

CACFP New Meal Pattern

Fruits and Vegetables Question and Answers

November 29, 2017

- 1. Is it required to serve two different vegetables or is it just best practice? Can you serve sunshine carrots that have two different colored carrots in a package and ¼ cup of fruit?**

Serving two different vegetables is an option and is not required. Sponsors and providers are given the choice of serving one serving of fruits and one serving of vegetables *or* two servings of different types of vegetables at lunch and supper. Mixed colored carrots would only count as one type of vegetable, but if served with ¼ cup of fruit, it would meet the requirement of having one vegetable and one fruit component for either lunch or supper.

- 2. If you have a homemade vegetable mix, can this be credited as two different types of vegetables at lunch or supper?**

Yes, homemade vegetable mixes, such as mixed broccoli and cauliflowers, can be credited as two different types of vegetables when served at lunch or supper as long as there is a recipe on file showing how each ingredient credits. In addition, the mix must contain at least 1/8 cup of each type of vegetable used for crediting and the vegetable that is being served in place of the fruit component must meet the minimum portion size of the fruit component it is replacing.

- 3. If I have a commercially purchased vegetable mix, such as frozen peas and carrots, would I need to have a product formulation statement that shows how much of each item is in the mix in order to count this vegetable mixture as two different vegetable components? Or can I have my cooks manually separate out the mix and credit this as two different vegetables?**

Commercially purchased vegetable mixes must have a product formulation statement that indicates how much of each vegetable is present in the mix if you want to count the vegetable as two different vegetable components. Manually separating vegetable mixes in order to credit the mixes as two different vegetable components is not allowed due to the impracticality of separating out vegetable mixes and the high likelihood of inaccuracy in determining portion sizes for each component.

- 4. For family style meal service, if two vegetables are being served, do they need to be served in two different bowls or can they be served in the same bowl?**

Two different vegetables may be served in the same bowl as long as there are menu records, production records, or recipes available that show portion size requirements for each vegetable is being met. For best practice, it is recommended that meal components are plated separately in family style service to allow for more flexibility of choice and the use of smaller serving bowls that can help younger participants better serve themselves.

5. How do you credit raw leafy greens? What if you cook the leafy greens? Can you give an example of how this changes the crediting?

One cup of *raw* leafy greens credit as ½ cup of vegetables. When *cooked*, the leafy greens credit for the volume that is served. So for example, a whole cup of raw spinach will credit as ½ cup of vegetables while ½ cup of cooked spinach will credit as ½ cup of vegetables.

6. Does vegetable soups, such as butternut squash or carrot soup, credit for the vegetable component?

Soups such as butternut squash, carrot, pumpkin, or tomato soup can credit towards the vegetable component if adequate crediting information is available. For homemade soups, this would include recipes showing the amount of vegetables that are present in each serving. For commercially purchased soups, a CN label or a product formulation statement showing the amount of creditable vegetables would need to be on file. Ready-to-serve vegetable soups, such as minestrone, tomato, or all-vegetable soups can credit for ¼ cup of vegetables per 1 cup serving according to the [Food Buying Guide](#).

7. Are dried fruits creditable?

Yes. ¼ cup of dried fruit can credit as ½ cup of fruits. For example, a serving of ¼ cup of raisins can credit for ½ cup of fruits at breakfast.

8. Are fruit cups creditable?

Fruit cups and fruit cocktails are generally creditable, however, packaged fruit mixes are often packed in water or syrup, making the amount of creditable fruit smaller than the package size. A sample fruit cup or can should be drained and measured to ensure that minimum portion sizes are being met.

9. There are some fruits and vegetables that are hard to categorize. How can I tell if they are fruits or vegetables? For example, are tomatoes and avocados fruits or vegetables?

For fruits and vegetables that are difficult to categorize, sponsors should use the [Food Buying Guide](#) to determine which component to credit. Based on the Food Buying Guide, both tomatoes and avocados are credited as vegetables.

