

# What's on my child's school lunch tray?

## School Meals Play a Critical Role in Helping Children Learn How to Lead Healthy Lifestyles

The Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA), enforced last school year, mandated several changes to school lunch programs identifying age-appropriate portion sizes and healthy ranges for fruits, vegetables, grains, meats/meat alternates and milk. The HHFKA is complex, so we've simplified the main points for you in the charts below. Keep in mind these guidelines are intended to provide one-third of your child's daily nutritional and energy needs. Whitsons School nutrition remains committed to providing the best combination of nutrients available to your child while they are in our care.

### Daily Meal Component Offerings

Meal Components	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
<b>Fruits</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
<b>Veggies</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
<b>Grains</b>	2oz	2oz	3oz
<b>Meat/ Meat Alternate</b>	2oz	2oz	2oz
<b>Fluid Milk</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup

All Whitsons School Nutrition meals must meet the minimum requirements as defined by the HHFKA. There are no maximum limitations on these meal components but the meal must fit within the weekly calorie range for that grade level. Daily grain and meat/ meat alternate weights are approximated and may slightly increase or decrease on any given day.  
\*Net weight of pure protein source in the food served. Actual serving size might vary according to protein content.

### Weekly Vegetable Offerings

Veggie sub-groups	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades 9-12
	5 cups/week	5 cups/week	5 cups/week
<b>Dark Green</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
<b>Red/ Orange</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 1/4 cup
<b>Legumes</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
<b>Starchy</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
<b>Other</b>	1 cup	1 cup	3/4 cup

The weights listed above are based on average weekly Whitsons offerings and may vary based on the specific likes and/or needs of each district. Minimum HHFKA vegetable sub-group requirements are always met each week at each level.

### Lunch Tray Example 1



*Ham & Cheese Wrap with Carrots, Broccoli, Grapes, Apple & Skim Milk*

### Lunch Tray Example 2



*Two Beef Tacos with Rice, Black Beans, Pico De Gallo, Banana, Strawberries & Skim Milk*

### Lunch Tray Example 3



*Cheese & Tomato Pizza with a Side Salad, Baby Carrots, Red Grapes, Banana and Skim Milk*

# Answers to Your Top 8 Questions About Your Child's School Nutrition Program.

## 1 WHY HAVE LUNCH OFFERINGS AND PORTION SIZES CHANGED?

Schools participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) are required to follow new HHFKA regulations that set mandatory nutrition minimums based on age group. There are no maximum limits in grains and meat/meat alternates; however, meals must still comply with the age-specific calorie limits, even though the portion sizes could be larger. Meals are broken into 5 components and students must take a minimum of 3 components (one must be a fruit or vegetable). Vegetables are further broken-down into sub groups by color; vegetables from every sub group must be offered each week.

## 2 HOW NUTRITIOUS ARE LUNCH MEALS UNDER THE NEW STANDARDS?

The new school meals are intended to be high in micro-nutrients and adequate in calories. The new dietary specifications (portions and calorie ranges) reflect the latest scientific recommendations from nutrition experts on the dietary needs of school children, so they are tailored to your children's needs. Lunch portions are "right sized" and are designed to meet the caloric needs of school children.

## 3 WHY MUST MY CHILD TAKE A FRUIT OR VEGETABLE WITH LUNCH?

Under the HHFKA, a healthy meal plate must include a fruit or vegetable. We encourage students to select from a variety of fruits and vegetables to meet the fruit and vegetable requirements. They choose what foods they want. We use educational tools such as our "Fruit and Veggie of the Month", as well as food tastings and other promotions to help increase acceptance of new foods.

## 4 WHY HAVE SNACK OPTIONS CHANGED?

In an effort to provide the best combination of nutrients available, we have revised our snack choices to include foods that contain zero trans fats. Moreover, all snack foods sold in schools are required to comply with the USDA's "All Foods Sold in Schools' standards of the HHFKA. Additionally, each state may further restrict competitive snack foods.

## 5 CAN STUDENTS PURCHASE ADDITIONAL FOOD?

Yes, your child can purchase an additional lunch or purchase a la carte items. However, if your child takes all the components that are offered, he/she shouldn't need to purchase additional items as the portions are designed according to his/her nutritional needs.

## 6 WHAT ABOUT PHYSICALLY ACTIVE STUDENTS, SUCH AS THOSE INVOLVED IN SPORTS PROGRAMS, WHO MIGHT NEED MORE CALORIES?

Helping students choose meal components wisely the first time through the serving line is key. We have signage throughout each servery explaining the components of a balanced meal. Active students should select all 5 meal components including; a fruit, a vegetable, a grain, a meat or meat alternate and a milk, focusing on foods that sustain energy.

## 7 WHY DO WE HAVE TO HAVE WHOLE GRAINS?

HHFKA requires over 50% of all grains items offered to be whole grain or whole grain rich. Beginning the school year 2014-15, 100% of all grain based items offered will be required to be whole grain. People who eat whole grains as part of a healthy diet have a reduced risk of some chronic diseases. This is why you see that all of our grain offerings are whole grain or whole grain rich.

## 8 WHAT'S WITH ALL THE LOW FAT MILKS?

HHFKA restricts milk to 1% or fat-free for plain white milk and ONLY fat-free for flavored milks. Drinking low-fat or fat-free milk over the full fat alternative cuts calories but doesn't reduce the calcium or the other essential nutrients. Milk is especially important to build children's growing bones.

For more information contact your school food service director OR visit the school nutrition page on your district website.



*Nourishing Growing Minds.*

