

# INFANT MEALS

## PLANNING MEALS FOR INFANTS

Child care facilities participating in the Child and Adult Day Care Food Program (CACFP) must offer program meals to all eligible children, including infants, who are enrolled for care in their facilities. A facility may not avoid this obligation by stating that the infants are not **ENROLLED** in CACFP or by citing some logistical or cost barrier to offering an infant meal. Decisions on offering program meals must be based on whether the child is enrolled for care. As long as the infant is in care during the meal service period, the facility must offer the infant a meal that complies with program requirements. As with all children in CACFP facilities, an infant's parent or guardian may decline what is offered and supply the infant's meals instead. The key factor is that the infant must be provided access to CACFP meals. If a parent or guardian does not want the provider to claim his or her infant's meals, an *Infant Meal Waiver* form must be on file for each infant.

Infants are children from birth to one year. Because they are so vulnerable nutritionally, day care facilities should design their feedings to meet individual needs by utilizing the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Infant Meal Pattern and any documented alteration of the meal pattern as prescribed by the child's doctor. Facilities are advised to check with parents to be certain that an infant has tried, and had no reaction to, baby food products containing multiple fruits, vegetables, meat products, or other ingredients such as milk, nonfat dry milk, whole milk solids, cheese, whey, wheat flour or other wheat products, tomato, and/or corn or corn products. Facilities should request that parents furnish a statement signed by a recognized medical authority if their infant is allergic to, and should not be fed, certain foods or ingredients. The statement must be signed by a licensed physician if the allergy is severe and life-threatening.

USDA has revised program policy to recognize the nonfood-related cost of serving infants. Meals served to infants from birth up to eight months that contain only iron-fortified formula provided by the parent or the caregiver or bottled breast milk provided by the **parent** may be claimed for reimbursement. To receive reimbursement, the caregiver must always offer a complete developmentally appropriate meal. Infants 8 through 11 months old must be served **at least one** required food item at breakfast and lunch that is provided by the caregiver. ***All infant meals must be served by the caregiver.***

Infant meals served must be documented using the *Infant Meals as Served* form. Documentation must include the infant's name, age, date, and actual components and quantities served to each infant at each meal service.

USDA Infant Meal Patterns are for breakfast, lunch, and snack meals. Young babies may need to eat every two to four hours. Older babies may need to eat more frequently than the specified times. When babies are hungry, give them part of their next feeding.

There are ranges given for each food portion in the meal pattern to allow for flexibility in how much food is served to the baby based on his or her appetite. Babies will vary day-to-day in the amounts they eat. The amounts listed are the **MINIMUM** portions you must serve to meet the requirements. Some babies will want more than these amounts. You may serve larger portions and additional foods to those babies. For example, a 3-month-old baby may be fed more than six ounces of formula or breast milk at a feeding or an 8-month-old baby may be fed an additional food such as bread at breakfast, lunch, or supper.

## CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM INFANT MEAL PATTERN

BREAKFAST	BIRTH THROUGH 3 MONTHS	4 THROUGH 7 MONTHS	8 THROUGH 11 MONTHS
	4-6 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> or formula <sup>1</sup>	4-8 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> or formula <sup>1</sup> 0-3 Tbsp infant cereal <sup>1,4</sup>	6-8 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> or formula <sup>1</sup> 2-4 Tbsp infant cereal <sup>1</sup> 1-4 Tbsp fruit or vegetable
<b>LUNCH/ SUPPER</b>			
	4-6 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> or formula <sup>1</sup>	4-8 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> or formula <sup>1</sup> 0-3 Tbsp infant cereal <sup>1,4</sup> 0-3 Tbsp fruit or vegetable <sup>4</sup>	6-8 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> or formula <sup>1</sup> 1-4 Tbsp fruit or vegetable  <b>AND AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:</b>  2-4 Tbsp infant cereal <sup>1</sup> 1-4 Tbsp meat, fish, poultry, egg yolk, or cooked dry beans or peas 1/2-2 oz cheese 1-4 oz (volume) cottage cheese 1-4 oz (weight) cheese food or cheese spread
<b>SNACK</b>			
	4-6 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> or formula <sup>1</sup>	4-6 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> or formula <sup>1</sup>	2-4 fluid oz breast milk <sup>2,3</sup> , formula <sup>1</sup> , or fruit juice <sup>5</sup> 0-1/2 slice bread <sup>4,6</sup> or 0-2 crackers <sup>4,6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Infant formula and dry infant cereal shall be iron-fortified.