10. Are French fries and tater tots considered vegetables?

Yes, French fries and tater tots would both be considered vegetables since they are both made from potatoes, which can be credited towards the vegetable component. Sponsors and providers should keep in mind that there is now a new restriction on deep-fat frying on site. While commercially made deep-fat-fried foods may be purchased and served, the items may not be reheated using a deep-fat fryer. As a best practice, it is recommended that commercially purchased pre-fried foods are limited to one serving per week.

11. Are corn and potatoes vegetables or grains? What about dry lentils and legumes?

Corn can credit as a vegetable when it is fresh, canned, or frozen in whole kernels. When corn is processed into corn flour, corn meal, or masa and made into items such as corn bread, grits, or tortillas, it credits as a grain. Potatoes can only credit as a vegetable. Dry lentils and legumes can credit as either a meat alternate or vegetable component only. To determine whether a food item is creditable and the component they credit for, sponsors and providers should consult the [Food Buying Guide](#).

12. During the April 2017 trainings, we learned that juices can be credited as either a fruit or vegetable based on the number of fruits and vegetables in the juice. The juice is counted towards the component with more ingredients listed. What if there is an equal number of fruits and vegetables in the juice?

When the number of fruits and vegetables are equal in a juice ingredients list, the component will be determined by the most prominent ingredient. The most prominent ingredient is the one that is listed first on an ingredients list. A 100% fruit and vegetable juice blend may be credited towards the fruit component when fruit juice or puree is the most prominent ingredient; similarly, the juice blend may be credited towards the vegetable component when vegetable juice or puree is the most prominent ingredient.

13. Could you explain how to credit juice in the fruits and vegetable components?

Juice will credit the same way as vegetables or fruits. Eight fluid ounces is equal to one cup. A four fluid ounce cup of apple juice will credit for ½ cup of the fruit component.

14. Does the once per day juice limit apply to each component, or does the once per day juice limit apply to both the fruit and vegetable components?

The once per day juice limit is inclusive of both the fruit and vegetable component. Sponsors and providers may only serve juice a maximum of once per day for all meal services across all meal components. Note that juices are no longer creditable under the infant meal pattern.

15. If juice is served through the National School Lunch (NSLP) program during the school day, does that juice count towards the once per day juice limit for the CACFP afterschool supper program at the same site?

No, the once per day juice limit does not cross over between NSLP and CACFP. Juices served through NSLP does not contribute to the CACFP juice limit.

16. Could a program that serves two different groups of children, such as a child care program that serves a morning class breakfast and lunch and an afternoon class lunch and PM snack, offer juice at both the breakfast and PM snack?

No, the once per day juice limit is per site and not per child. Juice may only be served at one meal service per day per site. If a site has different shifts for meals, then juice may be served at both shifts, but juice may not be served at two different meal services. Because breakfast and PM snack are different meal services, the juice may only be creditable at one of the meals.

17. Will smoothies containing yogurt and fresh fruit still be creditable? And if yes, how?

Yes, smoothies continue to be creditable towards the meal pattern depending on the ingredients and portion sizes used. A smoothie containing 4 ounces of yogurt and ½ cup of fresh fruit, the drink may credit towards the meat alternate and fruit components for a child in the 3-5 age range. Fruit that is pureed in a smoothie will credit as a juice and will be counted towards the once per day juice limit. For additional information on crediting smoothies, refer to the memo [CACFP 05-2014 titled Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition programs.](#)

18. We serve a pureed tomato sauce with pasta, would this meet the recognizable vegetable requirement for crediting?

Yes, the tomato sauce would credit for the vegetable component. While pureed vegetables and fruits blended into dishes would need to have at least 1/8 cup of recognizable component per serving to contribute to the meal component, the tomato sauce, though pureed, would be visible and recognizable as a vegetable.

19. Would an adult participant who requires a pureed diet need to have a medical statement on file in order for their meals to be reimbursable?

Participants requiring pureed diets are recommended to have a medical statement on file, although this is not required. In these cases, the purpose of having a medical statement would be to help the sponsor provide the appropriate texture modifications for their participant. Pureed items for participants needing texture modifications are generally recognizable as the food component.