

## School Meals are a Healthy Choice!

School Meals serve more of the healthy foods students need:	
Whole Grains	Whole grains are a great source of nutrients such as iron, magnesium, selenium, B vitamins, & dietary fiber.
Fruits and Vegetables	A fruit & vegetable must be offered to students daily. Fruits & vegetables contribute a wide range of nutrients from folate to potassium & vitamins A, C, & K. Consumption of fruits & vegetables is associated with reduced risk of many chronic diseases.
Low-fat and Fat-free Milk	Milk provides calcium, vitamin D & potassium to the diet. Consumption of milk products is associated with reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, & lower blood pressure.
Legumes	Beans & peas are excellent sources of protein. They also contain iron, zinc, dietary fiber & folate. Beans & peas are a great source of protein & often lower in fat & calories than some other protein sources.

All forms of fruits and vegetables (canned, fresh, frozen, 100% juice and dried) can have a place in your diet and can count towards your daily recommended amount. Fruits and veggies are healthy only if they are eaten and are a far better choice than foods that have a high calorie and low nutrient profile. Be sure to read the Nutrition Facts panel and the ingredient statement on food packages for sodium/salt, fiber, and nutrient levels; be on the lookout for added salt, sugar or fat to these products.

Sodium is an essential nutrient and is needed by the body in small quantities. It is recommended that sodium intake should be limited to 2,300 mg per day and further reduced to 1,500 mg per day for those 51 & older or those with hypertension, diabetes, or kidney disease.

The human body is composed of 60 percent water and can only survive four to six days without water. The Institute of Medicine actually recommends different daily amounts of water consumption for men and women: 3 liters for men and 2.2 liters for women.

Low-fat and fat-free milks offer as many nutrients as the high-fat milks, but are lower in fat and cholesterol.



## Nutrition Standards for School Meals



Illinois State Board of Education  
Nutrition Division  
[www.isbe.net/nutrition](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition)  
800/545-7892

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## What is the National School Lunch Program?

The National School Lunch Program is a federally assisted meal program operating in nearly 100,000 schools/institutions that serves school lunches to 30 million students each day.

### That's 4.9 billion lunches served annually!

Participating school districts receive cash subsidies and donated foods from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for each meal they serve.

The lunches must meet Federal requirements and are a healthy option for all students.

## What is Included in a lunch?

The United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) made some updates to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) requirements in order to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine and are intended to enhance the diet and overall health of school children. The NSLP meals will include the following food items each day:

- Milk—fat-free or low-fat (1%) flavored or unflavored milk
- Fruit
- Vegetable
- Grains
- Meat/Meat Alternate



## Additional Requirements:

- Foods must be trans fat free.
- Appropriate serving sizes and calories are defined by grade groupings, K-5, 6-8 and 9-12.
- There are calorie minimums and maximums as well, this allows for the lunch meal to account for approximately 1/3 of the recommended daily calories for each grade grouping.
- A variety of vegetables must be served. To assist schools in meeting this requirement, they must serve a variety of different colors and types of vegetables over the week: dark green, red/orange, beans/peas, starchy and other. The color of the vegetables tend to indicate the types of vitamins & minerals they contain. Providing a variety of colors, provides a variety of vitamins & minerals.
- Half of the grains offered over the week must be Whole Grain-Rich (WGR), meaning that at least 1/2 of the grains in that item are whole grains.
- There are also requirements for all foods and beverages sold on campus. The requirements provide a uniform message regarding healthy food & beverage choices.