

Sample Cold Lunch and Supper Menus for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

This document provides sample cold lunch and supper menus with menu planning considerations for adult day care centers that participate in the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). The specified servings meet or exceed the requirements of the [CACFP adult meal patterns](#) and are indicated in parentheses after each menu item.

The CACFP adult lunch and supper meal pattern requires the minimum serving of three meal components, including 1 cup of low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk (unflavored or flavored); 2 ounce equivalents (oz eq) of meats/meat alternates, ½ cup of vegetables, ½ cup of fruits, and 2 oz eq of grains. Vegetables may substitute for the entire fruits component at any lunch or supper.

Each meal component must provide at least the minimum meal pattern serving. CACFP menus may include additional food or larger servings beyond the minimum requirements. Serve nutrient-dense foods that are appropriate to participants' nutrition needs.

For guidance on the CACFP adult meal patterns, refer to the Connecticut State Department of Education's (CSDE) [Guide to Meeting the CACFP Adult Meal Patterns and Crediting Requirements](#). For more information, visit the CSDE's [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Care Centers](#) webpage and refer to the CSDE's [Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns](#).

Menu Planning Considerations

Consider the meal pattern requirements and recommendations below when planning CACFP menus. For guidance on crediting foods, refer to the CSDE's [Crediting Summary Charts for CACFP Adult Meal Patterns](#) and visit the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage and [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Meats/meat alternates (MMA) component

- The serving size of MMA refers to the edible portion of cooked lean meat, poultry, or fish, e.g., cooked lean meat without bone, breading, binders, fillers, or other ingredients. Commercial processed products that contain added ingredients (such as combination entrees, deli meats, hot dogs, and sausages) require a Child Nutrition (CN) label or product formulation statement (PFS) to document crediting information. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Commercial Meat/Meat Alternate Products in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [Crediting Deli Meats in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

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- Nut and seed butters credit by volume (tablespoons) not weight. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Nuts and Seeds in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).
- Yogurt and soy yogurt cannot contain more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces (no more than 3.83 grams per ounce). Effective October 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the limit for yogurt to no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).
- The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving only lean meats, nuts, and beans, peas, and lentils; limiting processed meats to one serving per week; and serving only low-fat or reduced-fat natural cheese.

For more information, visit the "[Meats and Meat Alternates](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage

Fruits component and vegetables component

- Before serving juice at lunch or supper, make sure that the other daily meals and snacks do not contain juice. Pasteurized full-strength juice credits as either the vegetables component or fruits component at only one meal or snack per day. The juice limit includes fruit and vegetable juice, frozen pops made from 100 percent juice, and pureed fruits and vegetables in smoothies (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Crediting Juice in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [Crediting Smoothies in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)). The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving whole fruits (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) more often than juice.
- Dried fruit credits as twice the volume served, e.g., $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raisins credits as $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the fruits component.
- Raw leafy greens such as lettuce or spinach credit as half the volume served, e.g., $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of raw leafy greens credits as $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the vegetables component.

For more information, visit the "[Fruits](#)" section and the "[Vegetables](#)" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.

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Grains component

- At least one serving of grains per day must be whole grain-rich (WGR). The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend at least two servings of WGR grains per day. To meet the CACFP WGR criteria, foods must contain at least 50 percent whole grains and the remaining grain ingredients must be enriched, bran, or germ. For more information, refer to the CSDE's [Guide to Meeting the Whole Grain-rich Requirement for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and "Whole Grain-rich Requirement" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.
- To credit as the required oz eq, the serving of grain products and recipes must provide either: 1) the required serving weight (groups A-E) or volume (groups H-I) in the USDA's Exhibit A chart (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Grain Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [How to Use the Grain Ounce Equivalents Chart for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)); or 2) the minimum creditable grains per serving (refer to the CSDE's resources, [Calculation Methods for Grains Ounce Equivalents for the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) and [When Commercial Grain Products Require a Product Formulation Statement to Credit in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)). For more information, refer to "Serving Requirements" in the "Grains" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.
- Grain-based desserts do not credit. Examples include cookies, piecrusts in sweet pies, doughnuts, cereal bars, granola bars, sweet rolls, pastries, toaster pastries, cake, and brownies. Sweet crackers such as graham crackers and animal crackers are not grain-based desserts and may credit as the grains component. However, the CSDE recommends limiting sweet crackers to no more than twice per week between all meals and snacks. For more information, visit the USDA's [Grain-based Desserts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#) webpage
- Breakfast cereals must be WGR, enriched, or fortified and cannot contain more than 6 grams of sugars per dry ounce. Effective October 1, 2025, the USDA final rule, [Child Nutrition Programs: Meal Patterns Consistent with the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#), changes the limit for breakfast cereals to no more than 6 grams of added sugars per dry ounce. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Breakfast Cereals in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