<sup>2</sup> It is recommended that breast milk be served in place of formula from birth through 11 months.

<sup>3</sup> For some breast-fed infants who regularly consume less than the minimum amount of breast milk per feeding, a serving of less than the minimum amount of breast milk may be offered with additional breast milk offered if the infant is still hungry.

<sup>4</sup> A serving of this component shall be optional.

<sup>5</sup> Fruit juice shall be full-strength.

<sup>6</sup> Bread and bread alternates shall be made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour.

**NOTE:** Do not serve honey or use in food served to infants under one year old.

## **INFANT MEAL WAIVER INSTRUCTIONS**

Infants who are enrolled for child care must have access to CACFP meals. If a parent or guardian does not want his or her infant to participate in the CACFP, an *Infant Meal Waiver* form must be completed and on file for each infant. The facility will not be able to claim the infant meals for reimbursement. The institution must have the Infant Meal Waiver on file.

1. Record the infant's first and last names.
2. Record the infant's birth date.
3. Parent/guardian must sign waiver.
4. Record the date the parent/guardian signs.

**EXAMPLE**

**INFANT MEAL WAIVER**

I wish to decline my child's participation in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). I understand that the facility will not be claiming my child's meals for CACFP reimbursement.

Name of Infant:                     *Sue Sanders*                    

Date of Birth:                     *2/04/YYYY*                    

Signature of Parent/Guardian:                     *Mrs. Sanders*                    

Date:                     *10/3/YYYY*

## INFANT MEALS SERVED INSTRUCTIONS

All meal services offered infants each day may be recorded on the same page. Space is provided to record food items and the individual quantity of food served to six infants. It is required that the following information be recorded:

1. Date of meal service.
2. Names and ages of all infants served.
3. Individual food items credited for each infant toward the required food component. The food item is to be recorded on the same row the infant's name and age are recorded.
4. Individual quantity of the food item served for each infant recorded.
5. Total infants served.
6. Indicate formula or breast milk provided by the parent with an \*.

The *Infant Meals as Served* form must be completed on a daily basis. In addition, records must be kept on-site at all times. This record is the institution's documentation that meals claimed for reimbursement met minimum meal pattern requirements. The *Infant Meals as Served* form should be maintained with the Food Production Records/Menus as Served Book.

**EXAMPLE**

**INFANT MEALS AS SERVED**

DATE: 10/03/YYYY

REMEMBER TO ADD INFANT MEALS TO THE MEAL COUNT WORKSHEET.

TOTAL INFANTS SERVED: 1

Breakfast: 1 Lunch/Supper: 1 Snack: 1

Meal Type	Quantity Served Meat/Meat Alternate	Quantity Served Bread/Cereal	Quantity Served Fruit/Vegetable/ Juice	Quantity Served Formula/Breast Milk
<b>Names and Ages</b>				
<b>Breakfast</b>				
1. HARRISON BUTLER - 9 MO		4 TBSP CEREAL	4 TBSP PEACHES	8 OZ FORMULA*
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
<b>Lunch/Supper</b>				
1. HARRISON BUTLER - 9 MO	1 OZ CHEESE		4 TBSP CARROTS	8 OZ FORMULA*
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
<b>Snack</b>				
1. HARRISON BUTLER - 9 MO		2 CRACKERS		8 OZ FORMULA*
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
<b>Supper</b>				
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				

Place an asterisk (\*) beside the formula or breast milk provided by the parent/guardian.

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# CREDITING FOODS FOR INFANT MEAL PATTERN

## BREAST MILK AND FORMULA

- Meals containing only bottled breast milk or formula provided by the parent are reimbursable for infants up to eight months of age.
- All infant formulas, including soy-based formulas, may be served as long as they are iron-fortified and served according to the directions on the label.
- Whole milk may **NOT** be served to infants aged 8 through 11 months.
- Lowfat and skim milk (fat-free) are not recommended to be served until children reach the age of two.

## FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Commercial baby food fruits and vegetables that list fruit or vegetable as the first ingredient in the ingredient listing on the label may be credited.
- Commercial baby food fruits and vegetables that contain multiple fruits or multiple vegetables, and list fruit or vegetable as the first ingredient in the ingredient listing on the label, may be credited.
- Commercial baby food **DINNERS** which list fruit or vegetable as the first ingredient are **NOT** creditable as meal components.
- Commercial baby foods in the **JARRED CEREAL WITH FRUIT** category are **NOT CREDITABLE** as a meal component in the fruit or infant cereal categories.
- Commercial baby foods in the **DESSERT CATEGORY** (these generally have *dessert* or *pudding* as part of the product name on the front of the label) that list a fruit as the first ingredient in the ingredient listing are **NOT** creditable meal components.

## FRUIT JUICE

- Only full-strength fruit juice (regular or infant juice) may be credited as a snack for infants aged 8 to 12 months.
- It is recommended that fruit juice containing, or fortified with, vitamin C be selected. Vitamin C promotes the absorption of iron.
- It is recommended that only pasteurized fruit juice be selected. Frozen concentrate, shelf-stable juice in hermetically-sealed containers (including infant juices), and canned juices are processed or pasteurized to eliminate harmful bacteria.
- Vegetable juices and fruit juices with yogurt are **NOT** creditable.

## MEAT AND MEAT ALTERNATES

- Commercial baby food meats with meat or poultry as the first ingredient in the ingredient listing are reimbursable.

- Junior baby food meat products (i.e., beef and beef gravy, chicken and chicken gravy, ham and ham gravy, turkey and turkey gravy, and veal and veal gravy) are creditable even if they do contain additional ingredients, such as cornstarch and, in some cases, lemon juice concentrate.
- Meat sticks or *finger sticks* (which look like miniature hot dogs) are not creditable as a meat/meat alternate. They present a choking risk in infants and, by the manufacturer’s declaration, are designed to match the skills of children over 12 months of age.
- Commercial fish sticks, other commercial breaded or battered fish or seafood products, canned fish with bones, hot dogs, and sausages are **NOT** creditable as a meat/meat alternate. These foods are not designed by their manufacturers for consumption by infants. Infants may choke on these food items, and there may be an incidental bone in fish sticks and other breaded fish products.
- Yogurt is **NOT** creditable as a meal component in the Infant Meal Pattern. Yogurt can be served as an additional food if the parent requests that it be served.
- Nuts, seeds, and nut and/or seed butters are **NOT** creditable. These foods can cause an infant to choke and can also cause allergic reactions in some infants.

#### **BREADS, CRACKERS, AND INFANT CEREALS**

- Only infant cereal and bread or cracker-type products made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour that is suitable for an infant to use as a finger food may be credited. ***The Infant Meal Pattern does not specify the broad category of bread alternate.***
- Any iron-fortified dry cereal specially formulated for and generally recognized as cereal for infants that is routinely mixed with formula or breast milk prior to consumption may be credited. ***A serving of infant cereal must be fortified to a minimum level of 45 percent of the Daily Value for iron as listed on the product’s Nutrition Facts label.***
- Breads made from whole-grain or enriched meal or flour that are creditable at snack for infants aged 8 to 12 months include:
  - \* Breads (white, wheat, whole-wheat, French, Italian, and similar breads—all without nuts, seeds, or hard pieces of whole-grain kernels)
  - \* Biscuits
  - \* Bagels (made without nuts, seeds, or hard pieces of whole-grain kernels)
  - \* English muffins
  - \* Pita bread (white, wheat, whole-wheat)
  - \* Rolls (white, wheat, whole-wheat, potato, all without nuts, seeds, or hard pieces of whole-grain kernels)
  - \* Soft tortillas (wheat or corn)
- Cracker-type products creditable at snack for infants aged 8 to 12 months include:
  - \* Crackers (saltines or snack crackers made without nuts, seeds, or hard pieces of whole-grain kernels; matzo crackers; animal crackers; graham crackers made without honey)
  - \* Zwieback
  - \* Teething biscuits

