

Serving Meat and Meat Alternates at Breakfast

Breakfasts in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) include milk, vegetables and/or fruits, and grains. You can also serve meat and/or meat alternates instead of grains at breakfast up to 3 times per week. This option gives you more choices for menu planning.



Here's how to include meat or meat alternates as part of a reimbursable breakfast meal:

- Substitute 1 **ounce equivalent** of meat/meat alternate for 1 serving of grains; or
- Substitute 1 **ounce equivalent** of meat/meat alternate for 1 ounce equivalent of grains.

Ounce equivalents are a way to measure amounts of food. In the CACFP, 1 ounce equivalent of a meat or meat alternate is equal to 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, ½ of a large egg, or 1 ounce of lean meat, poultry, or fish. If you want to serve meat/meat alternates more than 3 days a week, you must offer them as additional foods, which do not count toward the reimbursable meal.

A Closer Look at Menu Planning

If you plan to offer a meat or meat alternate at breakfast in place of grains, it must replace the entire required amount of grains. The table below shows the minimum amount of a meat or meat alternate you would need to serve in place of grains at breakfast.

	Ages 1 - 2 years and 3 - 5 years	Ages 6 - 12 years and 13 - 18 years	Adults
Minimum amount of meat/ meat alternates required when served instead of grains at breakfast	½ ounce equivalent	1 ounce equivalent	2 ounce equivalents
	is equal to:	is equal to:	is equal to:
Beans or peas (cooked)	⅛ cup	¼ cup	½ cup
Natural or processed cheese	½ ounce	1 ounce	2 ounces
Cottage or ricotta cheese	⅛ cup (1 ounce)	¼ cup (2 ounces)	½ cup (4 ounces)
Eggs	¼ large egg	½ large egg	1 large egg
Lean meat, poultry, or fish	½ ounce	1 ounce	2 ounces
Peanut butter, soy nut butter, or other nut or seed butters	1 tablespoon	2 tablespoons	4 tablespoons
Tofu (store-bought or commercially prepared)	⅛ cup (1.1 ounces) with at least 2.5 grams of protein	¼ cup (2.2 ounces) with at least 5 grams of protein	½ cup (4.4 ounces) with at least 10 grams of protein
Yogurt (including soy yogurt)	¼ cup of yogurt (2 ounces)	½ cup of yogurt (4 ounces)	1 cup of yogurt (8 ounces)

Note: When you serve beans and peas as a vegetable, they cannot also count as a meat alternate in the same meal.



Mix It Up at Breakfast



You can serve a meat or meat alternate as a standalone item, such as eggs, yogurt, cottage cheese, turkey sausage, and ham. As a best practice, choose foods that are lower in saturated fat and sodium. Meat and meat alternates can be served together, such as eggs (a meat alternate) and ham (a meat). Meat and meat alternates can also be served in a dish mixed with other foods, such as apple slices spread with peanut butter, yogurt topped with fruit, or a tofu scramble with vegetables.



Bacon, imitation bacon products, scrapple, and salt pork are not creditable in the CACFP.



Turkey bacon, Canadian bacon, and some types of sausage are creditable only if the product has a Child Nutrition label, or if you have a Product Formulation Statement (PFS) signed by the manufacturer. For more information on crediting foods in the CACFP, please see the *Crediting Handbook for the CACFP* and the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* at <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/cacfp-meal-pattern-training-tools>.



For Adult Day Care Only: You can serve 6 ounces of yogurt in place of 8 ounces of milk once per day when yogurt is not served as a meat alternate in the same meal. If you serve yogurt to adults as a meat alternate at breakfast, you must also serve fluid milk.



Try It Out!

Test Yourself

1. Your adult day care center is open 4 days a week. How many times per week may you serve meat and meat alternatives in place of grains at breakfast?
2. Your child care home is open 7 days per week. How many times per week may you serve meat and meat alternatives in place of grains at breakfast?
3. You want to serve yogurt at breakfast to your 3-5 year olds once per week. If you are serving the yogurt in place of a grain, what's the minimum amount you must serve to this age group to meet the meal pattern requirement?

1. You may serve meat and meat alternates in place of grains up to 3 times per week. All centers and day care homes have the option to serve meat/meat alternates in place of grains at breakfast up to 3 times per week, no matter how many days per week they are open.
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3. If serving yogurt in place of a grain at breakfast, you must serve at least 2 ounces (1/4 cup) of yogurt to the 3-5 year olds to meet the meal pattern requirement.

Answer Key: