



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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SNP Memo # 06-07-14

TO: Directors, Supervisors and Contact Persons

FROM: Lynne Fellin, Acting Director
School Nutrition Programs 

DATE: May 10, 2007

SUBJECT: Determining Creditability of Breakfast Cereals for Child Nutrition Programs

This memo serves two purposes:

1. Reviews existing FNS guidance applicable to breakfast cereals; and
2. Provides an *additional option* to help determine if breakfast cereals that do not indicate they are enriched or fortified (either ready-to-eat or ready-to-cook), are creditable towards the grains/breads component for reimbursable meals served to children under the food-based menu planning approach.

Existing FNS Guidance:

The *Grains/Breads Instruction 783.1 Rev 2* and the *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* (FBG), section three, provide current guidance on crediting of grains/breads products. These guidance documents are still valid. Specifically, the flow chart in section three, on page 3-7 in the FBG is based on the *Grains/Breads Instruction* and provides several options to determine creditability of breakfast cereals. A breakfast cereal is creditable if any of the following are true:

- 1) the cereal is labeled as whole grain (100% of the grain component is whole grain);
- 2) the cereal is labeled as "enriched";
- 3) the cereal is labeled as "fortified";
- 4) the ingredient statement shows that the primary grain ingredient is either whole grain, enriched flour or meal, bran, or germ; or
- 5) manufacturer documentation provides the gram amount of creditable grains per serving.

New Problem with Crediting Breakfast Cereals:

Some cereal manufacturers no longer attach the words "fortified" or "enriched" to the name of the cereal on the label. In addition, some cereal manufacturers are adding the words "whole grain" or "made with whole grain" to the product label even if the grain component is not 100% whole grain. This makes it difficult to determine if the cereal is creditable.

Another Option for Determining the Creditability of Breakfast Cereals:

If the cereal label does not give enough information to complete the steps in the Food Buying Guide flow chart, you may use the nutrient criteria FNS has provided as a sixth option for determining creditability of breakfast cereals.

FNS has established nutrient criteria for breakfast cereals based on the minimum required amounts of selected nutrients in one slice of enriched bread. This nutrient profile is not intended to set a standard of identity for breakfast cereals or any other grains/breads product; it only provides guidance for the CN

programs in determining if a breakfast cereal is a creditable grains/bread component of reimbursable meals served under food-based menu planning.

The FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals do not replace the guidance in the *Grains/Breads Instruction* or FBG; they just provide an additional option. In other words, if a breakfast cereal is determined to be creditable using the *Grains/Breads Instruction* or the FBG flowchart, the cereal remains creditable even if the product does not meet any or all of the five nutrient criteria outlined in this memo. It is expected that cereal creditability will be first determined using the *Grains/Breads Instruction* or the FBG and that the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals will be used as a last option. If you need to use the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals to determine creditability, then the product must contain the minimum levels of all five nutrients (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid, and iron) listed.

FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals Served to Children Ages One and Older					
Required Nutrient	Cereal Portion Size		Minimum % Daily Value (%DV) of Nutrient per Portion	or	Minimum Weight of Nutrient per Portion
	Ready-to-Eat (whichever amount weighs less)	Ready-to-Cook			
Thiamin (B1)	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	6.7 %	or	0.10 mg
Riboflavin (B2)	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	3.5 %	or	0.06 mg
Niacin (B3)	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	4.2 %	or	0.84 mg
Folic Acid (B9)	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	5.0 %	or	20.0 mcg
Iron	1.0 ounce or 3/4 cup	25 grams dry	3.9 %	or	0.70 mg

It is important to note that the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals are set for specific portion sizes. The portion size for ready-to-eat breakfast cereals is one ounce **or** 3/4 cup, whichever amount weighs less. The portion size for cooked cereal is 25 grams of ready-to-cook, dry cereal regardless of the amount of cooked cereal served or the amount of liquid added to cook the cereal.

If the serving size on the Nutrition Facts Label *matches the cereal portion size listed* in the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals chart, then you can compare the nutrients listed on the Nutrition Facts Label to the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals. If the serving size does **not match the cereal portion size listed** in the FNS Nutrient Criteria for Breakfast Cereals chart, then you will need to convert the nutrient values from the label to determine the amount of nutrients in the required cereal portion size.

You can convert the nutrient values using the online USDA, Agricultural Research Service (ARS), Nutrient Data Laboratory, National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference or you can manually calculate the nutrient values. It is recommended that you use the ARS National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference.

If you have questions or need assistance, please contact the school nutrition program specialist assigned to your division or Lynne Fellin, acting director of school nutrition programs, at (804) 225-2074.

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