup	4 fl oz or 1/2 cup	4 fl oz or 1/2 cup
Peanut butter or other nut/seed butter	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp	2 Tbsp
Peanuts, soy nuts, tree nuts, seeds	1 oz	1 oz	1 oz
Tofu (commercially prepared)	2.2 oz or 1/4 cup	2.2 oz or 1/4 cup	2.2 oz or 1/4 cup
Milk (fluid): Served as a beverage or on cereal or both. Must offer two kinds. Unflavored low fat (1%) or fat free. Flavored must be fat free.	8 fl oz per day	8 fl oz per day	8 fl oz per day
Calories: (Minimum-maximum ranges) ^{7,8}	350-500	400-550	450-600
Saturated Fat: (percent of total calories) ⁸	< 10%	< 10%	< 10%
Sodium (milligrams) ⁹ Target 1: SY 2021-22 with Sodium Waiver Request granted by SA Target 2: SY 2021-22	≤ 540 ≤ 485	≤ 600 ≤ 535	≤ 640 ≤ 570
Trans fat ⁸	Nutrition label or manufacturer specifications must indicate zero grams of trans fat per serving.		

¹ For purposes of this meal pattern, a week equals five days. For weeks with a greater or lesser number of days, the servings per week must be prorated.

² Food items included in each food group and subgroup and amount equivalents. The minimum creditable serving size for a fruit or vegetable is 1/8 cup.

³ All juice must be 100% full-strength. No more than half of the fruit or vegetable offerings during the week may be in the form of juice.

⁴ The quantity of fruit required to be offered is 5 cups/week and a minimum of 1 cup/day.

⁵ Vegetables may be substituted for fruits at breakfast.

⁶ All of the grains offered to meet the daily/weekly grain requirement must be whole grain-rich.

⁷ The average daily amount of calories for a 5-day school week must be within the range (at least the minimum and no more than the maximum values).

⁸ Discretionary sources of calories (solid fats and added sugars) may be added to the meal pattern if within the specifications for calories, saturated fat, trans fat and sodium.

⁹ Target 2 sodium standards are required to be met in SY 2021-2022. However, sponsors who complete the Sodium Waiver Request will be granted flexibility to serve meals that meet the Target 1 sodium standards for SY 2021-2022. For SFAs using an overlap of grade groups, the required sodium target will be the lesser of the overlapped grade groups.

Breakfast Terminology

Food Component – one of three required food groups to be offered at breakfast:

- Grains (Meat/Meat Alternate is optional after the Grain requirement is met)
- Fruit/Juice/Vegetable
- Milk

Food Item – a specific food offered within the three components

At breakfast, a double portion of the same grain item or grain item large enough can count for more than one item. For example, 2 slices of toast = 2 items OR a 2 ounce bagel = 2 items.

For schools implementing Offer Versus Serve (OVS), 4 food items must be offered; students may decline one item. For a reimbursable breakfast, the student must leave the serving line with at least 3 items and one of them must be ½ cup of fruit or vegetable or a combination of both. For schools not implementing OVS, students must leave the serving line with all food items.

Examples of 5 Item Menus (G = Grains)

Offer a Choice

Assorted Cereal OR Oatmeal
Cinnamon Toast
Apple Wedges/Orange Juice
Milk

Breakfast in a Bag

Granola Bar (1 G)
Yogurt (1 M/MA = 1 G)
Apple/Assorted Juice
Milk

Blueberry Muffin (2 G) OR Bagel (2 G)
Sliced Peaches/Banana
Milk

Serve an Occasional Hot Meal

Ham and Cheese Biscuit (2 G)
Baked Sweet Potato Wedges
Orange Quarters
Milk

Breakfast in the Classroom

Cinnamon Roll (2 G)
Grapes/Orange Juice
Milk

Waffles (2 G)
Strawberries/Assorted Juice
Milk

Problems: Fact or Fiction?

Fiction: Bus schedules prevent our school from implementing a breakfast program.

