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Milk

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

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Fluid Milk Component for the Child Nutrition Programs

Regulations for Child Nutrition Programs require that fluid milk be offered at each breakfast, lunch, or supper meal service. The fluid milk may be served as a beverage, on cereal, or both; however, in a lunch or a supper meal, the fluid milk must be served as a beverage. Program operators have the option to serve fluid milk as one of the two components of a snack served in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), and in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Afterschool Snack Service. State agencies have the discretion to set stricter requirements than the minimum nutrition standards for school meals. For additional guidance please contact your State agency.



Fluid milk refers to pasteurized nonfat milk, low-fat milk (1%), reduced-fat milk (2%), whole milk, lactose-free milk, lactose-reduced milk, cultured milk, such as cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk, and cultured acidophilus milk, acidified milk, such as acidified kefir milk and acidified acidophilus milk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk, all of which meet State and local standards for such milk. The fluid milk must also contain vitamins A and D at levels specified by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Please note that not all fluid milks on this list apply to all Child Nutrition Programs, and some of the fluid milk may be flavored. Refer to the sections below for program-specific information related to the fluid milk requirement.

School Breakfast Program (SBP) and National School Lunch Program (NSLP)

School food authorities must offer at least two different options of fluid milk, including unflavored milk. Milk must be flavored or unflavored fat-free or unflavored low-fat (1% fat or less).

Fat-free or low-fat lactose-free and lactose-reduced milk may also be offered. Fat-free or low-fat cultured milk, such as cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk, and cultured acidophilus milk, and fat-free or low-fat acidified milk, such as acidified kefir milk and acidified acidophilus milk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk are also allowed. Such products must be pasteurized fluid milk that meets State and local standards.

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

Fluid milk varieties allowed for the Summer Food Service Program include unflavored or flavored: fat-free milk, low-fat milk (1%), reduced-fat milk (2%), whole milk, lactose-free milk, lactose-reduced milk, cultured milk, such as cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk, and cultured acidophilus milk, and acidified milk, such as acidified kefir milk and acidified acidophilus milk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk.

Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

One-Year-Old Children

Children who are 1 year of age must be served unflavored whole milk.

Children Two Years Old and Older and Adults

Allowable types of fluid milk for children 2 years old and older and adults include: fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk, fat-free or low-fat lactose-free milk, fat-free or low-fat lactose-reduced milk, fat-free or low-fat cultured milk, such as cultured buttermilk, cultured kefir milk, and cultured acidophilus milk, and fat-free or low-fat acidified milk, such as acidified kefir milk and acidified acidophilus milk, and Ultra High Temperature (UHT) milk. Milk must be pasteurized fluid milk that meets State and local standards. Whole milk and reduced-fat (2%) milk may not be served to participants 2 years of age and older and adults. Meals served to children 24 months to 25 months containing whole milk or reduced-fat milk (2%) may be claimed for reimbursement. Flavored and unflavored fat-free milk and unflavored low-fat (1% or less) milk are creditable for children 6 years and older and adults.

Breastmilk

Breastmilk is considered an allowable fluid milk substitute for children of any age if a mother chooses to breastfeed her child past 1 year of age.

Flavored Milk

Children 1 through 5 Years Old

- Flavored fluid milk and flavored non-dairy beverages cannot be claimed for reimbursement.

Children 6 Years Old and Older and Adults

- Flavored fluid milk served to children 6 years old and older and adults must be fat-free.

Fluid milk used in smoothies can credit toward the fluid milk component requirement. Remember, when a smoothie contains less than the required amount for a reimbursable meal, additional fluid milk must be offered. The minimum creditable amount of milk is 1/4 cup. Milk used in preparation of menu items other than smoothies does not credit toward the fluid milk requirement.

Non-Dairy Beverages

Nondairy beverages offered as fluid milk substitutes may also be offered in the NSLP, SBP, and CACFP. However, they must be nutritionally equivalent to milk and provide specific levels of calcium, protein, vitamins A and D, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, and vitamin B-12. For more information about fluid milk for children whose non-disabling allergies, culture, religion, or ethical beliefs preclude the consumption of cow's milk, please see program guidance.