

CREDITING BREAKFAST CEREALS

in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

The CACFP meal patterns for children and adult day care center participants require that breakfast cereals must meet the criteria for creditable grains, limit for total sugars, and minimum serving size. The CACFP meal patterns for children and adult day care center participants require at least one serving of whole grain-rich (WGR) grains per day, between all meals and snacks served in the CACFP facility.

CREDITABLE GRAINS

All ready-to-eat (RTE) cold breakfast cereals and cooked hot breakfast cereals (such as oatmeal) must be whole grain, enriched, or fortified. Table 1 shows examples of cereals that contain creditable grains.

- Whole grains** consist of the entire cereal grain seed or kernel (starchy endosperm, fiber-rich bran, and nutrient-rich germ) after removing the inedible outer husk or hull. A 100 percent whole-grain cereal lists a whole grain first in the ingredients statement (or second after water) and contains only whole grains. The USDA does not require 100 percent whole-grain RTE breakfast cereals to be enriched or fortified. For information, see the Connecticut State Department of Education’s (CSDE) handout, [Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP](#).
- Enriched cereals** have five vitamins and minerals added in amounts required by the Food and Drug Administrative (FDA) to replace some of the nutrients lost during processing. The enrichment nutrients include thiamin (vitamin B1, thiamin mononitrate, thiamin hydrochloride), riboflavin (vitamin B2), niacin (vitamin B3, niacinamide), folic acid (folate), and iron (reduced iron, ferrous sulfate). A cereal is enriched if the food is labeled as “enriched” or an enriched grain is listed as the first ingredient (or second after water). For more information, see the CSDE’s handout, [Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP](#).
- Fortified breakfast cereals** contain the five enrichment nutrients plus additional vitamins and minerals that do not exist naturally in grains, such as vitamins A, C, D, E, B₆ (pyridoxine hydrochloride), vitamin B₁₂ (cobalamin), pantothenic acid, phosphorous, magnesium, and zinc. Manufacturers choose which and how many nutrients to add. A fortified cereal lists the five enrichment nutrients and additional nutrients in the ingredients statement.

Table 1. Examples of Creditable Breakfast Cereals for CACFP Meals

Ingredients (Enrichment nutrients are in bold and fortification nutrients are in <i>italics</i>)	Type of Cereal
Whole-grain rolled oats, sugar, natural flavors, salt.	100% whole-grain hot cereal
Puffed rice, ferrous sulfate (a source of iron), niacinamide , citric acid, thiamin mononitrate , riboflavin , folic acid .	Enriched RTE cereal
Rice, sugar, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. BHT added to packaging for freshness. Vitamins and Minerals: Iron , <i>vitamin C (ascorbic acid)</i> , <i>vitamin E (alpha tocopherol acetate)</i> , niacinamide , <i>vitamin A palmitate</i> , <i>vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride)</i> , vitamin B2 (riboflavin) , vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride) , folic acid , <i>vitamin B12</i> , <i>vitamin D</i> .	Fortified RTE cereal
Whole-grain wheat, raisins, wheat bran, sugar, brown sugar syrup, contains 2% or less of salt, malt flavor. Vitamins and Minerals: <i>Potassium chloride</i> , niacinamide , reduced iron , <i>vitamin B6 (pyridoxine hydrochloride)</i> , <i>zinc oxide</i> , vitamin B2 (riboflavin) , vitamin B1 (thiamin hydrochloride) , <i>vitamin A palmitate</i> , folic acid , <i>vitamin D</i> , <i>vitamin B12</i> .	Fortified whole-grain RTE cereal

CREDITING BREAKFAST CEREALS IN THE CACFP, continued

WGR REQUIREMENT

The CACFP meal patterns for children and adult day care center participants require at least one serving of WGR grains per day, between all meals and snacks served in the CACFP facility. The USDA's *CACFP Best Practices* recommends at least two servings of WGR grains per day. WGR foods contain at least 50 percent whole grains and any other grain ingredients are enriched. A RTE breakfast cereal meets the WGR criteria if it has a whole grain as the first ingredient (or second after water), and it is fortified. For more information, see the CSDE's handout, *Whole-grain Rich Criteria for the CACFP*.



LIMIT FOR SUGARS

RTE and cooked breakfast cereals cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce (no more than 21.2 grams of sucrose and other sugars per 100 grams of dry cereal). Table 3 shows how to use the steps below to determine if a breakfast cereal complies with this limit.

- Step 1 – List the grams (g) of sugars per serving from the Nutrition Facts label (A).**
- Step 2 – List the serving size in ounces (B).** If the serving size is listed in grams (g), divide by 28.35 to convert to ounces (1 ounce equals 28.35 grams).
- Step 3 – Determine the grams of sugars per ounce (C).** Divide the total grams of sugars (A) by the serving size in ounces (B).
- Step 4 – Compare the grams of sugars per ounce (C) with the limit of 6 grams (D).** Cereals that contain 6 grams of sugars or less per ounce credit as the grains component in the CACFP meal patterns.

