

# What's on my child's school lunch tray?

## School Meals Play a Critical Role in Helping Children Learn How to Lead Healthy Lifestyles

Your child has likely noticed a difference in school lunch this year as schools across the country are being challenged to meet new dietary standards enforced by the Healthy, Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA). The HHFKA is pretty complex, so we've simplified the main points for you in the charts below. Keep in mind these guidelines are intended to provide one-third of your child's daily nutritional and energy needs. Whitsons School nutrition remains committed to providing the best combination of nutrients available to your child while they are in our care.

### Daily Meal Component Offerings

Meal Components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
<b>Fruits</b>	1 cup**	1 cup**	1 cup**
<b>Veggies</b>	1 cup**	1 cup**	1 cup**
<b>Grains</b>	1.75oz*	2oz*	2.25oz*
<b>Meat/ Meat Alternate</b>	1.75oz*	2oz*	2.25oz*
<b>Fluid Milk</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup

\* All Whitsons School Nutrition meals are designed to fit within minimum and maximum weekly ranges defined by the HHFKA. Daily weights are approximated and may slightly increase or decrease on any given day to fit within the weekly range.  
\*\* Fruits & Veggies are unlimited but HHFKA minimum requirements of 1/2 cup must be met.

### Weekly Vegetable Offerings

Veggie sub-groups	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
 *	5 cups/week	5 cups/week	5 cups/week
<b>Dark Green</b>	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
<b>Red/ Orange</b>	3/4 cup	3/4 cup	1 1/4 cup
<b>Legumes</b>	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
<b>Starchy</b>	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	1/2 cup
<b>Other</b>	1/2 cup	1/2 cup	3/4 cup
<b>Additional</b>	2 1/4 cup	2 1/4 cup	1 1/2 cup

\* Veggie subgroups are regulated by the USDA's MyPlate.

### Lunch Tray Example 1



*Ham & Cheese Wrap with Carrots, Broccoli, Grapes, Apple & Skim Milk*

### Lunch Tray Example 2



*Two Beef Tacos with Rice, Black Beans, Pico De Gallo, Banana, Strawberries & Skim Milk*

### Lunch Tray Example 3



*Chef Salad with Broccoli, Orange, Grapes, Graham Crackers & Skim Milk*

# Answers to Your Top 8 Questions About Your Child's School Nutrition Program.

## 1 WHY HAVE LUNCH OFFERINGS AND PORTION SIZES CHANGED?

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are required to follow new HHFKA regulations that set mandatory nutrition minimums AND maximums based on age group. Meals are broken into 5 components and students must take a minimum of 3 components (one must be a fruit or vegetable). Vegetables are further broken down into sub-groups by color; vegetables from every subgroup must be offered each week.

## 2 HOW NUTRITIOUS ARE LUNCH MEALS UNDER THE NEW STANDARDS?

The new school meals are intended to be high in micro-nutrients and adequate in calories. The new portions and calorie ranges reflect the latest scientific recommendations from nutrition experts on the dietary needs of school children, so they are tailored to your children's needs. Lunch portions are "right sized" and are designed to meet 1/3 of the daily calorie needs of school children.

## 3 WHY MUST MY CHILD TAKE A FRUIT OR VEGETABLE WITH LUNCH?

Under the HHFKA, a healthy meal plate must include a fruit or vegetable. We encourage students to select from a variety of fruits and vegetables to meet the fruit and vegetable requirements. They choose what foods they want. We use educational tools such as our "Fruit and Veggie of the Month", as well as food tastings and other promotions to help increase acceptance of new foods.

## 4 WHY HAVE SNACK OPTIONS CHANGED?

In an effort to provide the best combination of nutrients available, we have revised our snack choices to include foods that are free of high fructose corn syrup and contain zero trans fats. Additionally, each state may further restrict competitive snack foods and the USDA discourages foods with minimal value.

## 5 CAN STUDENTS PURCHASE ADDITIONAL FOOD?

Yes, your child can purchase an additional lunch or purchase a la carte items. However, if your child takes all the components that are offered, he/she shouldn't need to purchase additional items as the portions are designed according to his/her nutritional needs.

## 6 WHAT ABOUT PHYSICALLY ACTIVE STUDENTS, SUCH AS THOSE INVOLVED IN SPORTS PROGRAMS, WHO MIGHT NEED MORE CALORIES?

Helping students choose meal components wisely the first time through the serving line is key. We have signage throughout each server explaining the components of a balanced meal. Active students should select all 5 meal components including; a fruit, a vegetable, a grain, a meat or meat alternate and a milk, focusing on foods that sustain energy. Additionally, our cashiers and servers are trained to offer any missing meal components.

## 7 WHY DO WE HAVE TO HAVE WHOLE GRAINS?

HHFKA requires a minimum of 50% whole grain or whole grain rich (50% or more whole grain) items to be served during the 2012- 2013 school year. Starting next year (2013- 2014), all grains items must be whole grain or whole grain rich. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. This is why you'll see that all of our grain offerings are whole grain or whole grain rich starting this year.

## 8 WHAT'S WITH ALL THE LOW FAT MILKS?

HHFKA restricts milk to 1% or fat-free for plain white milk and ONLY fat-free for flavored milks. Drinking low-fat or fat-free milk over the full fat alternative cuts calories but doesn't reduce the calcium or the other essential nutrients. Milk is especially important to build children's growing bones.

For more information contact your school food service director OR visit the school nutrition page on your district website.



*Nourishing Growing Minds.*

