

# New York City Food Standards

## Part I: Standards for Meals/Snacks Purchased and Served

*Revised October 2011*

This document outlines standards for food purchased and meals and snacks served, with the goal of improving the health of all New Yorkers served by City agencies. The New York City Food Standards aim to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease, such as obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular disease, by improving dietary intake.

The standards have been developed based upon agency feedback, review, and agreement. They do not apply to food available in vending machines,<sup>1</sup> or at concessions that provide food *for sale* through leases, licenses or contracts at City programs.

Agencies and their contractors are expected to follow the standards described in each of the four sections:

- I. Standards for Purchased Food  
Addresses food items purchased and gives specific standards by food category.
- II. Standards for Meals and Snacks Served  
Addresses the overall nutrient requirements for meals served and gives standards for snacks and special occasions.
- III. Agency and Population-Specific Standards and Exceptions  
Addresses standards for specific populations (e.g. children, seniors) and agencies. The additions and exceptions in the third section supersede the first two sections. For example, children under 2 years may be served whole milk, instead of 1% or nonfat milk required in the first section.
- IV. Sustainability Recommendations  
Addresses recommendations to support a healthy and ecologically sustainable food system.

The first two sections overlap: all purchased food items must meet the standards in Section I *and* must fit in to meals and snacks served such that the nutrient requirements in Section II are met. The purchased food standards ensure that agencies make healthier foods a regular part of people's diets and ensure that people who only eat a few items of each meal are still eating healthy options. The meal and snack standards ensure that people eating whole meals and snacks have a healthy, balanced diet.

All food purchased or served by a City agency must meet the **required** standards that appear in bold. Agencies are expected to be in compliance with the revised standards by October 31, 2012. Agency contractors are also required to comply with these Standards. This includes foodservice contractors, such as caterers, and programmatic contractors, that serve food within the context of the program.

The New York City Food Standards were made effective by Executive Order 122 from Mayor Bloomberg on September 19, 2008.<sup>2</sup> The Executive Order mandates that all City agencies follow the Standards for all foods that are purchased, prepared, and/or served by the agency, and/or agency contractors.

**For more information, please contact: [nycfoodstandards@health.nyc.gov](mailto:nycfoodstandards@health.nyc.gov)**



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<sup>1</sup> Please see NYC standards for vending machines: [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cardio/cardio-vend-nutrition-standard.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cardio/cardio-vend-nutrition-standard.shtml)

<sup>2</sup> View the Executive Order at: [www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/downloads/pdf/eo\\_122.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/ceo/downloads/pdf/eo_122.pdf)

## I. Standards for Purchased Food

*These standards are defined per serving of food as shown on the product's Nutrition Facts label.<sup>3</sup>*

### Nutrient Standards:

- Trans fat:
  - **Require** restriction consistent with DOHMH, City regulation and law.<sup>4</sup>
- Sodium:
  - **Require** all individual items contain  $\leq 480$  mg sodium per serving,<sup>5</sup> not including specific items stated in the Food Category Standards below. Recommend purchasing "low sodium" ( $\leq 140$  mg sodium per serving) whenever feasible.

