

What's New With The School Menu?

Welcome back! The new school year brings new changes for the school menus. Yes....MORE changes to the menus! This time the changes involve the School Breakfast Program. Now that the School Lunch Program has some experience under its belt, it is time to transition some of the same healthy changes to the breakfast menu. These changes, as well as the previous lunch menu changes, are part of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, which states that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) must provide standards for all foods sold in schools. These standards are based on the "2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans" written by the USDA and the US Department of Health and Human Services. These guidelines essentially recommend an increase in fruit and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products and a decrease in saturated fats, refined grains, sugar and salt in our daily regimen.

Here is a list of the new changes to the breakfast menu:

1. A school breakfast meal must now contain at least 3 food components; a grain, a milk, and a fruit serving. A vegetable can be substituted for a fruit at the discretion of the foodservice manager.
2. Half of the grains offered must be whole grain-rich, meaning the first ingredient on the label contains the word "whole" or 50% or greater is whole grain by weight. 7- 10 servings of grain must be offered throughout the course of 1 week (7 is minimum amount for children in grades K-5, 8 for children in grades 6-8, and 9 for grades 9-12).
3. The milk requirement was already initiated at the time of the lunch changes last year. Milk can be low-fat or fat-free if it is plain; flavored milk must be fat-free.
4. Age/grade group menus must be established that meet specific calorie requirements for each group. Grades K-5 will receive meals containing 350-500 calories and grades 6-7 will receive meals containing 400-550 calories.
5. As with the lunch menus, meals must contain zero grams of trans fats and less than 10% of calories as saturated fat.
6. Nutrient analysis of menus will be required by the state to ensure compliance.

Further changes will occur with regard to sodium limits, fruit portions and grain requirements, but not until next year. Phew!

Eat your breakfast and start your day in a healthy way!

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