Dietary Specifications – Sodium

Sodium is one of the four dietary specifications required by the NSLP and SBP meal pattern requirements. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Group</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-5</td>
<td>≤ 1230 mg</td>
<td>≤ 540 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>≤ 1360 mg</td>
<td>≤ 600 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>≤ 1420 mg</td>
<td>≤ 640 mg</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Tips to lower sodium in School Meals:

• **Purchasing**
  - Specify maximum sodium levels on bids.
  - Purchase fresh and unprocessed foods.

• **Menu**
  - Substitute highest sodium entrées for lower sodium choice.
  - Decrease frequency high sodium entrées are served.
    - Example: serve pizza (or other higher sodium item) 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:

- [Just the Facts – Be Salt Savvy](https://www.usda.gov) (USDA)
- [Reducing Sodium Intake](https://www.nfsmi.org) (NFSMI)
- [Under Pressure Strategies for Sodium Reduction in the School Environment](https://www.ospicns.org)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym Reference</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>-mg</td>
<td>milligram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-NFSMI</td>
<td>National Food Service Management Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>-NSLP</td>
<td>National School Lunch Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>-OSPI CNS</td>
<td>Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction – Child Nutrition Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>-SBP</td>
<td>School Breakfast Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>-USDA</td>
<td>United States Department of Agriculture</td>
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