- All bread and cracker-type products, if they are served, must be prepared in a form that is suitable for an infant to use as a finger food and reduce the chance of choking.
- Iron-fortified dry infant cereals containing fruit are **NOT** creditable.
- Commercial jarred baby food cereals (which are *wet*, not *dry*) are **NOT** creditable.
- Ready-to-eat breakfast cereals (cold, dry) and cooked breakfast cereals (such as farina or oatmeal) are not considered *iron-fortified dry infant cereal* and are not creditable. They can be fed as additional foods if the parent requests that they be served.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON INFANT MEAL PATTERN

- 1. Q Must a young infant eat at only the specified mealtimes?**  
**A** The meal pattern states breakfast, lunch, supper, and snack, but that is only a guideline. Young babies may need to eat every two to four hours. Older babies may need to eat more frequently than the specified times. When babies are hungry, give them part of their next feeding.
- 2. Q How can you serve 0 tablespoons of food?**  
**A** Certain foods are listed as 0 tablespoons to let you know that the food is optional and should be served at your discretion. Also, you may serve less than one tablespoon of these foods.
- 3. Q Why are some of the food portions so small?**  
**A** The portions listed are the minimum amounts that meet the requirements. You may serve larger portions to those babies who would like more.
- 4. Q Why is fruit juice no longer required as an option at breakfast, lunch, and supper?**  
**A** Fruit juice should be provided in a cup, not in a bottle, to avoid baby-bottle tooth decay. By 8 months of age, most babies begin to drink from a cup. Fruit juice may be served as an additional food before 8 months of age to babies who are able to drink juice from a cup.
- 5. Q Can whole milk be served to infants 8 months of age and older?**  
**A** No. The Infant Meal Pattern requirements only include formula or breast milk for infants 8 to 12 months of age.
- 6. Q Can lowfat or skim (fat-free) milk be served?**  
**A** Lowfat and skim milk are not recommended to be served until children reach the age of 2.
- 7. Q Which infant formulas can be served?**  
**A** All infant formulas, including soy-based formulas, may be served as long as they are iron-fortified and served according to the directions on the label.
- 8. Q Which baby foods are allowed?**  
**A** Baby foods in a jar or dehydrated flakes are allowed as long as they are only fruits, vegetables, or meats. Desserts, combination foods, and dinners are not allowed since it is difficult to determine the amount of each component in them. Also, the nutritional quality of mixed foods is usually less than that of single foods. Commercial baby food containing modified food starch (MFS) is not allowable.
- 9. Q When an infant receives both breast milk and formula, is the meal eligible for reimbursement?**  
**A** Yes; a meal served to an infant 12 months of age and under which contains some amount of breast milk (and some amount of formula) is reimbursable as long as the total number of ounces offered to the infant meets, or exceeds, the minimum amount for the milk component as specified in the CACFP Infant Meal Pattern.

**10. Q Are meals served to children 12 months of age and older reimbursable if they contain infant formula?**

**A** Yes; for a period of one month, when a child is weaning from infant formula to whole cow's milk (i.e., transitioning), meals that contain infant formula may be reimbursable. When a child is weaned from formula (or breast milk) to cow's milk, it is a common practice to provide the infant with both foods at the same meal service to gradually ease the infant to accept some of the new food. However, unlike breast milk, infant formula is not an alternative type of milk that can be substituted to meet the fluid milk requirement for the CACFP meal pattern for children over the age of 1 year. Thus, for a child 13 months of age and older who is not in this transitional stage, a statement from a recognized medical authority is needed for a meal containing infant formula to be eligible for reimbursement.

**11. Q If a physician prescribes whole cow's milk as a substitute for breast milk for an infant under 12 months of age, is the meal reimbursable?**

**A** Yes; a meal or snack containing whole fluid cow's milk and served to an infant under 12 months of age is eligible for reimbursement if the substitution is authorized, in writing, by a recognized medical authority. Similarly, if a recognized medical authority prescribes a formula such as low-iron fortified formula, which is not listed as a creditable formula for CACFP, the meal is eligible for reimbursement.

We have always recognized the unique dietary needs of infants and that decisions concerning diet, during this first year of life, are for the infant's health care provider and parents or guardians to make together. Therefore, to support the request, a medical statement that explains the food substitution or modification is needed. The statement must be submitted and kept on file by the facility or institution.

