

City Agency Food Standards – Requirements and Recommendations

This document outlines standards for food purchased and meals served, with the goal of improving the health of all New Yorkers served by City agencies. It has been developed based upon agency feedback, review, and agreement. These standards do not apply to food available in vending machines, or at independent concessions that provide food *for sale* through leases, licenses or contracts at City programs.

Agencies and their contractors are expected to follow the standards described in each of the three sections:

- I. Standards for Purchased Food
Addresses food items purchased by agencies and their contractors and gives specific standards by food category.
- II. Standards for Meals and Snacks Served
Addresses the overall nutrient requirements that should be achieved based on the number of meals and snacks served and describes standards for snacks and special occasions.
- III. Agency and Population-Specific Standards and Exceptions
Describes standards for specific populations (e.g. children, seniors) and agencies. The additions and exceptions in the third section supersede the first two sections. For example, children under 2 years may be served whole milk, instead of 1% or nonfat milk required in the first section.

The first two sections are overlapping. Agencies must ensure that all purchased food items meet the purchased food standards in Section I. These items must then fit in to all meals or snacks served such that these meals and snacks meet the nutrient requirements in Section II standards. The purchased food standards ensure that agencies are making healthier choices like low-fat dairy products a regular part of people's diets and ensuring that people who eat a few items of each meal will have healthy options. The meal and snack standards ensure that people eating whole meals and snacks are eating a healthy, balanced diet.

Agency contractors, which provide meals to City-funded programs, are also required to comply with these standards. This includes both foodservice contractors and programmatic contractors that serve food within the context of their program.

All food purchased or served by a City agency is required to meet the standards that appear in **bold**. Agencies are expected to be in compliance with all standards within 6 months of adoption; for a limited number of items, technical challenges in reformulation may require a longer time frame for compliance with sodium and fiber requirements. Details of these allowances are provided within the standards.

I. Standards for Purchased Food

These standards are defined per serving of food. The serving size is based on FDA-established lists of "Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed Per Eating Occasion" and is used on the Nutrition Facts Panel, unless otherwise noted.

Nutrient Standards:

- Trans fat:
 - **Require** restriction consistent with DOHMH, City regulation and law. (For more information: <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/public/notice-adoption-hc-art81-08.pdf>)
- Sodium:
 - **Require** all individual items to have 480 mg or less sodium per serving, unless otherwise stated below.
 - Recommend purchasing "low sodium" (140mg or less sodium per serving) or "reduced sodium" (original sodium level reduced by 25%) whenever feasible; all products must have 480 mg or less sodium per serving, unless noted.
- **Require no** purchase of food products prepared by deep frying.

Food Category Standards:

- Beverages:
 - **Require** ≤ 25 calories per 8 oz. for beverages other than 100% juice or milk.
 - If purchasing juice, **require** 100% fruit juice.
- Canned fruits:
 - **Require** fruit canned in its own juice. No fruit canned in syrup.
- Dairy:
 - **Require** milk be 1% or non-fat and ≤ 100 calories per 8 oz.¹
 - **Require** any fluid milk substitute (e.g. soymilk) be ≤ 100 calories per 8 oz.¹
 - **Require** low-fat or non-fat yogurt.
 - Recommend that cheese contain ≤ 215 mg sodium per serving.
 - Recommend low fat cheese.
- Bread, pasta, and other grains and starches:
 - **Require** bread and baked goods contain ≤ 215 mg sodium per serving.
 - Recommend whole grain bread, pasta, etc.
 - Recommend breads contain ≥ 2 g fiber per serving.
- Cereal
 - **Require** cereal contain ≤ 215 mg sodium per serving.
 - Recommend cereal contain ≤ 10 g per serving of sugar.
 - Recommend cereal contain ≥ 3 g fiber per serving.
- Canned vegetables:
 - **Require** canned vegetables contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving or have "no salt added".
- Canned and frozen tuna, salmon and other seafood:
 - **Require** canned and frozen seafood contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving or have "no salt added".
- Canned meat:
 - **Require** canned meat contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.
- Portion controlled items and other convenience foods:

¹ For children ages 2-18 years flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes are permitted and **required** to be ≤ 130 calories per serving. Recommend that agencies continue to phase out flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes over time.

