

Offer Versus Serve



Background

Offer versus Serve (OVS) is a concept that applies to menu planning and meal service. OVS allows students to decline some of the food offered in a reimbursable lunch or breakfast meal. The goals of OVS are to reduce food waste and allow students to choose the foods they want to eat.

Breakfast Meal Pattern

	Minimum required per day				
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades K-8	Grades 9-12	Grades K-12
Fruit	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
Grain and/or M/MA	1 oz eq (7-10 oz eq/wk)	1 oz eq (8-10 oz eq/wk)	1 oz eq (8-10 oz eq/wk)	1 oz eq (9-10 oz eq/wk)	1 oz eq (9-10 oz eq/wk)
Milk	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup

* 5-day school week

OVS at Breakfast

- OVS is optional at breakfast for all grade groups
- Sponsors must always offer the 3 required breakfast components: fruit (or vegetables), grains or meat/meat alternate and milk.
- For OVS at breakfast, sponsors must always offer at least 4 food items. Breakfast food items are defined as: 1 oz eq grain and/or meat/meat alternate, ½ cup fruit, and 1 cup milk.
- A student must select at least 3 food items in the required servings. One must be at least ½ cup fruit and/or vegetable.

Example offered breakfast menu: toast, scrambled eggs, strawberries, oranges, and milk, each counting as 1 food item.	What a student may select for a reimbursable breakfast: 3 food items, one being ½ cup fruit.

Lunch Meal Pattern



	Minimum required per day			
	Grades K-5	Grades 6-8	Grades K-8	Grades 9-12
Fruit	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
Vegetable*	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
Grain**	1 oz eq (8-9 oz eq/wk)	1 oz eq (8-10 oz eq/wk)	1 oz eq (8-9 oz eq/wk)	2 oz eq (10-12 oz eq/wk)
Meat/Meat Alternate**	1 oz eq (8-10 oz eq/wk)	1 oz eq (9-10 oz eq/wk)	1 oz eq (9-10 oz eq/wk)	2 oz eq (10-12 oz eq/wk)
Milk	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup

* Must meet additional vegetable subgroup requirements throughout the week

** 5-day school week

OVS at Lunch

- OVS is required at lunch for grades 9-12
- OVS is optional for grades K-8
- For OVS at lunch, sponsors must always offer the 5 required lunch components: fruit, vegetables, grains, meat/meat alternate and milk.
- A student must select at least 3 components in the required servings. One of the components must be at least ½ cup fruit and/or vegetable.
- If a 9-12 grade student selects only 3 components, two of which are a fruit and a vegetable, they must select the full required serving size (1 cup) for either the fruit or the vegetable to have both credited as full components.

Example offered lunch menu: spaghetti, meatballs, apple, broccoli, and milk*.	What a student may select for a reimbursable lunch: 3 full components, one being ½ cup vegetable.
	

*Offered in the required quantities per grade group

Additional Information

- OVS is not allowed under the preschool meal pattern or in the Afterschool Snack Program.
- Sponsors must plan meals to meet all meal pattern requirements and provide all students access to all required components and quantities of food.
- The menu or signage must indicate what choices or combination of choices a student may select for a reimbursable breakfast and lunch.
- Meals must be priced as a unit. OVS does not affect the meal's unit price. Students may select 3 or more food components at lunch or 3 or more food items at breakfast for the same meal price.
- At the point of service, cashiers must be trained and informed on what constitutes a reimbursable meal. This includes understanding foods and/or beverages that are a la carte and/or extras, which do not count as food items or components.

Resources

- CDE School Nutrition's [Offer versus Serve webpage](#)
- [USDA Offer versus Serve Guidance Manual](#)
- [Reimbursable meal posters in English](#) and [Spanish](#)

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