

Commissioner's Memo  
10/1/2019

## New Food Items: Crediting Foods in the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, and Afterschool Snack Programs

### Memo Information

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Unit Child Nutrition

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Response Required NO

Attention Superintendents; Child Nutrition Directors/Managers

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### Memo Text

## **ATTENTION: Superintendents, Child Nutrition Directors, Program Managers, and Menu Planners**

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance for crediting new food items in the National school lunch, school breakfast, and afterschool snack programs.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) has added additional food items that may be credited as part of the meal pattern in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), and the Afterschool Snack Program (ASP). This memo provides Child Nutrition Directors, menu planners, and managers with information needed to properly credit these foods in the meal patterns for Child Nutrition Programs (CNPs). This memo will supersede information published in Commissioner's Memo CNU-19-046

**Crediting coconut and coconut water:** Fresh, frozen, and dried coconut may be served and credited as fruit. As with other fruit items, a minimum of 1/8 cup coconut must be served in order to credit as part in the meal pattern. Dried coconut will credit as fruit at twice the volume served. For example 1/8 cup of dried coconut would credit as 1/4 cup of fruit in the NSLP and SBP. A typical use for this item would include toppings or incorporating it into smoothie recipes. Menu planners must consider the caloric and saturated fat content of coconut when including this item in the planned menus. Coconut water that is labeled 100% juice may be credited when served in the CNPs just as any other fruit juice.

**Crediting hominy:** Depending on how it is offered in the meal pattern, hominy may credit as a grain or a vegetable. In the whole form, when hominy is offered, it would be credited as a starchy vegetable. When offered in a dried, milled form, it would be credited as a grain that is whole grain rich (WGR).

Program operators may now credit hominy as follows:

- 1/4 cup of canned, drained hominy or cooked, whole hominy (from dried hominy) credits 1/4 cup starchy vegetable in the NSLP and SBP.
- 1/2 cup cooked or 1 ounce (28 grams) of dry hominy grits credits as 1 oz. eq. of whole grain in the NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program.

**Crediting corn masa, corn flour, and cornmeal:** Masa harina or corn masa is dough or flour made from corn. It is made by a process known as nixtamalization which is soaking the grain in an alkaline or lime solution which increases the bioavailability of major nutrients. Used for making tortilla chips, taco shells, and other popular foods, these items are now creditable in CNPs. Proper crediting is determined by using Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs or grams of creditable grain per portion which is located on the product nutrient fact label. Corn that is not whole or enriched does not credit toward the meal patterns. Exhibit A is available through the USDA Interactive Food Buying Guide at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-for-child-nutrition-programs>

This information supersedes SP 02-2013 and SP 22-2019 as well as any other previously published memos addressing these grain products.

**Crediting popcorn:** Popcorn, a whole grain and a good source of fiber, is now allowed in the CNPs. According to the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines, fiber is under consumed, causing it to be a nutrient of concern. Popcorn is a budget friendly favorite of children and an effective way to increase dietary fiber.

Proper crediting is:

- ¾ cup popped (.25 ounces or 7 grams) = ¼ ounce equivalent grain (oz. eq.)
- 1-1/2 cups popped (.50 ounces or 14 grams) = ½ oz. eq. grain
- 3 cups popped (1 ounce or 28 grams) = 1 oz. eq. grain

To ensure accurate crediting of popcorn, it must be present in at least the minimum creditable amount which is ¾ cup or ¼ oz. eq. Menu planners are cautioned about the use of popcorn toppings such as salt, caramel, or cheese. These additives will increase sodium, calories, and fat.

Menu planners are encouraged to select popcorn products that are Smart Snack compliant whenever incorporating them into the menu. This will make the products suitable for a la carte sales.

