



United States Department of Agriculture

News Release

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USDA Proposes New Science-Based Meal Patterns for Child and Adult Care Food Program

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9, 2015 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released a proposed rule today with new science-based nutrition standards for meals provided through USDA's Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). With over 3 million children receiving meals from the CACFP each day, the proposed meal patterns will help ensure children have access to healthy, balanced meals throughout the day. The rule will also provide older adults and adults in nonresidential daycare settings greater access to nutritious foods.

Under the proposed rule, meals served to children and adults in day care will include a greater variety of vegetables and fruits, more whole grains, and less sugar and fat. These changes support the ongoing efforts of numerous parents, and the many public and private organizations that serve children, to solve the current obesity crisis. Today's proposal is the first major update of the CACFP meal patterns since the program's inception in 1968.

USDA designed meal pattern changes that would not increase cost for providers. The proposal focuses on incremental changes that reflect the science behind the nutritional needs of CACFP's diverse participants, and are practical and achievable for the program's varied service providers to implement. Along with the updated meal patterns, USDA is proposing best practices as a guide for providers when choosing to take additional steps to offer high-quality and nutritious meals in their program.

"With over one in five children under the age of five being overweight or obese, the proposed improvements to the CACFP meal patterns will help safeguard the health of children early in their lives," Agriculture Undersecretary Kevin Concannon said. "Providing children access to nutritious food early in life helps instill healthy habits that can serve as a foundation for a lifetime of healthy choices."

Mandated by the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the proposed meal pattern updates delivered to the *Federal Register* today for publication next week are designed to work in concert with USDA's school meals standards, now implemented in schools across the country. Additionally, the proposed changes

support breastfeeding and improve access to healthy beverages, including water and low-fat and fat-free milk. These updated meal patterns are based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, scientific recommendations from the Institute of Medicine, and stakeholder input.

CACFP contributes to the nutritious foods that young children need for healthy growth, development, and wellness. Each day, the program provides millions of meals and snacks to children in their regular day care, children residing in emergency shelters, youth participating in afterschool programs, and participants in adult day care programs. While data shows childhood obesity rates are starting to level off, the proposed CACFP meal patterns are critical to creating stronger community nutrition programs and continuing successful obesity prevention efforts to help our youngest children learn to enjoy healthy foods and resolve the obesity problem.

“Not only does this program ensure nutritious meals for children,” Concannon said, “It also enables child care providers to sustain their businesses and provide affordable care to low income families.”

USDA is seeking input on the proposed rule from the public. Those interested in reviewing the proposal and offering comments during the 90 day period are encouraged to do so once it is published at www.regulations.gov, a Web-based portal to make it easy for citizens to participate in the federal rulemaking process. All comments received will be considered carefully in finalizing the rule before it is implemented

The Child and Adult Care Food Program is one of 15 nutrition assistance programs, including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast programs, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, and the Summer Food Service Program. These programs touch the lives of one in four Americans each year and, taken together, comprise America’s nutrition safety net.

For more information about the proposed changes, please visit: www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/federal-register-documents.

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- [CACFP Meal Pattern Rule 010915 - Internet.pdf](#)