

Meal Myths

Myth: “Students Don’t Get Enough Food”

Fact: School lunch is designed to provide about one-third of the calories the average student needs each day. Students, especially those who are very active, will likely need to consume a snack after school. The U.S. Department of Agriculture offers numerous programs to schools to support these nutritional needs.



Myth: “School Food is Poor Quality”

Fact: School districts are offering a wider variety of fruits and vegetables these days, thanks to a number of programs. Many schools purchase fruits, vegetables, dairy products, whole grains, lean meats, poultry, and fish from the USDA. These foods are offered to schools to help them provide healthy, high quality meals to students. Additionally, a growing number of Wisconsin school districts are purchasing locally grown foods. The 2015 Farm to School census showed 49% of districts in Wisconsin participate in Farm to School programming, with over \$9 million invested in local food.

School breakfast and lunch help students to be healthy and successful, and they’re affordable and convenient for parents.

Meal Myths

Myth: “Students Don’t Like Healthy Food”

Fact: When presented with new foods, many students may be hesitant to try the dish. Generally, it can take 10-15 times eating a new food to like it. However, even with new meal additions, a recent study found nearly 90% of students like at least some school meal options. Schools can work to increase student selection of new foods by implementing taste test activities and Smarter Lunchroom strategies.

Learn about how schools can create Smarter Lunchrooms at <http://dpi.wi.gov/team-nutrition/smarter-lunchrooms>.

For more information contact:

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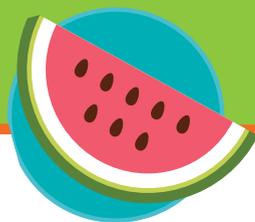
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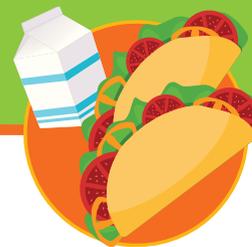
Let’s Do Lunch!

Check out your school’s meal programs and see for yourself that **Wisconsin School Meals ROCK!**





Wisconsin School Meals Rock!



Exciting Times for School Meals

All children in Wisconsin deserve the chance to fuel their bodies with nutritious food. The National School Lunch Program (NSLP) ensures school children have access to a well-balanced meal every school day. Did you know that these days a lot of schools are taking meals to the next level to make them truly rock?

School meals recently received an overhaul and likely look very different from meals served in the past. Now, school meals are healthier! They offer roughly double the amount of fruits and vegetables as meals under the previous standards. Meals also feature more whole grains and less sodium.

When done correctly, school meals can be tasty, nutritious, and exciting.

A host of new, innovative practices are allowing schools to offer wonderful meal options. Check out these practices at dpi.wi.gov/school-nutrition/wisconsin-school-meals-rock.



Making the Case for School Lunch

School meals can be a time saver for busy families. Think about how much time you or your family spend packing lunch each day and consider that time over the course of a school year (roughly 180 days).

Participating in the school lunch program could save you 30-45 hours each year.

10 min/day x 180 days = 1800 minutes/year

15 min/day x 180 days = 2700 minutes/year

Having your children eat school lunch may make sense for you financially. While each school sets its own lunch prices and food costs vary across the state, consider the following average costs:

- Elementary school lunch = \$2.45*
- Fast food kid's meal = \$3.62**
- Packed lunch = \$2.51^

On average, school meals have been shown to be healthier than lunches brought from home. Studies have consistently observed that packed lunches contain less fruits and vegetables and more desserts and sugar sweetened beverages than their school lunch counterparts. These differences lead to school lunches being lower in sugar, fat, and saturated fat and higher in protein, fiber, and many vitamins and minerals.

*Based on the 2014 Wisconsin Paid Lunch Price Data report.

**Based on menu costs posted at leading chain restaurants.

^Calculated based on grocery store sale prices for a meal consisting of a ham and cheese sandwich, fruit cup, baby carrots with ranch dressing, yogurt drink, and 1 ounce of chips.

Parents Can Make a Positive Impact

See what school lunches look like:

- Have lunch with your child. Most schools will happily accommodate parental visits at lunchtime.
- Review the school menu.
- Discuss school lunch choices with your children.

Offer nutritious foods at home:

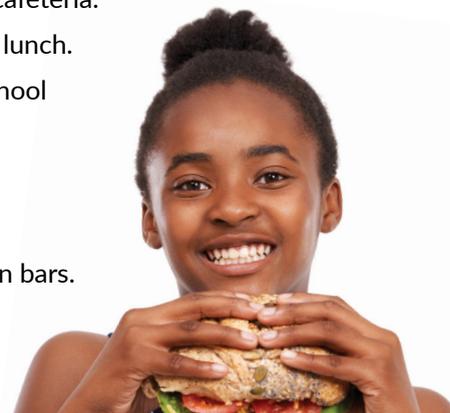
- Include fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks.
- Prepare whole grain-rich foods.
- Be a role model for your child by eating meals together.

Contact your district to find out how you can help:

- Join your school's wellness policy committee.
- Volunteer with current nutrition-related initiatives (e.g. school garden).
- Organize a taste test to allow your school to expand menu options.

Advocate for strategies that boost nutrition at school:

- Increase minutes a student has to eat after sitting down in the cafeteria.
- Move recess before lunch.
- Institute Farm to School programs, including school gardens.
- Expand nutrition education.
- Offer salad or garden bars.



What Makes a School Meal?

Schools participating in the NSLP must offer students minimum quantities of all components found on MyPlate: protein, grains, milk, fruit, and vegetables. While many students choose to turn down some food, they are always offered complete meals that provide an average of 550-650 calories (K-5), 600-700 calories (6-8), and 750-850 calories (9-12).

Protein at least: 1 oz eq (K-8) 2 oz eq (9-12)	Grains at least: 1 oz eq (K-8) 2 oz eq (9-12)	Milk 1 cup (K-12)
Fruit at least: 1/2 cup (K-8) 1 cup (9-12)	Vegetables at least: 3/4 cup (K-8) 1 cup (9-12)	

What is an ounce equivalent (oz eq)?

Protein

- 1 oz lean meat or poultry
- 1 oz cheese
- 2 Tbsp nut or seed butter
- 1/2 c yogurt

Grains

- 1 slice of bread
- 1 c cereal (flakes)
- 1/2 c cooked pasta



Join the conversation at #WISchoolMealsRock