Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Simple Facts About School Meals

There have been many changes to the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. As a result of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, the first changes went into effect July 1, 2012. It was not easy for schools to make changes. However, school nutrition programs across the nation have successfully made school meals both healthy and appealing to students. In fact, many schools across the country serve as model programs. They made changes to their school meals long before the mandated changes took effect.

What School Meals Offer

- More whole grains
- Fruits and vegetables every day of the week
- Increased portions of fruits and vegetables
- Weekly choices of dark green and red/orange vegetables
- Weekly choice of beans/peas (legumes)
- Offering only 1% low-fat milk, fat-free milk, or flavored fat-free milk
- Specified calorie ranges for age groups: K–5, 6–8, and 9–12
- New guidelines for frequency of offering desserts
- Zero trans fats, except when naturally occurring in foods
- New breakfast guidelines
- Smart Snacks in Schools, effective July 2014, for healthier foods sold to students during the school day

Will More Changes Be Coming?

The 2012 changes were just the beginning of the many changes made to the school meal pattern. New breakfast guidelines were established in 2013. New snack standards start in 2014. Additionally, on July 1, 2014, new sodium specifications begin. Final targets for sodium will be reached by 2022–2023.

www.kidseatright.org

Adapted from: *The School Day Just Got Healthier*, USDA
http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/healthierschoolday/default.htm

For more information, visit:
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/team-nutrition

Educational Opportunity:

With these changes come many opportunities for parents! Teach your kids what a healthy plate should look like at home. This will help them establish healthy eating habits for life. Parents can visit www.choosemyplate.gov and www.kidseatright.org for helpful information.

How Can I Support School Meals?

- Encourage kids to start their days with a healthy breakfast at home or at school.
- Make time to enjoy a school breakfast or lunch with your kids. See the new and improved school meals for yourself!
- Ask your kids what changes they have noticed in school meals. Discuss why the changes were made.
- Be a healthy role model. Serving healthy foods at home helps kids choose healthy foods at school.
- Join a school wellness council. Support the positive changes in school meals. Advocate for increased opportunities for physical activity and nutrition education.

School Nutrition Services
a dietetic practice group of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

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