**12. Q A mother would like her 5-month-old infant to receive breast milk that she provides and solid foods that are listed as options in the meal pattern. Because the infant is developmentally ready for solid foods, whose responsibility is it to provide them?**

**A** If an infant is developmentally ready for one or more solid food items and the parent or guardian requests that the infant be served solid foods, the center is responsible for purchasing and serving them to the infant.

The CACFP Infant Meal Pattern takes into consideration that infants develop at different paces. Some food items such as fruit and cereal are listed as options in the meal pattern to account for an infant's **READINESS** to accept these foods (i.e., some infants are developmentally ready for solid foods earlier than others). This occurs in the breakfast and lunch/supper meal service for infants 4 through 7 months old and for the snack meal service for infants 8 to 12 months of age. A child care center or provider must serve a complete meal to every infant or child enrolled in the meal service. Therefore, if a child is developmentally ready for these solid foods and the parent or guardian requests that the infant be served solid foods, the components are no longer considered as options and should be served to the infant to provide him or her with the optimal nutrition he or she needs to develop and grow.

**13. Q If a mother comes to the day care home or center to nurse her infant, is the meal reimbursable?**

**A** No. Although we strongly support all efforts for mothers to breastfeed their infants, we believe that the caregiver must provide some type of service in order to be reimbursed for a meal. CACFP reimburses child care facilities the cost of preparing and serving nutritious meals and snacks to infants and children receiving day care. When a parent nurses her own child, the services for which the center or the provider would receive reimbursement are not being performed.

However, the meal would be reimbursable for infants over three months of age who are developmentally ready for solid foods if at least one other component is furnished by the center or provider. For example, if a mother comes to the home or center for lunch meal service to breastfeed her five-month-old infant and the provider supplies a serving of vegetables (listed as options in the infant meal pattern for lunch for infants aged 4-7 months), the meal is reimbursable.

**14. Q Is a meal reimbursable if the parent or guardian provides the majority of the meal components for infants older than three months?**

A In addition to medical or special dietary needs, parents may *CHOOSE* to provide one or several of the meal components under the CACFP infant meal pattern for infants older than three months, as long as this in compliance with local health codes. Because we recognize that parents or guardians are often most in touch with their child's individual dietary preferences, we believe the CACFP infant meal pattern can accommodate these preferences. In such a case, the center or provider would still be required to provide at least one of the components in at least the minimum quantities specified in the meal pattern in order for the meal to be reimbursable. Centers and sponsoring organizations also need to ensure that the parent or guardian is truly choosing to provide the preferred component(s) and that the center or provider has not solicited (requested or required) the parent or guardian to provide the components in order to complete the meal and reduce cost to the center or provider.

**15. Q Cottage cheese is a meat alternate in the lunch and supper meal pattern for infants aged 8 through 11 months. How much cottage cheese must be offered to fulfill the meat/meat alternate meal pattern requirement?**

A Cottage cheese, cheese food, and cheese spread are acceptable meat alternates in the CACFP infant meal pattern. The amount which may be offered as a meat alternate to infants aged 8 through 11 months is 1 to 4 *OUNCES*.

**16. Q Are mixed or combination infant foods (e.g., infant dinners with vegetables and chicken) reimbursable in the infant meal pattern?**

A Mixed or combination foods are not reimbursable in the infant meal pattern. It is extremely difficult to identify the required food components and prove that the amount of the food components in mixed infant foods meet the meal pattern requirements. Additionally, many infant mixed food products contain more ingredients that could possibly cause an allergic reaction in those children with allergies and may have added sugar that may promote the development of tooth decay as well as provide few nutrients.

**17. Q Are foods that are considered to be highly allergic or foods that contain these highly allergic foods allowed for infant meals?**

A Foods that contain one or more of the eight major food allergens identified by the FDA (milk, egg, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans) are allowed and can be part of a reimbursable meal. The American Academy of Pediatrics states there is no current convincing evidence that delaying the introduction of foods that are considered to be highly allergic has a significant positive effect on the development of food allergies. Even though most food allergies cause relatively mild and minor symptoms, some food allergies can cause severe reactions, possibly life-threatening. With this in mind, it is good practice to check with parents or guardians of all infants to learn about any concerns of possible allergies and their preference on how solid foods are introduced.