

Allowable Milk Substitutions for Nondisabled Children in the U.S. Department of Agriculture School Nutrition Programs

Schools participating in the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) school nutrition programs (National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, After-School Snack Program, Seamless Summer and Special Milk Program) must follow the federal requirements for milk substitutions for nondisabled children. These requirements apply to accommodations for children *without disabilities* who cannot drink milk, i.e., children who do not have a life-threatening food allergy to milk.

School districts have the *option* to make this accommodation and offer one or more allowable fluid milk substitutes for children without disabilities. These substitutions are at the expense of the school district. If the district chooses to make allowable milk substitutions available, they must be available for all students when requested by their parent or guardian.

The following criteria apply only to children *without* disabilities. Dietary accommodations for children with disabilities must continue to follow the USDA requirements specified in the Connecticut State Department of Education's *Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in School Nutrition Programs* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/AccommodatingSpecialDiets.pdf>.

▶ ALLOWABLE FLUID MILK SUBSTITUTES

School districts can choose to offer one or more allowable fluid milk substitutions. These include low-fat (1%) or less lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk or an allowable nondairy beverage (such as soy milk) that meets the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes (see “USDA Nutrition Standards for Milk Substitutes” on page 2). The USDA recommends that lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk is the first choice for a student who has lactose intolerance.

School districts can choose to offer only one milk substitution. For example, the district can choose to offer only low-fat lactose-free milk. If a student decides not to take this substitution, the district is *not* obligated to offer any additional milk substitutions. A nondairy beverage that meets the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes could also be offered, but is not required.

▶ JUICE AND WATER SUBSTITUTES

Juice and water cannot be offered as milk substitutes for nondisabled children at any time. If a school district chooses to make milk substitutions available, they must include either low-fat (1%) or less lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk or a nondairy beverage that meets the USDA nutrition standards for milk substitutes (see “USDA Nutrition Standards for Milk Substitutes” on page 2). *Lactose-free or lactose-reduced milk (low-fat (1%) or less) and nondairy beverages are the only two options that are allowed for milk substitutions in the USDA school nutrition programs.*

▶ REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

Parents or guardians may request a nondairy milk substitute in writing without providing a medical statement. A statement from a recognized medical authority is not required. The written request from the parent or guardian must identify the medical or other special dietary need that restricts the child's diet. A statement from a recognized medical authority is still required for any meal variations other than milk substitutions for a nondisabled child with medical or other special dietary needs.

The provision allowing a statement from a parent or guardian applies only to milk substitutions for nondisabled children. It does not apply to any other substitutions of foods or beverages for nondisabled children. For any other special dietary accommodations for nondisabled children, substitutions can only be made by the food service program based on written documentation from a recognized medical authority, not based on written or verbal communication from a parent or guardian. For more information on the requirements for dietary accommodations, see the CSDE's *Accommodating Special Dietary Needs in School Nutrition Programs* at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/PDF/DEPS/Student/NutritionEd/AccommodatingSpecialDiets.pdf>.

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► USDA NUTRITION STANDARDS FOR MILK SUBSTITUTES

Schools choosing to offer a milk substitute as part of reimbursable meals for nondisabled students must provide products that meet the following USDA nutrition standards for fluid milk substitutes.

Nutrients per Cup (8 fluid ounces)

Calcium: 276 milligrams (mg)	Vitamin D: 100 IU	Potassium: 349 mg
Protein: 8 grams (g)	Magnesium: 24 mg	Riboflavin: 0.44 mg
Vitamin A: 500 international units (IU)	Phosphorus: 222 mg	Vitamin B-12: 1.1 micrograms (mcg)

It is important to note that the product's Nutrition Facts label will not provide all required nutrition information. Schools must obtain additional nutrition information from manufacturers to document that products meet the USDA nutrition standards above.

In addition to meeting the USDA nutrition standards, any nondairy milk substitutes used in school meals must also meet the state statutory beverage requirements. Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes specifies that nondairy milks may be flavored but contain no artificial sweeteners, no more than 4 grams of sugar per ounce, no more than 35 percent of calories from fat and no more than 10 percent of calories from saturated fat.

If a nondairy milk substitute does not meet both federal and state standards, it cannot be served as part of a reimbursable meal. The CSDE's *List of Acceptable Food and Beverages* (List 16) provides information regarding products that meet both federal and state requirements (<http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=322432>).

Resources

- USDA Memo SP 02-2009, *Final Fluid Milk Substitution Rule*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, October 16, 2008. http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/Policy-Memos/2009/SP_02-2009.pdf
- USDA Memo SP 29-2011, *Child Nutrition Reauthorization 2010: Nutrition Requirements for Fluid Milk*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, April 14, 2011. <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/governance/Policy-Memos/2011/SP29-2011-os.pdf>
- Final Fluid Milk Substitutions in the School Nutrition Programs* (73 FR 52903), September 12, 2008. <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2008/pdf/E8-21293.pdf>
- Operational Memorandum 3-09, Final Rule on Fluid Milk Substitutions*. Connecticut State Department of Education, November 14, 2008. http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/DEPS/Nutrition/OPmemos/09/OM_03_09.pdf
- Operational Memorandum 23-09, Q & A's: Milk Substitution for Children with Medical or Special Dietary Needs (Nondisability)*. Connecticut State Department of Education, September 4, 2009. http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/DEPS/Nutrition/OPmemos/09/OM_23_09.pdf
- USDA Questions and Answers: Fluid Milk Substitutions in the School Nutrition Programs*. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Revised November 12, 2009. http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/LIB/sde/pdf/DEPS/Nutrition/OPmemos/10/OM_03_10_Q&A.pdf

For more information, visit the CSDE's Web site (School Nutrition Programs page) at <http://www.sde.ct.gov/sde/cwp/view.asp?a=2626&q=320676>. Questions may be directed to:

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