Fact: Many schools have been able to implement a breakfast program into their existing schedule. However, when an adjustment is necessary, moving the bus schedule back as little as 10 minutes provides ample time for the children to eat breakfast. A breakfast program may help students adjust to early bus schedules or long bus rides. Some children are not hungry when they leave home but are very hungry when they get to school!

Fiction: A breakfast program will require additional labor hours.

Fact: By changing the work schedule of one or two employees, a breakfast program may be implemented without the need for additional employees or labor hours. Work schedules, menus, preparation time and the number of children being served are factors that determine the personnel needed for the program.

Fiction: Our schools do not all have the facilities/equipment to prepare or serve breakfast.

Fact: The breakfast program can be implemented in almost any facility. While kitchen and cafeteria facilities are ideal for a breakfast operation, a kitchen or cafeteria is not required. Pre-packaged food items and the use of disposables enable schools to serve breakfast in classrooms, the gymnasium or a multi-purpose room, even on the bus! Most schools do not need additional equipment to prepare or serve breakfast. If a kitchen is not suitable to prepare meals, breakfasts can be delivered from another preparation kitchen in bulk or individual bags. The district is not required to have a breakfast program in every school.

Fiction: A breakfast program will be a financial “drain” on our lunch program.

Fact: A breakfast program is relatively easy to implement since equipment and trained staff generally exist. Breakfast meals that meet USDA meal pattern requirements are eligible for reimbursement. This money can be used to cover food costs, labor costs and administration of the program. In some schools the breakfast program helps support the lunch program.

Breakfast Program Costs

The major costs involved in a School Breakfast Program are food, labor and supplies.

- The cost of food depends on whether the breakfasts are hot or cold, homemade or pre-packaged items. Using pre-packaged items may increase initial costs but save on labor costs. Other factors influencing food costs include the number of meals to be served, purchasing practices and the use of commodities.
- The cost of labor depends on the number of students participating in the program, the amount of preparation time required, the type of meal service implemented and the local wages.
- The cost of supplies includes items such as napkins, straws and in some cases, disposable plates and utensils.
- In an effort to reduce food waste, schools are advised to implement Offer Versus Serve (OVS). Schools may implement OVS in all grades or may restrict this provision to certain grade levels. The decision rests solely with the school district. In schools not implementing OVS, students must take full portions of all food items. In schools implementing OVS, at least 4 items must be offered daily; students must select at least 3 items with one of them being $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit. A student's decision to decline a food item does not change the price of the meal.

Breakfast Prices

Keeping the price down often promotes maximum participation. The goal is to have meal programs be self-supporting. Districts may determine the full (paid) price of a student breakfast based on how much it costs to produce the meal. Or they may choose to look at the reimbursement rate for a free breakfast minus the reimbursement received for a paid breakfast. This value provides the same income for all breakfasts served. The maximum price that can be charged for a reduced price breakfast is \$0.30

To view the most current guidance & resources for determining meal pricing, please visit <https://www.education.ne.gov/ns/forms-resources/national-school-lunch-program/charge-policy/>.

Recordkeeping

Recordkeeping requirements are the same as for the National School Lunch Program. If a child qualifies for free or reduced price lunch, the same benefit extends to the breakfast program. Documentation of menu items such as ingredient statements, nutrition fact labels, Child Nutrition (CN) labels (if applicable) and standardized recipes must be on file. Breakfast Production Records indicating the menu, portion sizes and quantities of food prepared must be completed daily. A Point of Service (POS) meal count must be taken at the end of the serving line to ensure that a reimbursable breakfast has been served.

Getting Started

Conducting a survey with your households or students may be a good idea prior to making the decision to start a breakfast program.

A breakfast program may be started anytime during the school year by amending the district's online application. For more information or help implementing a breakfast program contact:

Nebraska Department of Education, Nutrition Services
(800)731-2233 or (402)471-2488
500 S. 84th Street, Lincoln, NE 68510

