

SODEXO FOOD SERVICE

Dear Parent/Guardian

August 2012

New School Nutrition Regulations Mean Changes for School Meals:

You may have heard about a change coming in school lunch this fall. It is true! After much research on school meals, coupled with the recent release of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2012, the USDA announced new government regulations that will substantially change school meal requirements for the first time in decades. Changes will include more whole grains, more nutrient dense fruits and vegetables and a plan to significantly reduce the average sodium content of school meals over the next ten years. You will see some new menu items, some old menu items that include healthier ingredients, larger portions of fruits and vegetables and changes to how breakfast and lunch menus are planned. Students will be offered foods from five food groups (grain, fruit, vegetable, protein and dairy) and they must take at least 3 of the 5 menu items. In addition, they must **always** take at least ½ cup of a fruit or vegetable. Please be proactive and talk with your child about the USDA ChooseMyPlate. We will use this identifier to try and help students put into practice the guidelines needed to help them build healthier meals. For more information on ChooseMyPlate, please visit www.choosemyplate.gov.

Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act

Some changes you may notice...

1. We will begin using a Food Based Menu planning system

Every meal will consist of five components: grains, meat/meat alternatives, fruit, vegetable, and milk. In order to be considered a student meal, the student must select three of the five components. We encourage students to select all five components to receive a balanced meal.

2. Every student will be required to take 1/2 cup of fruit or vegetable each day to make a reimbursable meal.

We follow a plan that is called "offer vs. serve." This means students must be offered foods from all five food groups, but they are only required to take a full portion of three of the five offered items. Under the new regulation, students must take at least ½ cup of either a fruit or vegetable. Larger portions of vegetables and fruit will be available to those students who want them.

3. A legume will be offered at least once a week

Legumes are from the bean/pea family, but they are not green beans or green peas. Legumes are full mature beans, such as black beans, kidney beans, pinto beans. You may see these items offered as a side item, such as roasted garbanzo beans, bean dips, refried beans with a burrito or even as beans and rice. Please encourage your child to try these menu items as they are excellent sources of protein and fiber.

4. **All snack and beverage items will be compliant with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (AHG) guidelines.** AHG is a joint collaboration between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation. We are awaiting additional regulations from USDA that specify nutrition guidelines for snacks and beverages.

Whole Grains in our menus

The new Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act will require school to provide more whole grain-rich foods instead of refined grains. This means that changes such as replacing white bread and rolls with whole grain equivalents and white rice with brown rice will become more obvious on the menus. Even things such as pizza crusts and breading on chicken nuggets will change to whole grains. Starting in the fall 2012, 50% of all grains served in lunch must be whole grain-rich. By fall 2014, 100% of all grains served at lunch and breakfast will need to be whole grain-rich. Often, students won't even notice the change. In fact, we have made a number of these changes over the past few years. Sometimes they will notice and our experience tells us that they will adjust to most of the changes in taste. We will continue to work with manufacturing partners to develop great tasting products and recipes that meet or exceed these nutrition guidelines, as well as taste great!

More Fruits, Vegetables & Beans

The new Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act includes requirements to serve more fruits, vegetables and beans on a daily basis. The rule also includes a minimum serving for dark green and red-orange vegetables. These new categories include things such as:

<u>Dark Green</u>	<u>Red/Orange</u>	<u>Beans</u>
Bok Choy	Acorn Squash	Black Beans
Broccoli	Pumpkin	Kidney Beans
Romaine Lettuce	Sweet Potatoes	Garbanzo Beans
Turnip Greens	Tomato Juice	Navy

You will notice the inclusion of these types of items more often on menus and in recipes in the future. The goal is to increase consumption of nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables and teach students about healthy food choices that will last a lifetime.

Menus can be found on the Old Bridge Admin website under the food service tab or at www.sodexoeducation.com . Menus will no longer be sent home.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call Michelle Feliciano at 732.290.3900 x3935