Table 3. Determining Compliance with Sugar Limit	
A. Grams of Sugars per Serving <i>(From Nutrition Facts panel):</i>	4
B. Convert Serving Size Grams to Ounces <i>(From Nutrition Facts panel)</i> Divide <u> 29 </u> grams by 28.35	1.02
C. Grams of Sugars per Ounce: <i>(Divide A by B)</i>	3.92
D. Does the product contain ≤ 6 grams of sugars per ounce?	Yes

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size ¼ cup (29 g)	
Servings Per Container about 1	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 100	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 150 mg	6%
Potassium 35 mg	1%
Total Carbohydrates 26g	1%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 3 g	

This sample product contains 3.92 grams of sugars per ounce, which complies with the limit. To credit in CACFP meals, the cereal must also meet the requirements for creditable grains (see page 1) and serving size (see page 3).

CREDITING BREAKFAST CEREALS IN THE CACFP, continued

SERVING SIZE

Table 4 shows the required serving sizes for RTE cold breakfast cereals and cooked hot breakfast cereals through September 30, 2019. Serving sizes must comply with the amounts in *Serving Sizes for Grains in the CACFP*. The required volume for 1 serving of RTE breakfast cereal is $\frac{3}{4}$ cup. The required volume for 1 serving of cooked breakfast cereal is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. The minimum serving size for ages 1-2 and 3-5 is $\frac{1}{2}$ serving.

Table 4. Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals through September 30, 2019				
Type of Cereal	$\frac{1}{2}$ serving		1 serving	
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12 and Ages 13-18 ¹	Adult Day Care Center Participants
RTE Flakes or Rounds	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
RTE Puffed	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
RTE Granola	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup
Cooked Hot	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 13 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 13 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked or 25 grams (0.9 ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked or 25 grams (0.9 ounce) dry

¹ This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.

Table 5 shows the serving sizes for RTE cold breakfast cereals and cooked hot breakfast cereals effective October 1, 2019. Serving sizes must comply with the ounce equivalents in *WGR Ounce Equivalents for the CACFP*. An ounce equivalent is the amount of food that equals one ounce from the grain group. The required volume for 1 ounce equivalent of RTE breakfast cereal is 1 cup of flakes or rounds, 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups of puffed cereal, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of granola. The required volume for 1 ounce equivalent of cooked breakfast cereal is $\frac{1}{2}$ cup. The minimum serving size for ages 1-2 and 3-5 is $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce equivalent.

Table 5. Serving Size for Breakfast Cereals Effective October 1, 2019				
Type of Cereal	$\frac{1}{2}$ ounce equivalent		1 ounce equivalent ¹	
	Ages 1-2	Ages 3-5	Ages 6-12 and Ages 13-18 ²	Adult Day Care Center Participants
RTE Flakes or Rounds	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	1 cup	1 cup
RTE Puffed	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups	1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups
RTE Granola	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{8}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
Cooked Hot	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 14 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup cooked or 14 grams ($\frac{1}{2}$ ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked or 28 grams (1 ounce) dry	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked or 28 grams (1 ounce) dry

¹ If the appropriate volume of cereal weighs less than 28 grams, it still credits as 1 ounce equivalent. For example, 1 cup of flaked cereal that weighs 26 grams credits as 1 ounce equivalent.

² This age group applies only to at-risk afterschool programs and emergency shelters. Larger portion sizes may be needed to meet the nutritional needs of children ages 13-18.

DETERMINING COMPLIANCE WITH CACFP REQUIREMENTS

Child care facilities can use the CSDE's *Child Care Worksheet 2: Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP*, to determine if a breakfast cereal complies with the CACFP meal patterns for children and the Connecticut Child Care Nutrition Standards (CCCNS). Adult day care centers can use the CSDE's *Adult Centers Worksheet 2: Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the CACFP* to determine if a breakfast cereal complies with the CACFP adult meal patterns. Menu planners enter the product's information from the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients statement. The worksheets determine if a serving of the cereal complies with the CACFP requirements for creditable grains and sugar limit, and automatically calculates the nutrition information per serving. CACFP facilities can also use [Connecticut WIC's list of approved cereals](#), which must comply with the same sugar limit as the CACFP.

RESOURCES

Choose Breakfast Cereals That Are Lower in Added Sugar: <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/tn/FNSCACFPcereal12.pdf>

Crediting Enriched Grains in the CACFP:
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/cacfp/credit/enrichedgrainscacfp.pdf

Crediting Whole Grains in the CACFP:
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/nslp/crediting/wholegrainscacfp.pdf

USDA Memo CACFP 1-2018: *Grain Requirements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program; Questions and Answers:*
www.fns.usda.gov/cacfp/grain-requirements-child-and-adult-care-food-program-questions-and-answers

Whole-grain Rich Criteria for the CACFP:
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/cacfp/credit/wgcriteriacacfp.pdf



For more information, visit the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [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 Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103.

This handout is available at
www.sde.ct.gov/sde/lib/sde/pdf/deps/nutrition/cacfp/credit/credcerealscacfp.pdf.

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Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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