

the School Day just got Healthier

United States Department of Agriculture

Updated Standards for School Meals

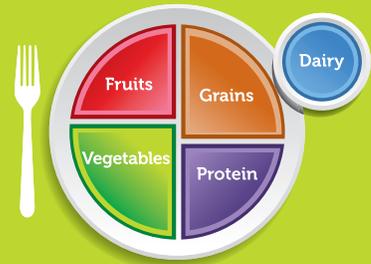
In January 2012, the USDA issued updated standards for school meals. These were the first major changes to school nutrition standards in over 15 years.

- These standards build upon recommendations from the Institute of Medicine:
 1. Ensure students are offered both fruits and vegetables every day of the week;
 2. Increase offerings of whole grain-rich foods;
 3. Offer only fat-free or low-fat milk;
 4. Limit calories based on the age of children being served to ensure proper portion size;
 5. Increase the focus on reducing the amounts of saturated fat, trans fats, added sugars, and sodium.
- Benefits to children with healthy eating habits and regular physical activity:
 - Greater concentration
 - Better attendance
 - Better classroom behavior
 - Lower obesity rates
 - Better self-esteem

Do Missouri children need healthier meals?

- In Missouri, 31% of children are considered overweight or obese, and Missouri ranks as the 11th most obese state in the nation.
- In Missouri, 69% of students eat a school lunch and 28% eat a school breakfast each day.
- Because children eat as many as half their calories in schools, school meals play a critical role in reinforcing what kids are already learning about nutrition and healthy foods at home.

For more information about School Food Services in Missouri, go to:
dese.mo.gov/divadm/food/



Choose **MyPlate**.gov

How are school meals changing?

- The new school meals are high in nutrients and adequate in calories. The new school meals portions are “right sized” to reflect the proper balance between food groups.
- The new school meals include more fruits and vegetables at lunch than were previously offered, and the amount of fruits served at breakfast will double beginning with the 2014-15 school year.
- Because many students often do not take all the food offered in the cafeteria, they will be encouraged to choose more of the food available to them to get the most benefit from the meals they eat at school.
- Schools may allow additional servings of fruits and vegetables (depending on calorie limits), which are excellent sources for sustained energy and satisfying meals.

