

Your Guide to the Lunch Line

Delicious & Nutritious!

How to Choose a Reimbursable Lunch in Elementary School

What is a Reimbursable Lunch?



What are the Goals of the National School Lunch Program?

- Safeguard the health & well being of the nation's children
- Encourage domestic consumption of nutritious agricultural foods
- Give children an understanding of the relationship between proper eating habits & good health

- The National School Lunch Program allows schools to receive money & foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal served.
- To receive these benefits schools must serve lunches meeting Federal requirements regarding nutrient content and portion sizes.
- A complete meal, meeting these requirements, allows a school to receive benefits and is referred to as a "reimbursable lunch"



It must include
a fruit or
vegetable!

What Makes Up a Reimbursable Lunch?

5 Possible Components

1.

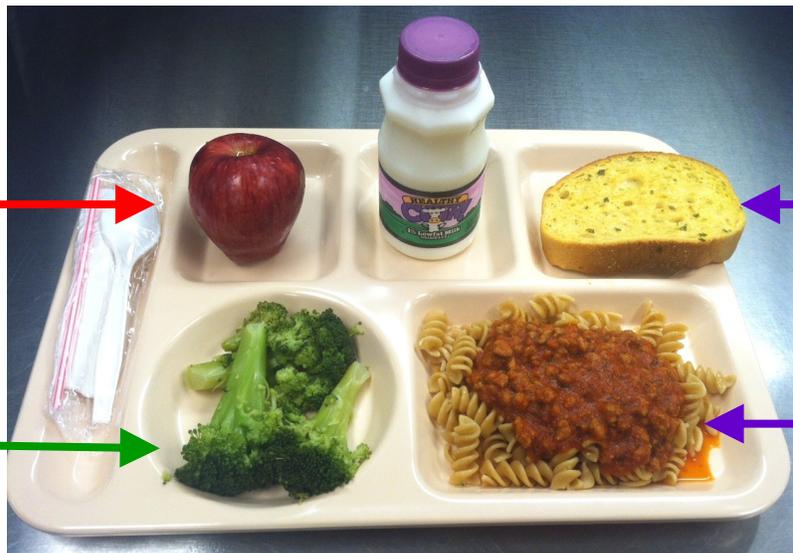
Milk

2.

Fruit

5.

Vegetable



3.

4.

Entrée

Comprised of:

- Meat or Meat Substitute
- Grain (bread & pasta count as the grain here)

The 5 Meal Components

1. Milk

2. Fruit

3. Meat or

Meat Substitute (included within the entrée)

4. Grain (included within the entrée)

5. Vegetable

Did You Know?

Elementary school students must take at least 1 serving of a fruit **or** vegetable. However, they may take up to 1 serving of fruit **and** 1 serving of vegetable in a meal for the same price!

A student needs 3 out of 5 components in order for a meal to be reimbursable. 1 of these 3 components must be a fruit or vegetable.



- 1. Fruit
- 2. Vegetable
- 3. Milk



- 1. Fruit
- 2. Vegetable
- 3. Milk
- 4. Meat Alternatives
- 5. Grain



- 1. Fruit
- 2. Vegetable
- 3. Milk



- 1. Fruit
- 2. Milk
- 3. Grain

All of the meals pictured here are considered reimbursable meals!
Each meal costs \$2.50

Why Choose a Reimbursable Meal?

Benefits for Students:

- Students learn how to build a balanced meal, a lifelong skill important for healthy living.
- Research shows when a child's nutritional needs are met, the child is more attentive in class, has better attendance, & fewer disciplinary problems.
- USDA research shows children who participate in National School Lunch Programs eat healthier compared to those who do not participate.
- School districts participating in the National School Lunch Program are required to have a wellness policy which addresses obesity, promotes healthy eating, and encourages physical activity among students.

Benefits for the School:

- The National School Lunch Program provides cash reimbursements, on a per meal basis, to schools providing free & reduced price lunches to eligible children.
- Schools receive USDA commodity foods for each lunch.



Benefits for Parents:

- School lunch offers parents a convenient way to provide a nutritious lunch for their children at the lowest possible price.
- When purchased separately, all 5 components would cost **\$5.00**. This is a savings of **\$12.50** per week and a total savings of over **\$400** per school year!

Grains

- Grains are made up of carbohydrates, which are an important energy source for the nervous system & red blood cells.
- Soluble fibers, found in grains, have been shown to lower cholesterol levels & blood glucose levels. This reduces the risk of cardiovascular disease & diabetes.
- Insoluble fibers, found in grains allow foods to move through the intestine faster. This can lower the risk of constipation, diverticular disease, & colon cancer.
- Repeated studies have shown whole grains can reduce the risk of stroke, type 2 diabetes, heart disease, as well as improve weight management.

Milk

- Milk is a great source of calcium, which is needed for lifelong healthy bones and teeth.
- Calcium is important for young people because 90% of bone mass is developed by age 17.

The Fantastic Five!

The 5 Components of a Meal Help Build a Strong Body & Mind

Fruits & Vegetables

- Fruits & vegetables provide essential vitamins & minerals, & other nutrients that are important for growth.
- Fruits & vegetables are a good source of fiber which promotes healthy digestion & may help prevent colon cancer.
- Most fruits & vegetables are naturally low in fat & calories & keep you feeling full longer.
- Eating fruits & vegetable has been shown to reduce the risk of certain chronic disease. These diseases include stroke, type 2 diabetes, some types of cancer, & heart disease.



Meat

- Meat is a valuable source of protein. Proteins provide structural support to vital body tissues and structures.
- Proteins also support the immune system.
- Meat & soy are the only foods that contain all 9 essential amino acids the body needs.



References

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