During this training we will discuss the specifics concerning Meat/Meat Alternate to meet the School Nutrition Meal Pattern for lunch and breakfast.

Please visit our training resource page for additional training. In the meal planning resource section you will find additional trainings for other food components.

The first section of this training we will focus on meat/meat alternate to meet the meal pattern for lunch then we will focus on breakfast.

The food-based menu planning approach focuses on food components, not nutrients. There are five required food components at lunch.
- Meat/Meat Alternate (M/MA)
- Fruits (F)
- Vegetables (V)
- Grains (G)
- Fluid Milk

Sponsors that offer a variety of selections on multiple lines must make all required food components available to all students on each line on a weekly basis. Sponsors must plan lunch menus using the age/grade groups K-5, 6-8,
Sponsors must price each meal as a unit. If Offer Versus Serve (OVS) is practiced, a lunch meal has the same cost if a student selects three, four, or five items. As of July 1, 2012, sponsors must identify, near or at the beginning of the serving line(s), the food items that constitute the unit priced reimbursable school meal(s).

Let’s take a brief moment to review the important role of the meat/meat alternate component has in nutrition.

They are an excellent source of
Protein
Iron
Zinc
B Vitamins

The main body functions that these nutrients derived from meat are
1. Building & repairing body tissues
2. Transporting oxygen & other nutrients
3. Producing Hormones & Enzymes
4. Fighting Disease/Illness
Let’s take a look at the meal pattern grid guide, for the meat/meat alternate.

We have a handout available showing this grid guide for your reference you can download. It is available with the training on the web or on the menu planning resource page.

On the slide the breakfast part is covered to remind you that we are only talking about the lunch meal pattern. And the meat/meat alternate component is highlighted.

To review, (click) you see the new three grade groups, at the top right, will be Grade groups, k-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Then look down on the left, (click) is listed the meat/meat alternate, with the minimum weekly **ounce equivalent** for the meat/meat alternate. (click) And in parentheses, is the **daily minimum** for that grade group.

Grade k-5 you need at least the minimum of 8 oz equivalent servings of meat/meat alternate for the week although the daily minimum is only 1 oz.

With Grades 6-8 you need the minimum 9 servings per week although the daily minimum is also 1 oz.

So for these two grade groupings, k-5 and 6-8, the minimum for the week will work out to needing more than 1 oz for most days.

Then the Grade group 9-12 you need at least 10 ounce equivalents per week, with, a **minimum 2 ounces daily**.

Please note that this grid is for a 5-day school week. We have a grid for 4-day-week, and a 7-day-week for your convenience, so you don’t have to do
Menu planners are encouraged to offer a variety of protein foods (e.g., lean or extra lean meats, fish, seafood, lowfat dairy products, tofu, eggs, poultry, beans/peas). USDA Foods provide low-sodium processed meats, cheeses, and other Meat/Meat Alternate products that help schools meet this requirement. For the Meat/Meat Alternate component, commercially processed combination foods such as convenience entrees (frozen or canned) must have a Child Nutrition (CN) label or manufacturer’s analysis sheet that states the food component contribution to the lunch meal pattern. Regardless of the protein foods offered, schools must plan all meals with the goal to meet the dietary specifications for sodium, saturated fat, trans fat, and calories.

Remember Sponsors must offer a minimum amount of meat/meat alternate daily (Click) 2 oz. eq for students in grades 9-12, and (click) 1 oz. eq for younger students), as well as a (click) weekly required amount for each age/grade group. The menu must be compliant with the daily and weekly
minimums for the meat/meat alternate component. Please note for the k-5 and 6-8 age/grade group you must serve more than the minimum daily amount to reach your weekly requirement.

Nut and seed butters may be used to meet all or part of the meat/meat alternate requirement. Examples include almond butter, cashew nut butter, peanut butter, reduced fat peanut butter, sesame seed butter, soy nut butter, and sunflower seed butter. Two tablespoons of nut or seed butter equal one ounce of the meat/meat alternate requirement.

Nuts or seeds such as sunflower seeds, almonds, and hazelnuts may be used to meet no more than one-half of the meat/meat alternate component and must be paired with another meat/meat alternate to meet the full requirement.

Since school meals are an opportunity for children to learn to eat healthy and balanced meals, foods served should be easily recognized by children as part of a food group that contributes to a healthy meal.
Tofu is widely recognized as a meat substitute and can easily be included in the school meal. We recognize that tofu is being used to produce other meat substitute products such as links and sausages made from tofu, which are easily recognizable as meat substitutes and can be credited as such. However, products made with tofu that are not easily recognized as meat substitutes, would not contribute to any component of the reimbursable meal and do not meet the customary and usual function of the meat/meat alternate component. Soft tofu for example, blended into a recipe so that it is not recognizable (i.e. in a soup) or does not represent a meat substitute (i.e. tofu noodles) does not qualify as a meat alternate.

When considering processed tofu products such as links and sausages made from tofu as meat alternates for the reimbursable meal, the tofu ingredient must contain the required 5 grams of protein or more, which is not shown on a nutrition facts panel. Therefore, the most appropriate way to ensure that the product meets Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) requirements is to request that the product be manufactured under the CN Labeling Program following a federally approved quality control program.

Commercially prepared tofu and soy products may be used to meet all or part of the meat/meat alternate component in accordance with FNS guidance. A 2.2 ounce serving (¼ cup) of commercially prepared tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein equals one ounce of meat/meat substitute.
Alternate. Noncommercial and/or non-standardized tofu and soy products are not creditable.

Other meat alternates, such as cheese and eggs, may be used to meet all or part of the meat/meat alternate component in accordance with FNS guidance.