Milk component

- Milk must be low-fat (1%) milk or fat-free milk and may be unflavored or flavored. The USDA's [CACFP best practices](#) recommend serving only unflavored milk.

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- Yogurt that meets the CACFP sugars limit may be served in place of milk once per day when it is not served as the MMA component in the same meal (refer to the CSDE's resource, [Crediting Yogurt in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#)). Six ounces (weight) or $\frac{3}{4}$ cup (volume) of yogurt credits as 8 fluid ounces of milk

For more information, visit the "Milk" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage.

Noncreditable foods

Noncreditable foods cannot be served in place of the required meal components. Examples of noncreditable foods include potato chips, pudding, ice cream, gelatin, cream cheese, bacon, condiments (e.g., syrup, jam, ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and butter), and water. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resource, [Noncreditable Foods for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).

Crediting Documentation

Adult day care centers must be able to document that CSCFP menus provide the minimum serving of each required meal component. Use the USDA's [Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs](#) (FBG) to determine the amount of purchased food that meets the meal pattern requirements.

- Commercial processed products require a CN label or PFS to document crediting information unless they are listed in the FBG. CACFP sponsors must verify PFS forms for accuracy prior to purchasing, serving, and claiming the product in reimbursable meals and snacks. For more information, refer to the CSDE's resources, [Using Child Nutrition \(CN\) Labels in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), [Using Product Formulation Statements in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#), and [Accepting Processed Product Documentation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program](#).
- Foods made from scratch must have a recipe that documents the crediting information per serving. Standardized recipes are encouraged to ensure accurate crediting information. For more information, refer to the "Standardized Recipes" section of the CSDE's [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs](#) webpage.

Additional guidance on meal pattern documentation is available on the CSDE's [Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Program](#) webpage.

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Abbreviations for Sample Menus

The abbreviations used in the CACFP sample menus are indicated below.

Meal components

M = Milk component

MMA = Meats/meat alternates component

V = Vegetables component

F = Fruits component

G = Grains component

WGR = Whole grain-rich

VS = Vegetables substituted for the fruits component

Menu items not credited

O = Other food (noncreditable)

Measurements

c = cup

Tbsp = tablespoon

tsp = teaspoon

oz = ounce

oz eq = ounce equivalent

Note: The CSDE's sample menus are intended for informational purposes and do not guarantee compliance with the CACFP adult meal patterns. Crediting information for local menus will vary depending on the types of foods purchased by the CACFP adult day care center and the recipes and preparation techniques used. CACFP adult day care centers are responsible for ensuring that their menus meet the CACFP adult meal patterns and maintaining appropriate crediting documentation on file (refer to "[Crediting Documentation](#)" above).

Sample Cold Lunch and Supper Menus for Adult Day Care Centers in the Child and Adult Care Food Program