### Food Category Standards:

- Beverages:
  - **Require**  $\leq 25$  calories per 8 oz for all beverages other than 100% fruit juice or milk.<sup>6</sup>
  - If purchasing juice, **require** 100% fruit juice.
- Dairy:
  - **Require** milk be 1% or non-fat, and unsweetened.<sup>7,8</sup>
  - **Require** fluid milk substitutes (e.g. soymilk) be unflavored.<sup>7</sup>
  - **Require** low-fat or non-fat yogurt.
  - Recommend purchase plain yogurt or yogurt with  $\leq 30$  g sugar per 8 oz or equivalent (e.g.  $\leq 15$  g sugar per 4 oz,  $\leq 23$  g sugar per 6 oz).
  - Recommend choose lower sodium cheese.
- Bread, pasta, and other grains:
  - **Require** sliced sandwich bread contain  $\leq 180$  mg sodium per serving, be whole wheat/whole grain and contain  $\geq 2$  g fiber per serving.
  - **Require** other baked goods (e.g. dinner rolls, muffins, bagels, tortillas) contain  $\leq 290$  mg sodium per serving.
  - Recommend purchase whole grain pasta, whole grain baked goods (dinner rolls, muffins, bagels, tortillas), brown rice, etc.
- Cereal:
  - **Require** cereal contain  $\leq 215$  mg sodium per serving,  $\leq 10$  g sugar per serving, and  $\geq 2$  g fiber per serving.<sup>9,10</sup>
- Fruits and vegetables:
  - **Require** canned/frozen vegetables and beans contain  $\leq 290$  mg sodium per serving.
  - **Require** fruit canned in unsweetened juice or water. No fruit canned in syrup.
- Tuna, salmon and other seafood:
  - **Require** canned/frozen seafood contain  $\leq 290$  mg sodium per serving.

<sup>3</sup> Serving size is based on FDA-established lists of "Reference Amounts Customarily Consumed Per Eating Occasion".

<sup>4</sup> For more information: [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/public/notice-adoption-hc-art81-08.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/public/notice-adoption-hc-art81-08.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> For agencies serving populations with a majority of the population over 50 years old, **require** all individual items contain  $\leq 360$  mg sodium per serving.

<sup>6</sup> For agencies serving a majority of children under 18 years, **require** beverages with no artificial sweeteners.

<sup>7</sup> For children ages 4-18 years, flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes are permitted and **required** to be  $\leq 130$  calories per serving. Recommend that agencies continue to phase out flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes over time. As per Article 47 of the New York City Health Code, child care facilities may not serve milk with added sweeteners.

<sup>8</sup> For children ages 12 months to under age two, **require** unsweetened whole milk.

<sup>9</sup> For child care facilities, **require** cereal contain  $\leq 6$  g sugar per serving in addition to sodium and fiber standards.

<sup>10</sup> Cereals that contain dried cranberries, dates, and/or raisins are exempt from the sugar standard due to the limited availability of this product type that meets the sugar standard. Cereals must still meet fiber and sodium standards. Recommend phasing out these high sugar cereals over time.

- Poultry:
  - **Require** canned/frozen poultry contain  $\leq 290$  mg sodium per serving.
- Beef and pork:
  - **Require** canned beef/pork contain  $\leq 480$  mg sodium per serving.
  - Recommend purchase “extra lean” beef and pork (total fat  $\leq 5\%$ ) and at least 90% lean ground beef.
  - Recommend bacon contain  $\leq 290$  mg sodium per serving.
- Luncheon meat:
  - **Require** luncheon meat contain  $\leq 480$  mg sodium per serving.
- Condiments and sauces:
  - **Require** salad dressings contain  $\leq 290$  mg sodium per serving.
  - **Require** sauces contain  $\leq 480$  mg sodium per serving.<sup>11</sup>
  - Recommend use lower sodium condiments and sauces such as reduced sodium soy sauce.
- Portion controlled items and other convenience foods:
  - **Require** portion controlled items and other convenience foods such as breaded chicken, veal patties, frozen French toast and waffles contain  $\leq 480$  mg sodium per serving.
- Frozen whole meals:
  - **Require** frozen whole meals contain  $\leq 35\%$  of the daily sodium limit (adults:  $\leq 805$  mg, children:  $\leq 770$  mg, seniors  $\leq 525$  mg).

Note regarding **sodium standards** for purchased food:

In some instances successful sodium reduction requires gradual change to maintain product taste and quality. If an agency is purchasing non-compliant products that are essential to menu planning and that agency has demonstrated efforts to reduce the sodium in those products, the agency may continue to purchase those products with the deadline of reaching the sodium standards by October 31, 2012.

