

OSPI CNS School Meal Programs Reference Sheet

Dietary Specifications – Sodium

Sodium is one of the four dietary specifications required by the NSLP and SBP Meal Pattern. Sodium requirements are figured on a weekly average and include all menu items and condiments. The sodium requirements are phased in over several years with Target 1 taking effect SY 2014-15. Implementation of the second and final targets is subject to USDA's review of data on the relationship between sodium intake and human health.

Requirements

- School Meals offered to each grade group must meet, on average over the school week, the sodium levels specified.

Sodium Targets		
Grade Group	Lunch	Breakfast
K-5	≤ 1230 mg	≤ 540 mg
6-8	≤ 1360 mg	≤ 600 mg
9-12	≤ 1420 mg	≤ 640 mg

Tips to lower sodium in School Meals:

- **Purchasing**
 - Specify maximum sodium levels on bids.
 - Purchase fresh and unprocessed foods.
- **Menu**
 - Substitute highest sodium entrees for lower sodium choice.
 - Decrease frequency high sodium entrees are served
Example: serve pizza (or other high sodium items) once a month instead of weekly
 - Decrease serving size of high sodium item
Example: instead of a whole slice of Texas cheese toast, serve half a slice with pasta and reduced sodium sauce.
 - Place higher sodium menu days with lower sodium menu days during a week.
- **Cooking**
 - Prepare more items from scratch.



- Modify higher sodium items to lower sodium.
Example: homemade pizza with lower sodium toppings or decreasing the amount of a higher sodium topping
- Use herbs and spices in place of salt.
- Use kosher or sea salt in place of table salt.
- Utilize “no salt added” products.
- **Sauces and Condiments**
 - Decrease sodium in teriyaki sauce by diluting with pineapple juice.
 - Make ranch dressing from scratch.
 - Dilute purchased ranch dressing with yogurt.
 - Reduce the frequency that higher sodium condiments are offered.
Example: Ketchup is not available daily.
 - Portion high sodium condiments (no self-access by students).

Resources:

- [FNS Strategies for Successful Implementation of the HHFKA- Sodium](#)
- [Successful Approaches to Reduce Sodium in School Meals Study](#)
- [Lowering Sodium in School Foods \(AHA\)](#)

Acronym Reference

- Mg – milligram
- AHA – American Heart Association
- HHFKA – Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010
- NFSMI – National Food Service Management Institute
- NSLP – National School Lunch Program
- OSPI CNS – Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction – Child Nutrition Services
- SBP – School Breakfast Program
- USDA – United States Department of Agriculture