

Cycle Menus are a key element in effective menu planning for Child Nutrition Program meal patterns. Cycle menus will help save time, simplify ordering and purchasing, and make the paperwork process less overwhelming, allowing more time for the preparation of tasty nutritious meals for participants.

WHAT IS A CYCLE MENU?

- A cycle menu is a series of menus that is repeated over a specific period of time
- The menu is different each day during the cycle
- At the end of the cycle, the menu is repeated

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF A CYCLE MENU?

- Save time and labor costs
 - Eliminates continuous planning of menus
 - Gathering information for crediting food items is more efficient
 - Purchasing procedures can be standardized
 - Menu costs are calculated once per cycle
 - Standardized grocery lists can be developed
 - Provides for more efficient production
- Allow menu planners to offer a variety of menu selections
 - Planners can take advantage of seasonal ingredients and celebration days
- Control food costs
 - Project for the exact amount of food to be purchased
 - Regularly used items can be purchased in bulk
- Reduce storage costs
 - Helps purchasers to keep stock at appropriate levels
- Reduce Food Waste
 - Menus are prepared repeatedly, making it easier to project food quantity to prepare

STEPS TO PLANNING CYCLE MENUS

1. Gather menu planning resources (ex: recipes, CN labels, FBG, etc.)
2. Decide on length of the cycle (ex: one, two, three, weeks, etc.)
3. Plan the main dishes (entrées) first
 - Plan a different main dish (entrée) for each day
 - Vary the meat/meat alternate throughout the week
4. Add foods to serve with the main dish to meet meal pattern requirements
5. Remember basic meal planning guidelines:
 - Include a variety of foods
 - Include familiar foods as well as new foods
 - Include different shapes, colors, textures, tastes, and temperatures of food
 - Balance higher-cost and lower-cost foods throughout the week
 - Include culturally relevant foods

TIPS

- Vary the preparation methods in a day's menu so equipment will not be overloaded
- Include both raw and cooked vegetables
- Include a variety of foods so participants get a wide range of nutrients
- Consider when fresh foods will arrive and how long they will last
- Consider delivery times and storage capacities of freezers and refrigerators
- Consider the season
- Remember that cycle menus can be flexible to allow variations for holidays, seasonal fruits and vegetables, special items, and the use of USDA Foods

RESOURCES: Individual training and additional resources for cycle menus can be found on the ODE Child Nutrition training webpage.

WHAT A CYCLE MENU MIGHT LOOK LIKE

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Hamburger on a Wheat Bun	Sweet Sesame Chicken with Brown Rice	Cheese Pizza Sticks with Marinara Sauce	Walking Taco	Chicken Nuggets
Week 2	Grilled Chicken Sandwich	Crunchy Seaside Fish & Chips	Ravin' Rotini & Meat Sauce	Beefy Bean Burrito	Toasted Cheese Sandwich
Week 3	Mac & Cheese	Chicken Broccoli Bowl with Oriental Noodles	Pepperoni Pizza	Quirky Quesadilla	Sloppy Joe
Week 4	BBQ Chicken with a Wheat Roll	Mini Meatball Sub	Teriyaki Turkey with Brown Rice	Taco Salad in a Tortilla Bowl	Harbor Fish Sandwich
Week 5	Cheesy Chili	Sweet and Sour Chicken with Brown Rice	Mexican Pizza	Chicken Alfredo with a Twist	Delicious Deli

- First, collect documentation for crediting all of the main dishes (entrées) that will be served.
 - For example: USDA Recipes, recipes with a USDA Recipe Analysis Worksheet (RAW), products with a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement, a CN Label or other acceptable crediting documentation
- Week by week – begin to plan the menu. Start with choosing entrées for each week. Next, add in fruit, vegetables and milk.
- Review the total monthly menu for balance and variety.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1	Hamburger on a Wheat Bun Oven Baked Potato Wedges Fresh Crunchy Apple Milk*	Sweet Sesame Chicken with Brown Rice Garden Green Salad Apricots Milk	Cheese Pizza Sticks with Marinara Sauce Half & Half Salad Fresh Oregon Pear Milk	Walking Taco Marinated Black Bean Salad Saucy Salsa Gorgeous Grapes Milk	Chicken Nuggets Fabulous Finger Squash Wonderful Watermelon Milk
Week 2	Grilled Chicken Sandwich 3 Bean Salad Peach Cup Milk	Crunchy Seaside Fish & Chips 3 Color Apple Basket Milk	Ravin' Rotini & Meat Sauce Steamed Italian Veggie Blend Peaches Milk	Beefy Bean Burrito Great Greens & Tomato Orange Smiles Milk	Toasted Cheese Sandwich Fresh Crispy Vegetables Oregon Blueberries Milk
Week 3	Mac & Cheese Popeye Salad Fresh Farm Tomatoes Great Green Grapes Milk	Chicken Broccoli Bowl with Oriental Noodles Edamame Pineapple Milk	Pepperoni Pizza Oven Roasted Vegetables Applesauce Milk	Quirky Quesadilla Veggie Sticks & Spicy Dip Peaches Milk	Sloppy Joe Match Stick Potatoes Kiwi & Strawberries Milk
Week 4	BBQ Chicken with a Wheat Roll Vegetarian Baked Beans Milk	Mini Meatball Sub Oregon Green Beans Fresh From the Farm Fall Apples Milk	Teriyaki Turkey with Brown Rice Great Greens Mandarin Oranges Milk	Taco Salad in a Tortilla Bowl Tropical Fruit Mix Milk	Harbor Fish Sandwich Sweet Potato Fries Favorite Fruit Bar Milk
Week 5	Cheesy Chili Zucchini Bake Fresh Apple Milk	Sweet & Sour Chicken with Asian Brown Rice Oriental Vegetable Mix Pineapple Chunks Milk	Mexican Pizza Carnival Corn Fresh Pears Milk	Chicken Alfredo with a Twist Fresh Garden Vegetable Salad Orange Wedges Milk	Delicious Deli Sandwich Baby Carrots & Hummus Strawberry Cup Milk

- Next step - add all of the additional items needed to make each day's menu reimbursable and to meet the weekly requirements for each component.
- Add milk to the menu indicating the choices that are allowable under the meal pattern you are offering.
- Finally, include the civil rights statement.

*Daily selections include a choice of Low-Fat (unflavored) or Fat-Free (unflavored or flavored) milk

This institution is an equal opportunity provider