Week 1

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)
MMA 2 oz	Ham sandwich: Ham (1½ oz) and reduced-fat cheese (½ oz)	Sliced turkey (2 oz)	Low-fat cottage cheese (½ c)	Sunflower butter (4 Tbsp)	Spinach salad with hard-boiled egg (1 large)
V ½ cup	Shredded lettuce (½ c) and tomato slices (¼ c)	Lentil salad (½ c)	Cucumber slices (½ c)	Broccoli florets and Ranch dip (¼ c vegetables)	Baby spinach (½ c) Shredded carrots (⅛ c)
F ½ cup	Orange slices (½ c)	Apple slices (½ c)	Fruit salad: Apples, oranges, grapes, pineapple, banana (½ c)	Waldorf salad: Apples (⅛ c), grapes (⅛ c), raisins (1 tsp), celery (1 tsp)	Cantaloupe wedges (½ c)
G 2 oz eq	Whole-grain bread (2 oz) WGR	Whole-grain crackers (2 oz) WGR	Enriched rye bread (2 oz)	Enriched cinnamon bread (2 oz)	Whole-grain roll (2 oz) WGR
O	Mustard (1 tsp) or low-fat mayonnaise (1 tsp)			Low-fat Ranch dip (1 Tbsp)	Low-fat salad dressing (1 Tbsp)

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Week 2

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)
MMA 2 oz	Hummus veggie pita (½ c chickpeas)	Low-fat yogurt (½ c) Banana bread with peanut butter (2 Tbsp)	Chicken salad with diced apricots (2 oz cooked chicken)	Sliced turkey on roll (2 oz turkey)	Tuna salad wrap: (2 oz tuna)
V ½ cup	Shredded lettuce (½ c) Black olives (¼ cup)	Carrot raisin salad (¼ c shredded carrots)	Red pepper strips (½ c)	Cucumber slices (½ c) Shredded lettuce (¼ c)	Chopped tomatoes (⅛ c) Sliced zucchini sticks (½ c)
F ½ cup	Sliced cucumbers (½ c) VS	Sliced peaches (½ c) Raisins (2 tsp)	Diced dried apricots (⅛ c) Fresh pear slices (⅛ c)	Red apple slices (½ c)	Fresh pear slices (½ c)
G 2 oz eq	Whole-grain pita (2 oz) WGR	Enriched banana bread (4 oz)	Whole-grain crackers (2 oz) WGR	Whole-grain roll (2 oz) WGR	Whole-grain tortilla (2 oz) WGR
O					

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Week 3

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)
MMA 2 oz	Chef's salad: Turkey (½ oz), ham (½ oz) and cheese (½ oz) and sliced hard-boiled egg (¼ large)	Cold sesame noodles with diced chicken (2 oz cooked chicken)	Chicken-avocado rollup: Sliced chicken (2 oz)	Hummus and carrot pita pocket (½ c chickpeas)	Ham and pasta veggie salad: Diced ham (1½ oz) and cheddar cheese (½ oz)
V ½ cup	Salad greens (½ c) with tomatoes and carrots (⅛ c)	Broccoli florets (½ c)	Diced avocado (¼ c) Chopped lettuce (¼ c) and tomato (¼ c)	Green pepper strips (⅛ c) Shredded carrots (⅛ c)	Chopped veggies: carrots, broccoli and red peppers (½ c)
F ½ cup	Mandarin oranges (½ c)	Sliced peaches (½ c)	Sliced red grapes (½ c)	Mango chunks (½ c)	Pineapple tidbits (½ c)
G 2 oz eq	Enriched pumpernickel roll (½ oz)	Enriched spaghetti (½ c)	Whole-grain tortilla (½ oz) WGR	Whole-wheat pita half (½ oz) WGR	Enriched macaroni (⅛ c) Whole-wheat roll (½ oz) WGR
O	Low-fat Italian dressing (1 Tbsp)		Low-fat mayonnaise (½ Tbsp)		

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Week 4

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)
MMA 2 oz	Cold meatloaf sandwich (2 oz cooked meat)	Sliced turkey breast (2 oz)	Low-fat cottage cheese (½ c)	Egg salad sandwich (1 large egg)	Marinated black bean-tomato-carrot salad (½ c beans)
V ½ cup	Sliced cherry tomatoes (½ c)	Marinated green bean salad (½ c)	Red and green pepper strips (½ c)	Carrot raisin salad (½ c carrots) Shredded lettuce (¼ c)	Shredded carrots (⅛ c) Diced tomatoes (⅛ c)
F ½ cup	Watermelon chunks (½ c)	Strawberries (½ c)	Crushed pineapple in juice (½ c)	Blueberries (½ c)	Fresh pear slices (½ c)
G 2 oz eq	Whole-wheat bread (2 oz) WGR	Whole-grain crackers (2 oz) WGR	Whole-wheat bagel (2 oz) WGR	Whole-wheat bread (2 oz) WGR	Whole-grain roll (2 oz) WGR
O	Ketchup or mustard (½ Tbsp)			Low-fat mayonnaise (½ Tbsp)	

