

USDA INFANT AND PRESCHOOL MEAL PATTERN IN SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Grains Component

This handout provides information about the grains requirements under the Infant and Preschool meal pattern. These requirements are for School Food Authorities (SFAs) serving children aged 1-5 years old and not yet in kindergarten (5K). A separate handout on the new infant meal pattern requirements is available.

Grains Component Requirements

- At least one serving of grains per day, per student must be whole grain-rich.
- Grain-based desserts are not creditable grains.
- Breakfast cereals must contain no more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce.



Whole Grain-Rich

Whole grain-rich (WGR) foods contain at least **50% whole grains**, and the remaining grains are enriched. This whole grain-rich requirement only applies to meals served to children 1 year and older; it does not apply to infant meals.

If a grain qualifies as whole grain-rich in the School Breakfast Program or National School Lunch Program, it is considered whole grain-rich under the Infant and Preschool meal pattern.

Grains like quinoa, brown rice, oatmeal may not have the word *whole* before their name, but are 100% whole grains. Foods labeled with the words *multi-grain*, *stone-ground*, *100% wheat*, *seven-grain*, or *bran* may not be whole grain-rich.

Serving Meals with Whole Grain-Rich Foods

Under the Infant and Preschool meal pattern, at least one meal per day must include a whole grain-rich food.

- If you only serve students ages 1-5 and not yet in kindergarten (5K) one meal per day (breakfast or lunch), the grain must be whole grain-rich.
- If you only serve students ages 1-5 and not yet in kindergarten (5K) more than one meal, you may choose which meal to serve the whole grain-rich food.

Schools that offer half-day sessions and serve different groups of students may choose to:

1. Treat each session as a separate program and offer at least one whole grain-rich food per day to students in *each* session.
2. Apply the meal pattern requirements across both half-day sessions and only offer a whole grain-rich food at least once per day.

| Whole grains | Not whole grains |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Amaranth | All-purpose flour |
| Brown or wild rice | Bread flour |
| Buckwheat | Bromated flour |
| Bulgur (cracked wheat) | Cake flour |
| Bromated whole wheat flour | Corn grits |
| Crushed wheat | Couscous |
| Graham wheat | De-germinated cornmeal |
| Millet | Durum flour |
| Oatmeal or rolled oats | Enriched flour |
| Quinoa | Enriched rice |
| Triticale | Enriched wheat flour |
| Whole grain barley | Farina |
| Whole rye | Long-grain white rice |
| Whole grain corn | Pearled barley |
| Whole cornmeal | Phosphate flour |
| Whole grain sorghum | Unbleached flour |
| Whole grain triticale | White flour |
| Whole durum wheat | Whole flour |
| Whole wheat | Wheat flour |

Grain-Based Desserts

Grain-based desserts can be a significant source of added sugar and are not creditable under the Infant and Preschool meal pattern.

The exclusion of grain-based desserts is different from the requirements for grades K-12 students.

- Grain-based desserts are restricted by type at breakfast for grades K-12 students.
- Up to 2 ounce equivalents (oz. eq.) of grain-based desserts per week are allowed at lunch for grades K-12 students.
- Grain-based desserts are not creditable grains for students ages 1-5 years and not yet in kindergarten (5K).

Grain-based desserts made with whole grains or ingredients such as applesauce or black beans are still not creditable.

Some grain-based desserts may be labeled with a different name than what they actually are (e.g., breakfast bar instead of granola bar); however, they are still a grain-based dessert and cannot be served as a creditable component.

| Grain-Based Desserts | NOT Grain-Based Desserts |
|---|--|
| Brownies | Croissants |
| Sweet biscotti and scones made with fruits, icing, etc. | Savory biscotti and scones made with cheese, herbs, vegetables, etc. |
| Cake, including coffee cake | French toast |
| Cereal bars, breakfast bars, granola bars | Granola cereal |
| Cookies, including vanilla wafers | Graham crackers |
| Doughnuts | Pancakes |
| Gingerbread | Quick breads (banana, zucchini, and others) |
| Pie crusts of dessert pies, cobblers, and fruit turnovers | Pie crusts of savory pies (e.g., vegetable pot-pie or quiche) |
| Sweet bread pudding and rice pudding | Muffins |
| Sweet rolls (cinnamon rolls) | Teething biscuits and toasts |
| Toaster pastries | Waffles |

Sugar in Breakfast Cereals

Breakfast cereals, including ready-to-eat, and instant or regular hot cereal, must contain no more than **6 grams** of sugar per dry ounce. Use one of the options below to determine if a cereal is creditable.

1. Use the [WIC approved breakfast cereals](#) list.
2. Use USDA's Team Nutrition training worksheet [Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Low in Added Sugar](#). The worksheet includes a chart with common breakfast cereal serving sizes and the maximum amount of sugar the breakfast cereal may contain per serving.
3. Use the Nutrition Facts Label on the breakfast cereal packaging to calculate the sugar content per dry ounce.
 - First, find the serving size in grams at the top of the label and the sugars listed towards the middle.
 - Next, divide the total sugars by the serving size in grams.
 - If the answer is equal to or less than 0.212, then the cereal is within the required sugar limit and may be creditable.

Recordkeeping Requirements

Records must document that students following the Infant and Preschool meal pattern are being served meals that meet the meal pattern requirements. Visit the School Nutrition Team [Menu Planning](#) webpage for more information on product documentation, production record requirements, and downloadable production record templates.



For more information, visit the [Infants and Preschool in NSLP and SBP](#) webpage.



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