



POWAY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
NUTRITION STANDARDS
Frequently Asked Questions



Q1: Does PUSD follow nutrition guidelines for the State of California?

A1: Yes. All meals served by the PUSD Food and Nutrition Department meet and exceed federal and state nutrition guidelines.

Q2: Is my child getting the nutrients he/she needs from school meals?

A2: Yes. Poway has a team of food and nutrition professionals, including a registered dietitian, to plan all school meal menus. We follow nutrition guidelines set by the government, and analyze meals to ensure compliance with nutritional requirements. In addition, meals are developed in accordance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the My Plate food guide, thus ensuring appropriate portion sizes.

Q3: Is there a link between good eating habits and student performance in school?

A3: Yes. According to numerous studies, children who eat healthy meals (breakfasts and lunches) each day score higher on tests, make fewer trips to school nurses, have better attendance, and have fewer disciplinary problems. School meals play a critical role, because they provide nutritious, healthy, safe, low cost, and balanced meals.

Q4: What are the nutritional requirements for school meals?

A4: School meals must meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, which recommend that no more than 30 percent of an individual's calories come from total fat, and less than 10 percent from saturated fat. Regulations also establish a standard for school lunches to provide one-third, and breakfast to provide one-fourth, the Recommended Dietary Allowances for protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium, and calories.

Q5: Are sack lunches from home better than school meals?

A5: It depends on the sack lunch. However, research shows that in general, school meals provide more nutrients than meals brought from home. School meals provide children with a variety of foods from at least 3 to 5 of the five food groups. The meals must also meet stringent guidelines for fat, calories, and nutrients that tend to be low in children's diets, such as Vitamin A, iron, and calcium.

Q6: Is chocolate milk bad for kids?

A6: No. Chocolate milk is made from fresh white milk and has all the nutrients found in white milk, including calcium, potassium, phosphorus, protein, Vitamin D, Vitamin A, Vitamin B12, riboflavin, and niacin. Both white and chocolate milk are excellent sources of calcium. There is very little caffeine in chocolate milk, and it contains about the same amount of sugar as one would find in equal amounts of most unsweetened 100% fruit juices. Each 8-ounce serving of milk (plain or chocolate) provides 300 mg of calcium, about one-third to one-fourth of the daily calcium requirement for children.

Q7: Why do you offer chocolate milk which contains caffeine and added sugar?

A7: Studies show that offering flavored milk, such as chocolate, increases students' milk consumption. Although chocolate milk contains a small amount of caffeine and added sugars, it is a compromise to encourage milk consumption to ensure students get the important nutrients in the milk, such as calcium, Vitamin A and Vitamin D. The main difference is that chocolate milk has about 60 more calories per serving, which can easily fit into a growing child's total diet.



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Q8: Is pizza bad for kids?

A8: **No.** All foods can fit into a healthy diet, if consumed in moderation. Pizza is a combination food that combines foods from two or more food groups. For example, cheese pizza combines mozzarella cheese (milk group), tomato sauce (vegetable group), and pizza crust (grain group). Pizza is a great source of nutrients because it combines nutrients from the food groups from which they are made. People often criticize pizza for being high-calorie, but calorie for calorie, combination foods like tacos, sub-sandwiches, chef's salads or stir-fry dishes are nutritious choices. Pizza becomes an unhealthy choice when it is made with high-fat ingredients, or when kids eat excessive portions. The pizza served in PUSD lunches is made with low fat mozzarella cheese and the crust is made with whole grains.

Q9: Why did Poway stop serving French Fries?

A9: The nutritional content of French Fries does not meet District standards, and all deep fat fryers were removed from school kitchens. Also, the California Department of Education imposes a financial penalty on districts that sell or serve food items that have been "deep fried," "par fried," or "flash fried." We do serve a la carte baked potato wedges at many of our secondary schools.

Q10: Do school meals cause childhood overweight and obesity?

A10: **No.** Overweight/obesity conditions are caused by too little exercise and too much high calorie food. When kids eat more calories than they burn, their bodies store the excess energy as fat. An increase in the consumption of high fat, high energy foods, along with a decrease in physical activity (too much TV, video games) is a major cause of the current obesity epidemic.

Q11: What is a nutritious snack for elementary school students?

A11: California law mandates that an individual snack sold on an elementary school campus contain no more than 175 calories, 35 percent of its calories from total fat, 10 percent from saturated fat, and 35 percent of its weight from sugar. The law makes exceptions for foods like nuts, cheeses, seeds, legumes, eggs, fruits, and vegetables.

Q12: What is a nutritious snack for middle and high school students?

A12: California law mandates that an individual snack sold on a secondary school campus contain no more than 250 calories, 35 percent of its calories from fat, 10 percent from saturated fat, and 35 percent of its weight from sugar. The law makes exceptions for foods like nuts, cheeses, seeds, legumes, eggs, fruits, and vegetables.

Q13: What is a nutritious entrée item?

A13: An individually sold entree may contain no more than 400 calories, 4 grams of fat per 100 calories, and must qualify under the federal meal program.

Q14: What is a nutritious beverage for elementary school students?

A14: California law authorizes the following beverages on elementary school campuses during the school day: Water with no added sweetener, fluid milk, 100 percent juice, and fruit/vegetable-based drinks composed of at least 50 percent fruit or vegetable juice with no added sweetener.

Q15: What is a nutritious beverage for middle and high school students?

A15: California law authorizes the following beverages on secondary school campuses during the school day: Water with no added sweetener, fluid milk, 100 percent juice, fruit/vegetable-based drinks composed of at least 50 percent fruit or vegetable juice with no added sweetener, and electrolyte replacement beverages containing no more than 42 grams of sugar per 20-ounce serving.