
(con't) CALORIE RANGE

Using Commodities to Meet This Standard

The USDA Food Distribution Program only distributes canned fruits in light syrup or fruit juice to decrease calories from sugar. The fat content in the specifications for USDA ground beef products has decreased in recent years and now provides a leaner product with fewer calories per serving.

Menu Tips:

Sometimes schools struggle to meet the minimum calorie standard while staying under the maximum fat standard in meals. There are several steps to take to add calories and nutrients to meals without increasing the fat.

- Offer students the option of taking a second half-pint of low-fat or skim milk with their meal to increase beneficial nutrients without significantly increasing total fat.
- Offer students additional servings of whole grain products and healthy side dishes to increase nutrients without significantly increasing total fat.
- Offer students fresh fruits for side dishes and desserts. Offer fresh vegetables as side dishes to increase nutrients and fiber.
- Limit the offering of added cheese, cream-based sauces, high-fat salad dressings and condiments.
- Plan daily menus to provide 100-110% of the calories needed each day to stay within the calorie range for the weekly average. This will prevent meals that are too large and result in excessive waste or too small and leave students hungry.
- Keep portion sizes age appropriate and consistent.

Recipe Ideas

The *USDA Recipes for Schools* are standardized and include data on calories per serving. All of the recipes are available online at www.teamnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/usda_recipes.html.

