GRAINS

Grains are a required component for a reimbursable breakfast, lunch, and supper meal. Grains are an optional component at snack.

All grain products served in the CACFP must be made with whole grains or enriched meal and/or enriched flour, or bran or germ, to be creditable in the CACFP. This section provides guidance on how to determine if a product is creditable based on the combination of grains, meals, and flours in the product.

Exhibit A: Grain Requirements for Child Nutrition Programs (Exhibit A) provides the minimum portion sizes of grain products that are required to meet meal pattern requirements for each age group. This chart provides serving size information in both grains/breads servings and ounce equivalents (oz eq). As a reminder, starting October 1, 2021, all grain products served in the CACFP and to preschool age children in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and School Breakfast Program (SBP) must be credited based on ounce equivalents. See Exhibit A on page 94.

To emphasize the importance of whole grains, the CACFP meal patterns require that grains served at least once per day be whole grain-rich. Whole grain-rich means that at least half (50 percent) of the grain ingredients in the food are whole grains and any other grains are enriched. Please note that food items that are 100 percent whole grain meet the whole grain-rich requirement. This requirement was developed based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendation that half of the grains we consume should be whole grains.

This requirement will help children and adults increase their intake of whole grains and benefit from the important nutrients that whole grains provide. This whole grain-rich requirement only applies to meals and snacks served to children (ages 1 year or older) and adults.

Any additional grains served that do not meet the whole grain-rich criteria may still count toward program requirements if they are made of creditable grains.

Whole grain-rich foods are foods that contain 100 percent whole grains, or that contain at least 50 percent whole grains with the remaining grains in the food being enriched. See page 78 for more information on how to identify whole grain-rich products.