**Crediting pasta products made from vegetable flour:** In an effort to increase options in menu planning, FNS now allows pasta made from vegetable flour to be credited as a vegetable in CNPs. Pasta made from one or more vegetable flour(s) may credit as a vegetable. The crediting is consistent with that of crediting vegetables in other forms in that:

- ½ cup of pasta made from vegetable flour is equal to ½ cup of vegetable.
- Pasta made from vegetables within a particular vegetable subgroup, credits within the appropriate subgroup. For example, pasta made from chickpeas credits as a vegetable from the legume group.
- Pasta made from a blend of vegetable flours can be credited in two ways:
  - Using a manufacturer’s formulation statement, the pasta can be credited based on the actual volume of each specific vegetable contained in the product;
  - Or, the pasta product can be credited as “additional vegetables” used through the week to meet the vegetable requirement. Pasta made from a blend of vegetable flour and other non-vegetable ingredients: using a Manufacture’s Formulation Statement, may credit toward the appropriate vegetable subgroup.
- Pasta made from legumes may credit as meat/meat alternate or a vegetable, but cannot credit as part of both components in a single meal.

These changes in crediting do not apply to grain based pasta or those products containing vegetable powder for color.

**Crediting Tempeh:** Tempeh, a fermented soybean product, is used as a meat alternate in recipes for stir fries, sandwiches, and salads. Use of tempeh will help menu planners add variety to menus offered in the CNPs. One ounce (1 oz.) credits as 1 oz. of meat alternate. This applies to tempeh made of soybeans (or other legumes), water, tempeh culture, and herbs and seasonings. Some varieties of tempeh contain other creditable foods such as brown rice, sunflower seed, flax, vegetables, etc. To credit these varieties, menu planners must obtain a CN label or Product Formulation Statement.

**Crediting Surimi Seafood:** This is a pasteurized, restructured seafood usually made from pollock, a member of the cod fish family. Available in a variety of forms such as flakes, chunks, and shreds, it can be used in a various recipes, but additional preparation is not required. Crediting of this product is as follows:

Surimi Seafood	Meat Crediting
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(ounces)	(ounce equivalents)
4.4	1.5
3.0	1.0
1.0	0.25

CN labels and Product Formulation Statements may also be used to document product crediting which may differ from the chart above.

**Crediting shelf-stable dried, semi-dried meat, poultry, and fish:** Products such as beef jerky and summer sausage are now creditable. The use of these products could be helpful in meals served off site, such as field trips, school picnics, or summer feeding programs where meals are sometimes served in non-traditional settings. This information supersedes any previous information concerning shelf-stable, dried, and semi-dried meat, poultry, and fish products found in TA-05-2011. To credit these products, follow the same principles for other meat, fish, or poultry found in the USDA *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs*.

For products referenced in this memo with a Manufacturer's Product Formulation Statement, refer to that section of the CN Labeling Program website at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/food-manufacturersindustry>.

For additional information about these crediting these newly added foods email your Area Specialist or contact them at 501-324-9502.

Attachments:

USDA Guide to Smart Snacks in Schools 2018-2019

SP-21-2019

SP-23-2019

SP-24-2019

SP-25-2019

SP-26-2019

SP-34-2019

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## Attachments

- [SP-21-2019\\_Crediting\\_Shelf\\_Stable\\_Dried\\_Meat\\_Poultry\\_and\\_Seafood\\_Products\\_in\\_CNPs\\_112717.pdf](#)
- [SP-23-2019\\_Crediting\\_Popcorn\\_in\\_CNPs\\_112730.pdf](#)
- [SP\\_24-2019\\_Crediting\\_Surimi\\_Seafood\\_in\\_CNPs\\_112743.pdf](#)
- [SP-25-2019\\_Crediting\\_Tempeh\\_in\\_CNPs\\_112801.pdf](#)

- [SP-26-2019\\_Crediting\\_Pasta\\_Made\\_from\\_Vegetable\\_Flour\\_in\\_CNPs\\_112813.pdf](#)
- [SP-34-2019\\_Crediting\\_Coconut\\_Hominy\\_Corn\\_Masa\\_and\\_Masa\\_Harina\\_112831.pdf](#)
- [USDA\\_Guide\\_to\\_Smart\\_Snacks\\_in\\_Schools\\_2018-2019\\_112847.pdf](#)