Note regarding **revised standards** for purchased food:

Agencies are expected to be in compliance with the revised standards by October 31, 2012. Technical challenges related to reformulation at the manufacturer’s level may require a longer timeframe for compliance with the new requirements. In October 2012, agencies that are unable to meet the new standards will submit a list of items out of compliance, steps taken to achieve compliance, and expected timeline for full compliance to the Food Policy Coordinator and Health Commissioner.

Note regarding populations with religious or special dietary needs:

If an agency cannot meet required purchased food standards due to a present lack of availability of food items that meet the specific needs of the population they serve (e.g. packaged kosher foods), the agency is expected to seek suitable replacements in the marketplace as quickly as is feasible. The agency must identify and report these products to the Food Policy Coordinator and the Health Commissioner.

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<sup>11</sup> Soy sauce is exempt due to lack of market availability for products that meet this standard. Recommend use reduced sodium soy sauce.

## II. Standards for Meals and Snacks Served

All City agencies must have a plan for regular menu review to ensure that they meet the nutrient content standards. Outlined in this section are standards for Nutrition, Meals Served, and Snacks Served.

### A. Nutrition Standards

These standards are based on the USDA's 2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.<sup>12</sup> Standards in chart are requirements for adult populations; see page 8 for children's standards.

Require the following daily nutrient standards:	
Nutrient	Adult
Calories	2,000 calories <sup>13,14</sup>
Sodium*	< 2,300 mg <sup>15</sup>
Sodium (> 50 years)	≤ 1,500 mg
Total Fat	≤ 30% of total calories
Saturated Fat	< 10% of total calories
Fiber	≥ 28 grams <sup>16</sup>
Recommend the following daily nutrient standards:	
Protein	10-35% of total calories
Carbohydrate	45-65% of total calories
Cholesterol*	< 300 mg
Potassium	4,700 mg
Calcium	1,000 mg
Iron	> 8 mg (18 mg F; 8 mg M)

\* Daily limit, regardless of total calorie intake

For agencies serving only one or two meals per day:

- **Require** each meal served meets appropriate range of calories, sodium and fiber: 25-30% for breakfast; 30-35% for lunch; 30-35% for dinner.<sup>17</sup>

Note regarding Nutrition Standards featured in the table above:

Although encouraged to follow the Nutrition Standards, contracted agency programs or sites that meet ALL four of the following requirements can be approved for exemption:

- Meals are prepared on site or by another similar program (e.g. a daycare center that prepares food for another facility); and
- Program does not have access to a City agency-employed nutritionist for regular menu review; and
- Program site regularly serves less than 200 people per meal; and
- Program is not part of a larger contract for food purchasing coordinated by a City agency.

<sup>12</sup> Available at: [www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2010-PolicyDocument.htm](http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/DGAs2010-PolicyDocument.htm)

<sup>13</sup> **Require** calories are no more than 10% above or below the standard.

<sup>14</sup> Agencies serving the adult correctional population, **require** calories be kept to less than 2,200 calories for women and 2,800 calories for men. Agencies serving the youth detention population, **require** calories be kept to less than 2500 calories for males.

<sup>15</sup> **Require** agencies serving populations with a majority of children 6-18 years of age limit sodium to ≤ 2,200 mg per day. **Require** agencies serving populations with a majority of children 1-5 years of age limit sodium to ≤ 1700 mg per day. **Require** breakfast contain no more than 425 mg sodium; snacks contain no more than 170 mg sodium; lunch contain no more than 600 mg sodium; and dinner contain no more than 600 mg sodium.

<sup>16</sup> For agencies serving populations with a majority of children 4-18 years old, **require** fiber be ≥ 25 grams per day. For agencies serving children 1-4 years old, **require** fiber be ≥ 19 grams per day.

<sup>17</sup> The Department of Education, which has federal standards for minimum amount of calories served, may serve up to 785 calories for lunch, for grades 7-12 (in line with National School Lunch Program).

