

Questions and Answers

I. OFFER VERSUS SERVE (At-risk and adult day care programs only)

1. How many items may a child or adult decline in OVS?

If an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program chooses to use OVS at breakfast, a child or adult may decline any one food item of the four food items offered. The adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program may choose to offer additional food items beyond the four required. For example, an OVS breakfast menu may consist of:

- Cereal and toast (two grain items);
- Orange slices and bananas (two fruit items); and
- Milk (one milk item).

In these cases, children or adults still have to take **at least three different** food items in order for the meal to be reimbursable but may decline more than one food item. In this example, a meal of cereal, toast and milk would be reimbursable. This is because two different grain items and a milk item were selected by the child or adult. The child or adult does not need to select a fruit/vegetable item in order for the meal to be reimbursable.

If an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program chooses to use OVS at lunch or supper, a child or adult must take food items from at least three food components, so when five food items (one food item from each of the required five food components) are offered a child or adult may decline up to two food items. Similar to breakfast, the adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program may choose to offer different food items within each required component, providing more choices for the child or adult to select from and the option to decline more than two food items. However, a child or adult must take food items from at least three food components for it to be a reimbursable lunch or supper, not just three different food items.

For example, this OVS lunch menu has six food items from the five food components:

- Milk (one milk item);
- Roasted turkey and yogurt (two meat/meat alternate items);
- Apple slices (one fruit item);
- Broccoli (one vegetable item); and
- Bread roll (one grain item).

There are many combinations a child or adult may select, some of those include:

- Milk, roasted turkey, and broccoli;
- Milk, broccoli and bread roll; and
- Yogurt, apple slices, and broccoli.

However, if a child or adult selects roasted turkey, yogurt and the bread roll, the meal is not reimbursable. This is because roasted turkey and yogurt are two food items from the same food component. Therefore, the selected meal only contains two food components (meat/meat alternates and grains) instead of the required three components.

It is the adult supervisor's responsibility to ensure that children and adults understand which foods they may decline under OVS. This can be done through signage and instructions to participants.

2. Under OVS, may a child or adult decline a combination food?

It depends. When adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs choose to use OVS at breakfast, at least four food items must be offered and a child or adult must take at least three of those food items and decline only one. Therefore, a child or adult may not decline a combination food at breakfast when four food items are offered.

For example, this breakfast menu includes a combination food and four food items:

- Milk (one milk item);
- Waffle with strawberries (combination food with a grain item and fruit item);
and
- Orange slices (one fruit item).

In this situation, the child or adult must take the waffle with strawberries in order for the meal to be reimbursable. This is because if a child or adult declines the waffle with strawberries, there are only two other food items (milk and orange slices) for them to select and the child or adult must select three different food items in order for the breakfast to be reimbursable.

An adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program may choose to offer more than four food items at breakfast, such as:

- Milk (one milk item);
- Waffle with strawberries (combination food with a grain item and fruit/vegetable item);
- Orange slices (one fruit/vegetable item); and
- Cereal (one grain item).

In this situation, a child or adult would be able to decline the combination food (waffle with strawberries) and must take all the other food items (orange slices, cereal and milk) for the breakfast to be reimbursable.

When an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program chooses to use OVS at lunch or supper, at least one food item from each of the required five food components must be offered.

The child or adult must take food items from at least three food components in order for the meal to be reimbursable. Therefore, if a combination food contains three or more food components and a total of five food items are offered (three of which are included in the combination food), a child or adult cannot decline the combination food.

For example, an OVS lunch menu may consist of:

- Milk (one milk item);
- Vegetable and bean burrito (combination food with three food items from three components: grain, vegetable, and meat/meat alternate); and
- Apple (one fruit item).

Under this menu, a child or adult must take the burrito in order for the meal to be reimbursable. This is because if a child or adult declines the burrito, then there are only two food components for them to select and three food components must be selected for the lunch to be reimbursable.

An adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program may choose to serve a lunch menu with a combination food and an additional three food items. For example, this lunch menu includes six food items and one combination food:

- Milk (one milk item);
- Vegetable and bean burrito (combination food with three food items from three components: grain, vegetable, and meat/meat alternate);
- Chicken strips (one meat/meat alternate item); and
- Apple (one fruit item).

Under this menu, the child or adult would be able to decline the combination food and must take all the other food components (the chicken strips, apple and milk) for the lunch to be reimbursable.

3. Is a child or adult required to take a vegetable or fruit in CACFP OVS?

A child or adult is not required to take a vegetable or fruit when an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program uses OVS. Under CACFP OVS, there are no specific food items or components that a child or adult must take. A child or adult must simply take three different food items at breakfast and three different food components at lunch or supper. While FNS encourages increased consumption of vegetables and fruits, it is the child or adult's choice to select or decline a food component. Additionally, children and adults should not be discouraged or prevented from taking all the food items offered during OVS.

4. Does OVS require an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program to offer daily choices within each of the food components?

No. Adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs that choose to use OVS must offer all the required food components while allowing participants to decline a limited number of food items or components they do not intend to eat. OVS does not require adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs to offer participants a variety of vegetables, fruits or choices within other components. However, when using OVS, FNS encourages adult day care centers and at-risk afterschool programs to offer a variety of food choices within the components to help increase the likelihood that children and adults will select foods they prefer, reduce waste and ensure children and adults are receiving enough food to meet their nutritional needs.

5. When an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program uses OVS, how do monitors ensure enough food is provided?

During onsite reviews, monitors should observe the meal service and ensure that adequate components and serving sizes are provided so that all children and adults are offered a reimbursable meal. Monitors may also review policies, training materials, receipts, menus, inventories, and invoices. Please note, maintaining production records is not a Federal requirement in CACFP.

6. When using OVS, if an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program runs out of a component, are all the meals served after the required component is no longer available disallowed?

Yes. Similar to other types of meal service, all the required food components in the required minimum serving sizes must be offered in order to be eligible for reimbursement. If an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program runs out of a food component when using OVS, all meals served after that point are not reimbursable because the adult day care food program or at-risk afterschool program was unable to offer the rest of the children or adults a complete reimbursable meal.

If an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program offers a breakfast menu with a ½ cup apples and a ½ cup bananas, (1/2 cup is the minimum serving size for the fruit and vegetable component at breakfast for children 6-12 years old, 13-18 years old, and adults), and the apples run out before all the participants are served, the meal would still be reimbursable. This is because a complete reimbursable meal is still offered.

However, if an adult day care center or at-risk afterschool program runs out of a food item it may be replaced with another food item in the same food component and the meals would still be reimbursable. For example, if a center serves oranges to meet the fruit component and runs out of oranges, the center may then begin serving apples in place of the oranges and still fulfill the fruit requirement.

II. FAMILY STYLE MEALS

1. How much food does a center or day care home need to initially serve on the table when serving meals family style?

The CACFP regulations require that the full required minimum serving sizes of each required food component of the meal (7 CFR 226.20(c)(1)-(2)) be placed on each table for all the children or adults at the table and to accommodate supervising adults if they wish to eat with the children or adults. For example, if there are 3 children between the ages 3-5 years and 1 supervising adult seated at a table for lunch, then at least $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sliced apples must be available for each person. Therefore, a total of 1 cup of apple slices must be served in the communal plate or bowl that is placed on the table. In this example, a total of 1 cup of sliced apples must be placed in the communal bowl or plate to meet the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup per person requirement for the fruit component (this includes the $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of fruit for the supervising adult).

2. Can a center or day care home choose to serve just one food item family style?

Yes. Centers and day care homes may serve one component, multiple components or all the required components of a meal in common serving bowls, plates, dishes, pitchers or containers on the table. For tips on how to successfully serve meals family style in CACFP, refer to the *Nutrition and Wellness Tips for Young Children's Supplement E: Support for Family Style Meals* available at http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/Supplement_E.PDF.

3. If a child refuses to serve him/herself the full minimum serving size of a required food component, such as vegetables, during a family style meal, can that meal still be claimed for reimbursement?

Yes. When preparing foods for family style meals, enough food must be provided for each child, as well as any supervising adults who are eating with the children, to be able to take the full minimum serving size. Children and adults should be encouraged to take the full serving size, but they are not required to self-serve or consume the full serving size to claim reimbursement. If a child or adult refuses to take a component, the meal can also still be claimed for reimbursement when serving meals family style.

4. During family style meals, can a supervising adult assist a young child or adult that is not able to serve him or herself?

Yes. Children and adults must be allowed to serve themselves in family style meal service. However, supervising adults may assist young children or adults who are unable to serve themselves. In the case of young children, family style meals are an opportunity to help children develop motor skills. A center or day care home may choose to have children start by serving themselves one food item while the supervising adult acts as a model and serves the rest of the food items.

5. What if a child or adult serves themselves too much or too little food?

Children and adults can be guided to follow their hunger and fullness cues and be encouraged to eat accordingly. This is one of the benefits of family style meals: it allows children and adults to control how much they want to eat. To help children and adults take the appropriate serving size for their age, centers and day care homes can use serving utensils that provide the amount needed for one serving. For example, if the meal pattern requires $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of fruit, use a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup scoop, ladle or spoodle for participants to serve the fruit.

If a child or adult does not take the minimum serving size, he or she should be encouraged to take the full serving size. However, the child or adult does not have to self-serve or consume the full serving size in order for the meal to be reimbursable.

Conversely, if a child or adult takes more than the serving size for their age group, the meal is still reimbursable because the meal pattern serving sizes are minimums. If the food in a communal platter is emptied before each participant is served, then the platter must be re-filled so each participant is offered a complete reimbursable meal. And, as a reminder, second meals cannot be claimed for reimbursement when serving meals family style.

6. Can leftover food be stored safely and served in another reimbursable meal?

Centers and day care homes must be aware of and in compliance with all applicable local and State health and food safety codes. Therefore, centers and day care homes should refer to their local and State agencies to determine if leftover foods can be reused. It is important to keep in mind that local and State health and food safety codes may place specific limitations on which food or beverage items may be reused.