

# THE NEW USDA MEAL PATTERN



## What's New?

Vegetable subgroups offered each week

Flavored milks are all fat free

More whole grains

Increased portions or portion sizes are available for vegetables

Increased portions or portion sizes may be available for fruits

A gradual reduction of sodium in meals

## WHAT'S DIFFERENT AT LUNCH AND WHY

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act was signed into law by President Obama. The law changed the nutrition standards for schools meals. The changes were put in place to help reduce child obesity in the United States. Current research shows that 1 out of every 3 kids are at risk for diseases such as diabetes and heart disease because they are overweight or obese. Another issue facing the nation is unemployment and the economic difficulties it has created for families. Children need to be able to rely on nutritious, wholesome meals at school.

With the new meal pattern came some changes to what is served to students for breakfast and lunch. Some of the changes, such as most of the

changes to breakfast, will be changed over a period of time. The changes to lunch for school year 2012-13 include:

- A weekly requirement of vegetable subgroups to ensure a variety of nutrient needs are met through the vegetable served
- A fat restriction on milks to limit unnecessary calories
- Half of the grains served must be qualified as 'whole grain rich'
- Calorie minimum and maximum ranges for all grade groups
- A new requirement that students must take either 1/2 c fruit, or 1/2 c vegetables, or a combination of fruits and vegetables to total 1/2 cup

with a lunch meal

- An increase in the amount of vegetables available for students to take
- A gradual reduction in the amount of sodium allowed in meals.
- Breakfast changes will be gradually introduced over the next two years.

*"Diets rich in whole grain foods and other plant foods and low in total*



*fat, saturated fat, and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease and some cancers." FDA Health Claim*

**We watch the calories so you don't have to!**  
Daily calorie ranges for lunch by grade group:

Grades K-5

550-650 calories

Grade 6-8

600-700 calories

Grades 9-12

750-850 calories

## WHAT'S A VEGETABLE SUBGROUP?

Vegetable subgroups are the way that vegetables are categorized to group them with other vegetables that contain the same characteristics and nutritional qualities. Generally, the sub-



group title helps identify the vegetables in the subgroup, such as the red/orange subgroup which contains orange and red colored vegetables like carrots and tomatoes. The 5 subgroups are: dark green, red/orange, beans/peas (legumes),

starchy, and "other".

Schools are now required to serve a minimum amount of each of the 5 vegetable subgroups at lunch. Students will be seeing a variety of vegetables offered each week!