Exempt programs should strive to meet these Nutrition Standards through thoughtful menu planning. Should exemption be granted, programs must still comply with ALL other requirements of the NYC Food Standards.

Note regarding sodium and fiber meal standards:

If an agency does not meet the required nutrition standard for sodium or fiber, it is expected to meet the standard as quickly as is feasible with the deadline of reaching the standards by October 31, 2012.

## B. Meal Standards

- Fruits and vegetables:
  - **Require** minimum of two servings of fruits and vegetables per meal for lunch and dinner.
  - **Require** minimum of five servings of fruits and vegetables a day for agencies serving breakfast, lunch, and dinner.
  - For programs serving meals 5 days per week or less, **require** at least 3 servings of non-starchy vegetables weekly per lunch and per dinner.<sup>18,19</sup>
  - For programs serving meals more than 5 days per week, **require** at least 5 servings of non-starchy vegetables weekly per lunch and per dinner.<sup>19</sup>
  - Recommend serve fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables instead of canned.
- Beverages:
  - Water:
    - **Require** water be available at all meals (this can be in addition to or in place of other beverages regularly served). Tap water should be used if possible.
  - Fruit juice:
    - **Require** 100% fruit juice and portion size limited to ≤ 6 oz per serving.
    - **Require**, if provide meals, serve juice no more than one time per day.
    - **Require**, if provide snacks only, serve juice no more than 2 times per week.
- Food preparation and service:
  - **Require** no use of deep fryers;<sup>20</sup> no deep frying.
  - Recommend, to help ensure healthy portion sizes, establishment of program-specific guidelines for serving containers (e.g. size of food plates and beverage cups).

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<sup>18</sup> Standard does not apply to programs serving one or two meals per week.

<sup>19</sup> Starchy vegetables include white potatoes, corn, green peas, and lima beans.

<sup>20</sup> Require that all new or renovated kitchens be built without deep fryers.

### C. Snack Standards

*Snacks should add important nutrients to the overall diet and help curb hunger.*

These snack standards are in compliance with the snack pattern requirements of the USDA's Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and are eligible for reimbursement with the exception of low calorie beverage choices for sites serving adults.

#### Overall Guidelines

- **Require** all items have 0 g trans fat.
- Recommend foods served be on the list of acceptable choices below or provide equivalent nutrient value (for example: melon slices substituted for a banana for the fruit category).
- Recommend water is available at all snack times.

#### Food Category 1: Dairy beverages

- **Require** milk be 1% or non-fat and unsweetened.<sup>21,22</sup>

#### Food Category 2: Fruit or vegetable

- **Require** juice be 100% fruit juice and portion size limited to ≤ 6 oz per serving.
- **Require**, if provide snacks only, serve juice no more than 2 times per week.
- Examples of acceptable choices: carrot sticks, celery sticks, pepper slices, salads, apples, bananas, pears, oranges, dried fruit, applesauce with no sugar added, and canned fruit in unsweetened juice or water.

#### Food Category 3: Bread or grain

- **Require** sodium ≤ 180 mg per serving for sliced sandwich bread.
- **Require** sodium ≤ 200 mg per serving for all crackers, chips, and salty snacks.
- **Require** sugar ≤ 10 g per serving.
- **Require** fiber ≥ 2 g per serving.
- Recommend all items served be whole grain.
- Examples of acceptable choices: whole wheat pita triangles, whole grain cereal, whole grain crackers, whole grain bread, rice cakes, popcorn.
- Examples of non-appropriate items: doughnuts, pastries, croissants, cake, etc.

#### Food Category 4: Protein<sup>23</sup>

- Examples of acceptable choices: hummus, bean dip, cottage cheese, low-fat cheese, hard boiled eggs, low-fat or non-fat yogurt, low-sodium tuna, nuts, nut butters, sunflower seeds, turkey slices.

