

# 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
<b>Fruit</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup
<b>Grain*</b>	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)
<b>Milk</b>	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup	1 cup

\* 5-day school week

SFAs may substitute 1 oz eq meat/meat alternate for 1 oz eq grain if the minimum daily grains requirement is offered

## 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 counting as a grain), 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 (or meat/meat alternate counting as a grain), 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
<b>Fruit</b>	½ cup	½ cup	½ cup	1 cup
<b>Vegetable*</b>	¾ cup	¾ cup	¾ cup	1 cup
<b>Grain**</b>	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)
<b>Meat/Meat Alternate**</b>	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)
<b>Milk</b>	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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**COLORADO**  
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