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Week 5

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)
MMA 2 oz	Cold oven-fried chicken (2 oz chicken)	Low-fat Greek yogurt (½ c) Almond butter (2 Tbsp)	Turkey-avocado roll-up: (2 oz turkey)	Red pepper hummus (½ c chickpeas)	Egg salad sandwich: Egg (1 large)
V ½ cup	Potato salad (½ c potatoes)	Cucumber slices (½ c)	Baby spinach (½ c) diced tomato (⅛ c), and avocado (⅛ c)	Cucumber-tomato salad (½ c)	Confetti coleslaw (½ c vegetables)
F ½ cup	Three-bean salad (½ c) VS	Cinnamon applesauce (½ c)	Orange wedges (½ c)	Carrot sticks (½ c) VS	Plums (½ c)
G 2 oz eq	Enriched corn muffin (4 oz)	Whole-grain rice cakes (2 oz) WGR	Whole-corn tortilla (2 oz) WGR	Whole-wheat crackers (2 oz) WGR	Whole-grain bread (2 oz) WGR
O					

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Week 6

Component	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
M 1 cup	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)	Unflavored low-fat milk (1 c)
MMA 2 oz	Marinated lentil-ham salad: Lentils (½ c) and ham (1 oz)	Chicken sandwich: Sliced chicken (2 oz)	Sliced ham (1 oz) Sliced Swiss cheese (½ oz)	Low-fat cottage cheese (¾ c)	Tuna pasta salad with tomatoes, carrots, and olives: Tuna (1½ oz)
V ½ cup	Red pepper strips (½ c)	Julienned jicama sticks (½ c)	Tossed salad greens (½ c) with tomatoes (⅛ c)	Carrot-raisin salad (¼ c carrots)	Shredded carrots (¾ c) Diced tomatoes (⅛ c) Chopped black olives (⅛ c)
F ½ cup	Fresh nectarine (½ c)	Broccoli florets (½ c) VS	Watermelon (½ c)	Blueberries (½ c)	Honeydew melon (½ c)
G 2 oz eq	Whole-grain roll (2 oz) WGR	Enriched marble bread (2 oz)	Whole-grain crackers (2 oz) WGR	Enriched soft pretzel (2 oz)	Enriched rotini pasta (⅛ c) Whole-wheat roll (2 oz) WGR
O			Low-fat ranch dressing (1 Tbsp)		

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Resources

Crediting Documentation for the Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/crediting-documentation-for-the-child-nutrition-programs>

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 Summary Charts for the CACFP Adult Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/crediting/crediting_summary_charts_cacfp_adults.pdf

Guide to Meeting the CACFP Adult Meal Patterns and Crediting Requirements (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/guide_cacfp_meal_patterns_adults.pdf

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

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-adult-centers>

Menu Planning Basics: A Guide for CACFP Operators in Child Care (Institute of Child Nutrition):

<https://theicn.org/icn-resources-a-z/menu-planning-basics-cacfp>

Menu Planning for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers (CSDE's Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers webpage):

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/meal-patterns-cacfp-adult-centers/menu-planning>

Recipes for Child Nutrition Programs (CSDE's Menu Planning for Child Nutrition Programs webpage)

<https://portal.ct.gov/sde/nutrition/menu-planning/recipes-for-child-nutrition-programs>

Resources for the Child and Adult Care Food Program Meal Patterns (CSDE):

https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/resources_cacfp_meal_patterns.pdf

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For more information, visit the [Meal Patterns for CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage and [Crediting Foods in CACFP Adult Day Care Centers](#) webpage or contact the [CACFP staff](#) at the Connecticut State Department of Education, Bureau of Child Nutrition Programs, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841. This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/sde/nutrition/cacfp/mealpattern/adult_menu_lunch_cold.pdf.

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Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; or
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