#### Examples of acceptable snack choices, all served with water:

- Peanut butter, whole grain crackers and apple slices
- A peach and whole grain crackers
- Half of a tuna sandwich: tuna on whole wheat bread with lettuce and tomato
- Turkey served with whole wheat pita triangles and carrot sticks
- Milk and whole grain cereal, with fresh berries
- Yogurt topped with blueberries and low-fat granola
- Hummus with pita and sliced red peppers

<sup>21</sup> For children ages 12 months to under age two, **require** unsweetened whole milk.

<sup>22</sup> For children ages 4-18 years flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes are permitted and **required** to be ≤ 130 calories per serving. Recommend that agencies continue to phase out flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes over time. As per Article 47 of the New York City Health Code, childcare facilities may not serve milk with added sweeteners.

<sup>23</sup> For CACFP programs, this category is referred to as 'meat or meat alternative'.

Additional Snack Standards:

- **Require** ≤ 25 calories per 8 oz for beverages other than 100% juice or milk at sites serving adults.

#### **D. Special Occasion Standards for Meals and Snacks**

*Special occasion standards apply to trips, parties for major holidays and special events. This also includes food purchased from vendors not routinely used by the agency for normal food service.*

- **Require** healthy options be served, such as fresh fruit, leafy green salad, and/or vegetable slices.
- **Require** water be served at all special occasion events.
- Recommend adopting a policy for special occasion meals and snacks.
- Recommend special occasion meals and snacks generally be limited (for example, once a month).
- Recommend, if serving sweets/desserts, offer in moderation and in appropriate portions.
- Recommend adherence to beverage standards.
- Recommend eliminating all foods that meet the USDA definition of Foods of Minimal Nutritional Value (FMNV).<sup>24</sup> Examples of FMNV include chewing gum, candy and water ices.

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<sup>24</sup> Definition available at: [www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/menu/fmnv.htm](http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/menu/fmnv.htm)

### III. Agency and Population-Specific Standards and Exceptions

*Agencies which serve meals to populations with special nutritional needs (e.g. children, seniors) have specific nutrition requirements.*

#### Children

##### *Standards for Purchased Food:*

When milk is provided, children ages two and older shall only be served milk with 1% or less milk-fat unless milk with a higher fat content is medically required for an individual child, as documented by the child's medical provider. When milk is provided, children ages 12 months to under age 2 should be served whole milk.

For children ages 4-18 years, flavored milk and flavored fluid milk substitutes are permitted and **required** to be  $\leq 130$  calories per serving. Recommend that agencies continue to phase out flavored milk over time. As per Article 47 of the New York City Health Code, child care facilities may not serve milk with added sweeteners.

For child care facilities, **require** cereal contain  $\leq 6$  g sugar per serving in addition to sodium and fiber standards.

##### *Nutrition Standards.<sup>25</sup>*

Recommend agencies serving populations with a majority of participants under 19 years of age follow the Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board's Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI)<sup>26</sup> for appropriate age groups.

**Require** agencies serving populations with a majority of children 6-18 years of age limit sodium to  $\leq 2,200$  mg per day.

**Require** agencies serving populations with a majority of children 1-5 years of age limit sodium to  $\leq 1700$  mg per day. **Require** breakfast contain no more than 425 mg sodium; snacks contain no more than 170 mg sodium; lunch contain no more than 600 mg sodium; and dinner contain no more than 600 mg sodium.

For agencies serving a majority of children age 4-18 years of age, **require** fiber be  $\geq 25$  grams per day. For agencies serving a majority of children 1-4 years old, **require** fiber be  $\geq 19$  grams per day.

#### Seniors

Recommend agencies follow the Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board's Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI)<sup>26</sup> for appropriate age groups.

**Require** agencies serving populations with a majority of the population 50 years of age and older limit sodium to  $\leq 1,500$  mg per day.

**Require** individual items contain  $\leq 360$  mg sodium per serving.

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<sup>25</sup> Please see page 4 for programs that are exempt from this standard.