The term “dry beans and peas” refers to the harvesting process of allowing the bean or pea to “mature” or “dry” on the plant before harvesting; it does not refer to the “as-purchased” form of the bean. Many canned or frozen beans or peas are actually dry beans and peas that have been cooked and subsequently canned or frozen, and are therefore acceptable.

Beans and peas that are not allowed to mature on the plant before harvesting are often referred to as, “immature” or “fresh” and do not qualify as dry beans or peas for the lunch meal pattern.
criteria. Immature lima beans, field and green peas are examples of beans and peas that are not allowed to dry on the plant before harvest and therefore do not qualify as “dry beans and peas.” They do count as starchy vegetables, however.

The beans and peas listed in the meat/meat alternate section of the Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs qualify for the lunch meal pattern criteria for meat/meat alternate. For additional information see the USDA Food Buying Guide Calculator.

The Dietary Guidelines emphasize more dry beans and peas (legumes) because they provide a broad array of vitamins, minerals, and macronutrients, including those that are nutrients of concern. They are also a great economical source of dietary fiber and plant protein as both dry and canned forms are inexpensive. These products can be purchased in the dry form and cooked at the school, or purchased as canned and precooked. A variety of dry beans/peas are available through the USDA Foods program which may be incorporated into entrees, side dishes, or salad bars.

Dry/mature beans and peas may be offered as a meat alternate or as a vegetable, at the discretion of the menu planner. However, one serving may not count toward both food components in the same meal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grades K-5</th>
<th>Grades 6-8</th>
<th>Grades 9-12</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 oz. eq.</td>
<td>9 oz. eq.</td>
<td>10 oz. eq.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum Weekly</td>
<td>Minimum Weekly</td>
<td>Minimum Weekly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 oz. eq.</td>
<td>1 oz. eq.</td>
<td>2 oz. eq.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum Daily</td>
<td>Minimum Daily</td>
<td>Minimum Daily</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Dry/mature beans and peas may be offered as a meat alternate or as a vegetable, at the discretion of the menu planner. However, one serving may not count toward both food components in the same meal.
Lunch Meat/Meat Alternate—Refried Beans

• Menu planners must determine in advance how to count beans/peas in a meal.

One serving of refried beans can be offered as a vegetable in one meal and as a meat/meat alternate on another occasion. The refried beans offered as a vegetable count toward the weekly beans/peas requirement, but not toward the meat/meat alternate weekly range. Menu planners must determine in advance how to count beans/peas in a meal.

A sponsor may offer two distinct servings of beans/peas (legumes) in one meal. For example, legumes may be offered as part of a salad (vegetable component) and as part of chili/bean soup (meat/meat alternate component).

A ¼ cup of cooked beans equals one ounce equivalent of meat/meat alternate or ¼ cup legume vegetable.
A ¼ cup of cooked beans equals one ounce of the meat/meat alternate requirement. If with liquid, there should be more than ¼ cup of beans and liquid. The liquid does not count as beans.

Mature beans & dry peas, otherwise known as Legumes, can continue to count as either a vegetable in the new subgroup mature beans & dry peas or Legumes, (CLICK) or as a meat/meat alternate but not as both (CLICK) in the same meal.

This needs to be decided in the menu planning stage how you want to count the mature beans/dry peas or Legumes you are serving, a vegetable or a meat/meat alternate but not both during the same meal.
Now we will focus on meat/meat alternate to meet the meal pattern for breakfast.

A food component is one of the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts. The three food components to be offered to all students at breakfast are: grains (with optional meats/meat alternate items allowed); fruit/vegetable; and fluid milk.

**Age/Grade Groups**
Sponsors must plan menus using the age/grade groups K-5, 6-8, and 9-12.

**Food-Based Menu Planning**
The food-based menu planning approach focuses on food components, not nutrients. There are three required food components at breakfast.

**Food Component—Breakfast**
A food component is one of the three food groups that comprise reimbursable breakfasts. The three food components to be offered to all students at breakfast are: grains (with optional meats/meat alternate items allowed); fruit/vegetable; and fluid milk.

**Food Item**
A food item in the School Breakfast Program is a specific food offered within the three food components. In the School Breakfast Program, a sponsor must offer at least four food items. For the purposes of Offer Versus Serve (OVS), students must select at least three food items for a
reimbursable breakfast meal.

**Unit Pricing**
Sponsors must price each meal as a unit. If Offer Versus Serve (OVS) is practiced, a breakfast meal has the same cost if a student selects three, four, or five items. As of July 1, 2012, sponsors must identify, near or at the beginning of the serving line(s), the food items that constitute the unit priced reimbursable school meal(s).

Sponsors may offer a meat/meat alternate in place of part of the grains component after the **minimum** daily grains requirement (1 oz. eq) is offered in the menu or planned breakfast. A serving 1 oz. eq meat/meat alternate may credit as 1 oz. grains. Sponsors have the option to serve 1 oz. equivalent servings of grains and a meat/meat alternate item every day at breakfast and count both toward the weekly grains requirement and dietary specifications.

Beans/peas (legumes) may be credited as a meat/meat alternate item and count toward the grains component, provided that at least 1 oz. eq of grains is also offered that day as part of a reimbursable breakfast even though the new SBP does not require a meat/meat alternate component. Additionally, if counted as a meat/meat alternate, they cannot be counted towards meeting the fruit/vegetable component.

Sponsors may also offer a meat/meat alternate item as an additional food
and not credit it toward the weekly grains requirement) if it fits within the other weekly dietary specifications, including calories.

On this slide you will find the resources referenced in this training.

Thank you for completing the meat/meat alternate component training. If you have questions please contact your Assigned Specialist.