- **Require** portion controlled items and other convenience foods such as breaded chicken and veal patties contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.
- Frozen whole meals:
 - **Require** frozen whole meals contain ≤ 800 mg sodium per meal.
- Condiments:
 - Recommend low-fat mayonnaise; reduced sodium soy sauce; low-sodium ketchup; and low-fat and low-sodium and low-calorie salad dressings (as per FDA definitions).
 - Individual packets of condiments (sugar, salt, etc.) are not limited.
- Meat
 - Recommend purchasing “extra lean” beef and pork (total fat $\leq 5\%$) and at least 90% lean ground beef.
 - Recommend that bacon contain ≤ 290 mg sodium per serving.
 - Recommend that sausage contain ≤ 480 mg sodium per serving.

Note regarding **sodium standards** for purchased food:

In some instances successful sodium reduction requires gradual change to maintain product taste and quality. If, after 6 months, an agency is purchasing non-compliant products that are essential to menu planning and that agency has demonstrated a commitment to reduce the sodium in those products, the agency may continue to purchase those products with a sodium reduction plan in place over the next three years. By January 1, 2009, agencies must provide a list of products meeting these conditions, their current sodium content, and a plan for compliance or 20% sodium reduction within 3 years to the Food Policy Coordinator and the Health Commissioner.

Note regarding populations with religious or special dietary food needs:

If an agency cannot meet required purchased food standards due to a lack of availability of food items that meet the specific needs of the population they serve (ex. packaged kosher foods), the agency is expected to find suitable replacements for these products as quickly as is feasible. The agency will provide a list of those products to the Food Policy Coordinator and the Health Commissioner.

II. Standards for Meals and Snacks Served

All City agencies must adhere to agreed upon standards and must have a plan for regular menu review to ensure that they accomplish specified nutrient content goals. Outlined in this section are standards for Nutrition, Meals Served, and Snacks Served.

Nutrition Standards

These standards incorporate those already used by many City agencies and are based on the USDA's 2005 *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*.

Require the following daily ² nutrient standards.	
Nutrient	Adult (RDA or AI)
Calories	2,000 kcal ³
Sodium*	< 2,300 mg
Sodium (< 19 years)	< 2,200 mg
Sodium (> 50 years)	< 1,500 mg
Fat	≤ 30% of kcal
Saturated Fat	< 10% of kcal
Fiber	> 28g ⁴
Recommend the following daily nutrient standards.	
Protein	10-35% of kcal
Carbohydrate	45-65% of kcal
Cholesterol*	< 300 mg
Potassium	4,700 mg
Calcium	1,000 mg
Iron	> 8mg (18mg F; 8mg M)

* *Daily limit, regardless of total calorie intake*

Standards for agencies serving only one or two meals per day:

- **Require** each meal served meets appropriate range of calories, sodium and fiber: 25-30% for breakfast; 30-35% for lunch; 30-35% for dinner.⁵
- Recommend potassium, calcium, and iron amounts be proportional to calories served.

Note regarding sodium and fiber meal standards:

If an agency cannot meet the required nutrition standard for sodium or fiber, upon adoption of the standards, it is expected to meet the standard as quickly as is feasible, but in no more than 3 years. The Food Procurement Task Force will track the level of sodium and fiber over time to ensure agency progress.

² If an agency, like the Department of Education, calculates nutrients on a weekly basis and serves a similar population, the agency may use the weekly average instead of daily numbers to meet all nutrient requirements (in line with National School Lunch Program).

³ Agencies serving the correctional population, **require** calories be kept to less than 2,200 kcal for women and 2,800 kcal for men.

⁴ **Require** fiber be ≥ 25g per day for agencies serving populations with a majority of children 4 to 19 years old. For agencies serving children 1 to 4 years old, **require** fiber ≥ 19g per day. These daily requirements are for agencies serving 3 meals per day. Agencies serving less than 3 meals, should follow the appropriate range provided for fiber per meal.

⁵ The Department of Education, which has federal standards for minimum amount of calories served, may serve up to 785 calories for lunch, for grades 7-12 (in line with National School Lunch Program).

