

New School Nutrition Regulations Mean Changes for School Meals:

You may have heard about a change coming in school lunch this fall. It is true! After much research on school meals, coupled with the recent release of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2012, the USDA announced new government regulations that will substantially change school meal requirements for the first time in decades. Changes will include more whole grains, more nutrient dense fruits and vegetables and a plan to significantly reduce the average sodium content of school meals over the next ten years. You will see some new menu items, some old menu items that include healthier ingredients, larger portions of fruits and vegetables and changes to how breakfast and lunch menus are planned. Students will be offered foods from five food groups (grain, fruit, vegetable, protein and dairy) and they must take at least 3 of the 5 menu items. In addition, they must always take at least ½ cup of a fruit or vegetable. Please be proactive and talk with your child about the USDA ChooseMyPlate. We will use this identifier to try and help students put into practice the guidelines needed to help them build healthier meals. For more information on ChooseMyPlate, please visit www.choosemyplate.gov.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Julie Stratton, food service General Manager at 480-664-5025.

Let's Move and Healthy Hunger Free Kids:

Recently the news in school lunch has been about the move to healthy meals. There are two main reasons why we are hearing about and seeing changes to school meals. First, school meals are required to mimic the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. These guidelines are updated every five years, but schools meal regulations have not seen significant changes in many years. The new regulations for school meals complement the recommendations outlined in the Dietary Guidelines.

(<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/MyPlate/DG2010Brochure.pdf>) In addition, Michelle Obama's "Let's Move" campaign to improve physical activity and eating habits and the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act of 2010 have stimulated many changes to communities, schools and school meal programs over the past couple years. We anticipate the momentum behind this movement will continue to grow. More fruits and vegetables, more whole grain and lower sodium are the highlights of the new regulations for school meals. Together the "Let's Move" campaign, the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, the efforts of our school leaders and your support will help students increase their physical activity and change their diets to support a healthy lifestyle and brighter future.

Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act and Fountain Hills Unified School District

This fall there will be some changes to the School meal requirements that are being mandated by the United States Department of Agriculture. The law will require more whole grains, more and different types of fruits and vegetables and foods with lower sodium. You may have heard about these changes on the news. Here at XYZ school district, we began making similar changes to our menus a few years ago. Many of our menu items are now made with healthier ingredients such as whole grains, we have been modifying recipes to include less sodium and saturated fat, we have switched to only 1% or non-fat milk, our snacks and beverages meet nutrition guidelines established for lower sugar, fat and sodium, and our menus include more fruits and vegetables. We will be educating your child about the importance of maintaining an active lifestyle and using the USDA ChooseMyPlate as a symbol of how to build healthier meals. We have always encouraged students to try fruits and vegetables, but students will now be required to take at least ½ cup of fruits and vegetables every day as a part of the new regulations. We encourage you to speak with your child about these requirements and encourage them to consume these foods as well. It's not good nutrition if it's not consumed!

For more information, please feel free to call Julie Stratton, food service General Manager at 480-664-5025.

Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act, some changes you may notice...

1. We will begin using a Food Based Menu planning system

Every meal will consist of five components: grains, meat/meat alternatives, fruit, vegetable, and milk. In order to be considered a student meal, the student must select three of the five components. We encourage students to select all five components to receive a balanced meal.

2. Every student will be required to take 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetable each day to make a reimbursable meal.

We follow a plan that is called "offer vs. serve." This means students must be offered foods from all five food groups, but they are only required to take a full portion of three of the five offered items. Under the new regulation, students must take at least ½ cup of either a fruit or vegetable. Larger portions of vegetables and fruit will be available to those students who want them.

3. A legume will be offered at least once a week

Legumes are from the bean/pea family, but they are not green beans or green peas. Legumes are full mature beans, such as black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans. You may see these items offered as a side item, such as roasted garbanzo beans, bean dips, refried beans with a burrito or even as beans and rice. Please encourage your child to try these menu items as they are excellent sources of protein and fiber.

4. **French fries will always be baked, not fried.**

5. **All snack and beverage items will be compliant with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (AHG) guidelines.** AHG is a joint collaboration between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation. We are awaiting additional regulations from USDA that specify nutrition guidelines for snacks and beverages.

For more information, please feel free to call your Julie Stratton, food service General Manager at 480-664-5025.

Whole Grains in our menus

The new Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act will require school to provide more whole grain-rich foods instead of refined grains. This means that changes such as replacing white bread and rolls with whole grain equivalents and white rice with brown rice will become more obvious on the menus. Even things such as pizza crusts and breading on chicken nuggets will change to whole grains. Starting in the fall 2012, 50% of all grains served in lunch must be whole grain-rich. By fall 2014, 100% of all grains served at lunch and breakfast will need to be whole grain-rich. Often, students won't even notice the change. In fact, we have made a number of these changes over the past few years. Sometimes they will notice and our experience tells us that they will adjust to most of the changes in taste. We will continue to work with manufacturing partners to develop great tasting products and recipes that meet or exceed these nutrition guidelines, as well as taste great!

More Fruits, Vegetables & Beans

The new Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act includes requirements to serve more fruits, vegetables and beans on a daily basis. The rule also includes a minimum serving for dark green and red-orange vegetables. These new categories include things such as:

<u>Dark Green</u>	<u>Red/ Orange</u>	<u>Beans</u>
Bok Choy	Acorn Squash	Black Beans
Broccoli	Pumpkin	Kidney Beans
Romaine Lettuce	Sweet Potatoes	Garbanzo Beans
Turnip Greens	Tomato Juice	Navy Beans

You will notice the inclusion of these types of items more often on menus and in recipes in the future. The goal is to increase consumption of nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables and teach students about healthy food choices that will last a lifetime.