

Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This guidance applies to meals and snacks served in child care centers, family day care homes, emergency shelters, at-risk afterschool care centers, and adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP).



Creditable nuts and seeds in the USDA's meal patterns include almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, filberts, macadamia nuts, peanuts, pecans, walnuts, pine nuts, pistachios, and soy nuts. Roasted or dried soy beans credit the same as soy nuts. However, fresh soy beans (edamame) credits only as the vegetables component (legumes subgroup). For more information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) handout, [Vegetable Subgroups in the CACFP](#). Nuts and seeds served in the CACFP must meet the requirements below.



Note: Children younger than 4 are at the highest risk of choking. To prevent the risk of choking, the USDA recommends that CACFP facilities consider children's age and developmental readiness when deciding whether to offer nuts and seeds. This consideration is especially important when serving young children or children with disabilities. The USDA recommends that any nuts or seeds served to these groups are in a prepared food, and are ground or finely chopped.

Breakfast

The CACFP breakfast meal patterns do not require the meat/meat alternates component. CACFP facilities may substitute foods from the meat/meat alternates component (including nuts and seeds) for the entire grains component at breakfast up to three times per week. A 1-ounce serving of nuts or seeds offered as a grain substitute credits as one serving of the grains component. For more information, see the USDA's handout, [Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast](#).

Lunch

Nuts and seeds cannot credit for more than half of the meat/meat alternates component. CACFP facilities must combine nuts and seeds with another food from the meat/meat alternates component to meet the full requirement for each age group. For example, the lunch and supper meal pattern for ages 3-5 requires 1 ½ ounces of the meat/meat alternates component. A lunch or supper for this age

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group cannot contain more than $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce of nuts or seeds, and must also include $\frac{3}{4}$ ounce of another food from the meat/meat alternates component.

Snack

CACFP facilities may serve the meat/meat alternates component (including nuts and seeds) as one of the two required snack components in the CACFP meal patterns. Nuts and seeds may credit as the full serving of the meat/meat alternates component at snack.\

Nut and Seed Butters

Creditable nut and seed butters include almond butter, cashew nut butter, peanut butter, sesame seed butter, soy nut butter, and sunflower seed butter. Reduced-fat peanut butter credits if it meets the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) standard of identity for peanut butter (21 CFR 164.150), which requires that products contain at least 90 percent peanuts.

The serving size for nut and seed butters is based on volume (tablespoons), not weight (ounces). A serving of 2 tablespoons of nut or seed butter credits as 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

Menu planners should consider the appropriateness of the serving size for each grade group. It may be unreasonable to provide the full serving of a nut or seed butter in one menu item, such as a peanut butter sandwich. The CSDE recommends providing a smaller portion of peanut butter and supplementing with another food from the meat/meat alternates component to provide the full serving. For example, the lunch and supper meal pattern for ages 6-12, ages 13-18 in at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters, and adult day care center participants requires 4 tablespoons ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) of peanut butter, which is a large amount for two slices of bread. Alternatively, the lunch or supper menu could include:

- a sandwich made with 2 tablespoons of peanut butter (1 ounce of meat/meat alternates) served with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of yogurt (1 ounce of meat/meat alternates); or
- three half-sandwiches (made from three 1-ounce slices of whole grain-rich bread) that each contain 4 teaspoons of peanut butter (4 tablespoons total).



Note: If the CACFP facility portions nut or seed butters by weight instead of volume, the menu planner must use the appropriate weight conversion listed in the USDA's *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*. A 1-ounce serving of nut or seed butters does not provide 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component. The FBG indicates that 1.1 ounces (2 tablespoons) of nut or seed butters is required to provide 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternates component.

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The table below indicates the tablespoons of nut and seed butters that equate to ounces of the meat/meat alternates component.

Serving size for nut and seed butters			
Meal pattern serving size of meat/meat alternates	Tablespoons ¹	Scoop (disher) size ²	Weight equivalent ³
1/4 ounce (minimum creditable amount)	1/2	Closest is No. 100 (2 teaspoons)	0.275 ounces
1/2 ounce	1	Closest is No. 60 (3/4 teaspoons)	0.55 ounces
3/4 ounce	1 1/2	Closest is No. 40 (1 2/3 tablespoons)	0.825 ounces
1 ounce	2	No. 30 (2 tablespoons)	1.1 ounces
1 1/2 ounces	3	Closest is No. 20 (3 1/3 tablespoons)	1.65 ounces
2 ounces	4	No. 16 (1/4 cup)	1.2 ounces
<p>¹ One tablespoon equals 3 teaspoons.</p> <p>² Scoop equivalents are from the Institute of Child Nutrition's (ICN) <i>Basics at a Glance Portion Control Poster</i>.</p> <p>³ Weight equivalents are from the USDA's <i>Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs</i>.</p>			



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Resources

Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/AcceptDocCACFP.pdf>

CACFP Best Practices (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/cacfp/CACFP_bestpractices.pdf

Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternates in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/NSLP/Crediting/CreditMMA.pdf>.

Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Adult-Day-Care-Centers>

Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Crediting-Foods-in-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Adult-Centers>

Meal Patterns for CACFP Child Care Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Nutrition/Meal-Patterns-CACFP-Child-Care-Programs>

Product Formulation Statement for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/PFS_Documenting_Meat_Meat_Alternate_Nov_2019.pdf

Reviewer's Checklist for Evaluating Manufacturer Product Formulation Statements for Meat/Meat Alternates (USDA):

https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/reviewer_checklist.pdf

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast in the CACFP (USDA):

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/tn/CACFPMeatAlt.pdf>

Tips for Evaluating a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement (USDA):

<https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/manufacturerPFStipsheet.pdf>

Using Product Formulation Statements in the CACFP (CSDE):

<https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/PFScacfp.pdf>

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For more information, visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Child Care Programs](#) and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpages, or contact the [CACFP staff](#) in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This handout is available at <https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/CACFP/Crediting/CACFPCreditNuts.pdf>.

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- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
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