Meal Standards

- Fruits and vegetables:
 - **Require** minimum of two servings per meal for lunch and dinner.
 - For agencies serving three meals, **require** minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables a day.
 - Recommend substituting canned fruits and vegetables with fresh or frozen.
- Beverages:
 - **Require** water be available at all meals (this is in addition to other beverages regularly served). Agencies should be in compliance within 1 year. Those agencies that are unable to provide water at all meals due to structural or programmatic constraints are required to document constraints and submit a plan for addressing them by to the greatest extent possible by July 1, 2009 to the Food Policy Coordinator and the Health Commissioner. Tap water should be used wherever possible.
 - Recommend portion size limited to \leq 8oz per serving for juice.
- Food preparation and service:
 - **Require** elimination of deep fryers⁶; no deep frying.
 - Recommend review and establishment of standards for serving containers (e.g. the size of food plates and beverage cups) points of access to water, condiments and seasonings, including salt, consistent with serving sizes necessary to achieve nutritional balance. (*Related issue of vending machine locations, content and access addressed in Phase II*)

Snack Standards

Snacks should add important nutrients to the overall diet and help curb hunger.

For sites participating in the USDA's Child & Adult Care Food Program, these snack standards are in compliance with the snack pattern requirements and are eligible for reimbursement with the exception of low calorie beverage choices for sites serving adults.

Overall Guidelines

- **Require** all items to be 0g trans fat.
- **Require** foods served be on the list of acceptable choices or should provide equivalent nutrient value (for example: melon slices for the fruit category).
- Recommend water is available at all snack times (this is in addition to other beverages regularly served).

Choose at least 2 items, each from different food categories below:

Food Category 1: Dairy beverages

- Serving size is 1 cup (8 oz)
- **Require** milk be 1% or fat-free.^{7,8}

⁶ In situations where there are currently deep fryers, it may require a long time frame and significant structural changes to existing facilities. The standard requires that all new or renovated kitchens be built without deep fryers.

⁷ Children ages 12 months to under age 2 should be served whole milk.

⁸ For children ages 2-18 years flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes are permitted and **required** to be \leq 130 calories per serving. Recommend that agencies continue to phase out flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes over time.

- **Require** fluid milk substitute (e.g. soymilk) be ≤ 100 calories per 8 oz.

Food Category 2: Fruit or vegetable or juice

- Serving size is $\leq \frac{3}{4}$ cup (6 oz) or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup fresh fruit.
- If 100% fruit juice is selected, milk cannot be the other item.
- Examples of acceptable choices: carrot sticks, celery sticks, pepper slices, salads, apples, bananas, pears, oranges, dried fruit, applesauce with no sugar added, and canned fruit in its own juice.

Food Category 3: Bread or grain

- Serving size: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup or 1 slice
- **Require** sodium ≤ 215 mg per serving for bread.
- **Require** sodium ≤ 215 mg per serving for all crackers, chips, salty snacks.
- **Require** sugar ≤ 10 g per serving.
- **Require** fiber ≥ 2 g per serving.
- Recommend all items served be whole grain.
- Examples of acceptable choices: whole wheat pita triangles, whole grain cereal, whole grain crackers, whole grain bread, rice cakes, popcorn.
- Non-appropriate items: doughnuts, pastries, croissants, cake, etc.

Food Category 4: Protein (meat or meat alternative)

- Serving size: 1 oz cheese; beans ≤ 2 oz.; yogurt ≤ 4 oz.
- Examples of acceptable choices: hummus, bean dip, cottage cheese, low-fat cheese, hard boiled eggs, low fat or non fat yogurt, low-sodium tuna, nuts, nut butters, sunflower seeds, turkey slices.

Examples of acceptable eligible snack choices for children age 6-12 years, all served with water:

- Peanut butter (2 tbsp), whole grain crackers and apple slices
- A peach and whole grain crackers
- Half of a tuna sandwich: tuna (1 oz) on whole wheat bread with lettuce and tomato
- Turkey (1 oz) served with 5 whole wheat pita triangles and carrot sticks
- Milk and whole grain cereal, with fresh berries
- Mixed nuts (1 oz) and a banana
- Yogurt (4 oz), topped with blueberries and served with rice cakes
- Hummus ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) with pita and sliced red peppers

Beverages for sites serving adults

Require ≤ 25 calories per 8oz for beverages other than 100% juice or milk.

Condiments

- Recommend low-fat cholesterol-free mayonnaise; reduced sodium soy sauce; low-sodium ketchup; and low-fat and low-sodium and low-calorie salad dressings (as per FDA definitions), when possible
- Individual packets of condiments (sugar, salt, spread, jam, etc.) can be served when appropriate.

Recommend using added fats and sugars sparingly when preparing foods.

Special Occasion Standards for Meals and Snacks

Special occasion standards apply to trips, parties for holidays and special events where food is purchased from vendors not routinely used by the agency for normal food service.

- Recommend special occasion meals generally be limited (for example, once a month).
- Recommend special occasion snacks generally be limited (for example, once a month).
- **Require** healthy options be available, such as fresh fruit, leafy green salad, and/or vegetable slices.
- **Require** water be available at all special occasion events.
- Recommend, if serving sweets/desserts, offering in moderation.
- Recommend adherence to beverage standards.
- Recommend eliminating all foods that meet the USDA definition of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (definition available at: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/menu/fmnv.htm>)

III. Agency and Population-Specific Standards and Exceptions

In addition to baseline and category guidelines above, agencies which serve meals to populations with special nutritional needs (e.g. children, seniors) will require specific nutrition criteria.

Child Care Services Providers

All child care services that are issued permits under Article 47 of the Health Code are governed by the NYC Board of Health's regulations (Health Code §47.37 (§47.61 in revised Code) Food and food safety) that went into effect January 2007, and the Health Department's guidelines on nutrition for group child care services. All City agencies that contract with group child care services shall require contractors to comply with these regulations and guidelines in lieu of the City Agency Food Standards contained herein.

Home-based childcare providers are not required to comply with these standards.

Federal Commodity Food Programs

Food provided by the federal government to agencies is not required to meet the standards outlined in Section I. However, agencies accepting these foods are **required** to meet the nutrition standards outlined in Section II.

Children

Recommend agencies serving populations with a majority under 19 years of age follow the Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board's Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) for appropriate age groups.

Standards for Purchased Food

When milk is provided, children ages two and older shall only be served milk with 1% or less milk-fat unless milk with a higher fat content is medically required for an individual child, as documented by the child's medical provider. When milk is provided, children ages 12 months to under age 2 should be served whole milk.

Flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes are permitted and **required** to be ≤ 130 calories per serving. Recommend that agencies continue to phase out flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes over time.

Recommend juice not exceed 6 ounces per serving for children in elementary school.

Nutrition Standards

Require agencies serving populations with a majority of the population under 19 years old limit sodium to $\leq 2,200$ mg per day.

Require fiber be ≥ 25 g per day for agencies serving populations with a majority of children 4 to 19 years of age. For agencies serving a majority of children 1 to 4 years old, **require** fiber ≥ 19 g per day.

Recommend potassium be $\geq 3,800$ mg per day. For those agencies serving specific age groups, recommend children 4-8 years old receive $\geq 3,800$ mg per day; 9-13 years old receive $\geq 4,500$ mg per day; and 14-18 years old receive $\geq 4,700$ mg per day.

Recommend that calcium level be adjusted for age of children served: ≥ 800 mg per day for 4-8 year olds and $\geq 1,300$ mg per day for 9-18 year olds.

Seniors

Recommend agencies follow the Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board's Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI) for appropriate age groups.

Require agencies serving populations with a majority of the population over 50 years old limit sodium to $\leq 1,500$ mg per day. This is one of the more challenging goals and will require several years to implement. To reach this level of sodium intake, sodium will need to be reduced across the widest spectrum of foods and agencies will need to use other spices, so that taste preferences slowly adjust.

Recommend individual items contain ≤ 360 mg sodium per serving.

Correctional Population

Agencies serving the correctional population have a majority of young, healthy women and men who may require a higher than average caloric intake. For all meals and snacks served per day, **require** that calories be kept to less than 2,200 kcal for women and 2,800 kcal for men.

Patients Under Therapeutic Care

Nutrition requirements consistent with established medical guidelines and diets for patients under therapeutic care replace general nutrition criteria described here. The Patient Bill of Rights allows patients under therapeutic care to request specific food items. These items are considered part of the therapeutic diet and do not need to meet the nutrition criteria.

Emergency Food

Agencies that purchase food to be distributed by a third party to emergency food providers, such as soup kitchens and food pantries, are **required** to follow the guidelines outlined in Section I.

Food for Disaster Response

Food purchased by agencies to serve solely for a disaster or crisis response are not restricted by the nutrition criteria included here, recognizing such stocks intentionally include nutrient dense food products.