<sup>26</sup> Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board's Dietary Reference Intakes (DRI): <http://iom.edu/Reports/2006/Dietary-Reference-Intakes-Essential-Guide-Nutrient-Requirements.aspx>



### **Correctional Population**

Agencies serving the correctional population have a majority of young, moderately active women and men who may require a higher than average caloric intake. For all meals and snacks served per day, **require** that calories be kept to less than 2,200 calories for women and 2,800 calories for men.

### **Youth Detention Facilities**

Agencies serving the youth detention population have a majority of young, moderately active boys who may require a higher than average caloric intake. For all meals and snacks served per day, **require** that calories be kept to less than 2,500 calories for males.

### **Single Resident Occupancy and Self-Sustained Shelters**

Programs that allow clients to purchase and prepare their own meals are not required to comply with these standards.

### **Child Care Services Providers**

Home-based child care providers are not required to comply with these standards.

### **Patients Under Therapeutic Care**

Nutrition requirements consistent with established medical guidelines and diets for patients under therapeutic care replace general nutrition criteria described here. The Patient Bill of Rights allows patients under therapeutic care to request specific food items. These items are considered part of the therapeutic diet and do not need to meet the nutrition criteria.

### **Emergency Food**

Agencies that purchase food to be distributed by a third party to emergency food providers, such as soup kitchens and food pantries, are **required** to follow the guidelines outlined in Section I.

### **Federal Commodity Food Program**

Food provided by the federal government to agencies or agency programs is not required to meet the standards outlined in Section I. However, agencies/programs accepting these foods are **required** to meet the nutrition standards outlined in Section II.

Agencies/programs are expected to provide documentation upon request to verify which products were obtained through the commodity food program.

### **Donated Foods**

Foods that are donated or provided at no cost to a program are not required to meet the standards outlined in Section I. However, agencies accepting these foods are **required** to meet the nutrition standards outlined in Section II. Programs are not permitted to accept donations of candy or sugar-sweetened beverages for use in meal or snack service.

### **Food for Disaster Response**

Food purchased by agencies to serve solely for a disaster or crisis response are not restricted by the nutrition criteria included here, recognizing such stocks intentionally include nutrient dense food products.

#### **IV. Sustainability Recommendations**

The Standards for Meals/Snacks Purchased and Served focus on promoting a healthy eating pattern as part of a city-wide strategy to reduce the prevalence of chronic disease, such as obesity, diabetes, and heart disease, among New Yorkers. New York City also recognizes the importance of promoting a healthy and ecologically sustainable<sup>27</sup> food system that conserves natural resources and supports long term public health goals.

Agencies are encouraged to consider, when practicable and cost effective, sustainability criteria for the food they procure and serve. While New York City does not endorse any single criteria for sustainability, a number of food characteristics are associated with supporting the conservation of natural resources that are needed to sustain our food supply over the long term. For example, preferred products may include: (i) fruits and vegetables that are local, seasonal, or are grown by producers using low or no pesticides or an integrated pest management system, (ii) dairy products that are local or (iii) seafood that is sustainably raised or harvested.<sup>28</sup> Agencies may also request, but not mandate, that their vendors offer fruit, vegetables, dairy products and seafood that is locally grown or produced. Agencies are also encouraged to educate their customers about these local and/or sustainably produced foods through labeling or other mechanisms.

These suggestions will continue to be evaluated and updated based on the latest scientific research on nutrition, the relationship between human health and food production methods, and the sustainability of the food system.

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<sup>27</sup> The federal statutory definition of sustainable agriculture (7 USC 3103) is a guide to the elements to look for in a sustainability program. New York City does not endorse any particular labeling or documentation system or program over another, and recognizes that many agricultural producers practice sustainable agriculture without their products being labeled as such.

<sup>28</sup> For example, seafood that is identified as a “best choice” or “good alternative” on the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch List, or similarly certified by other equivalent program.