



MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES

Meats and meat alternates (M/MA) are a required meal component for a reimbursable lunch/supper in the CACFP. A M/MA is not required to be served at breakfast. However, M/MA may be used to meet the entire grains requirement a maximum of three times per week at breakfast. M/MA is not required at snack but may be served as one of two required meal components. M/MA include meat; poultry; fish; cheese; yogurt (including soy yogurt); beans, peas, and lentils; eggs; tofu; tempeh; nut and seed butters, such as peanut butter; and nuts and seeds. All meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish must meet State or local regulations for food safety. M/MAs are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq); 1 ounce equivalent is equal to 1 ounce of cooked lean meat (e.g., cooked chicken breast).

A food item must provide at least a 0.25 oz eq of M/MA to credit toward the M/MA requirement. This means that M/MA in amounts smaller than 0.25 oz eq do not credit toward the meal pattern requirements. For example, if you make a casserole containing pasta, cheese, peas and carrots. The cheese may credit toward the M/MA component if there is at least 0.25 oz eq in one serving of the casserole. You would use your standardized recipe to determine creditable amounts per serving. If there is less than 0.25 oz eq cheese per serving, then you could not credit the casserole toward the M/MA component.

To meet the minimum serving, the M/MA for lunch and supper may be served as the main dish or in the main dish together with another menu item. For example, offering a $\frac{1}{8}$ cup serving of cooked pinto beans with 1 ounce

of grilled chicken breast provides $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounce equivalents of M/MA and meets the minimum serving size required in the meal pattern for children ages 3 through 5.

Beans, Peas, and Lentils

Beans, peas, and lentils may credit toward the meal pattern requirements as a meat alternate or as a vegetable. A serving of beans, peas, or lentils cannot credit as both a meat alternate and a vegetable in the same meal. If two different beans, peas, or lentils are offered at a meal, the program operator may choose to credit one as a meat alternate and the other as a vegetable. For example, if a lunch menu includes chili made with pinto beans, a whole-wheat roll, sliced apples, and cooked black-eyed peas, the program operator may credit the pinto beans (in the chili) as a meat alternate and the black-eyed peas as a vegetable.

Yogurt

Yogurt, including soy yogurt, credits toward to the meal pattern requirements as a meat alternate. Yogurt served in the CACFP must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces of yogurt (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). See pages 43-44 for guidance on how to determine if a yogurt product meets the added sugars limit. Commercially-purchased frozen yogurt is not creditable. Additionally, when yogurt is served in place of milk to adults, the yogurt cannot credit toward both the milk and the M/MA component in the same meal.

Added Sugars vs. Total Sugars

What Are Added Sugars and How Are They Different from Total Sugars?



Total Sugars include sugars naturally present in many nutritious foods and beverages, such as sugar in milk and fruits as well as any added sugars that may be present in the product. **Added sugars** include sugars that are added during the processing of foods (such as sucrose or dextrose), foods packaged as sweeteners (such as table sugar), sugars from syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices. They do not include naturally occurring sugars that are found in milk, fruits, and vegetables. Labels for foods and beverages with added sugars list the number of grams and the percent Daily Value (%DV) for added sugars within the Nutrition Facts label.

Having the word “includes” before added sugars on the label indicates that added sugars are included in the number of grams of total sugars in the product.

For example, a container of yogurt with added sugars, might list:

Total Sugars 15g
Includes 7g Added Sugars 14%

This means one serving of the yogurt has 7 grams of added sugars and 8 grams of naturally occurring sugars—for a total of 15 grams of sugar. The 7 grams of added sugars represents 14% of the Daily Value for added sugars.



For more information, visit:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/added-sugars-nutrition-facts-label>



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Cheese

Cheese that meets the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) Standard of Identity for cheese is creditable as a meat alternate. Homemade cheeses are not creditable in CNP. The FBG includes many types of cheeses; however, if the cheese type you are searching for is not listed, use a cheese type that is similar in form and texture. For example, if you are searching for queso fresco or queso blanco cheese, which are fresh Mexican cheeses with crumbly textures, you can use the yield information for feta cheese from the FBG.

“Cheese substitute,” “cheese food substitute,” and “cheese spread substitute” must meet the

FDA’s Standard of Identity for substitute foods and be labeled as “cheese substitute,” “cheese food substitute,” or “cheese spread substitute.” The standard requires that a “cheese substitute” is not nutritionally inferior to the standardized cheese for which it is substituting. Cheese substitutes are creditable because they are produced under Federal standards and are nutritionally equivalent to cheese. Cheese alternates/alternatives are not the same as cheese substitutes. Cheese alternates, including imitation cheeses or “cheese products,” are produced without a Federal Standard of Identity, are typically nutritionally inferior to cheese, and are not creditable in CNP.

Quick-Reference Crediting Chart for Meats/Meat Alternates

The FBG provides serving sizes of foods typically in 1 oz eq and 1.5 oz eq M/MA crediting amounts. See the M/MA section of the FBG.

Food Item and serving size	Credits as:	
Meat, poultry, and fish (boneless)	1 oz cooked boneless meat, poultry, fish 1.5 oz cooked boneless meat, poultry, fish	1 oz eq M/MA 1.5 oz eq M/MA
Whole eggs	½ egg 1 egg	1 oz eq M/MA 2 oz eq M/MA
Cheese	1 oz cheese 1.5 oz cheese	1 oz eq M/MA 1.5 oz eq M/MA
Yogurt*, including soy yogurt	4 oz (½ cup) yogurt 6 oz (¾ cup) yogurt	1 oz eq M/MA 1.5 oz eq M/MA
Peanut butter and other nut butters	2 Tbsp nut butter 3 Tbsp nut butter	1 oz eq M/MA 1.5 oz eq M/MA
Beans, peas, and lentils	¼ cup cooked beans, peas, and lentils ⅜ cup cooked beans, peas, and lentils	1 oz eq M/MA 1.5 oz eq M/MA
Commercially prepared tofu	2.2 oz (¼ cup) tofu containing at least 5 grams of protein 4.4 oz (½ cup) tofu containing at least 10 grams of protein	1 oz eq M/MA 1.5 oz eq M/MA
Commercially prepared surimi seafood	3 oz surimi 4.4 oz surimi	1 oz eq M/MA 1.5 oz eq M/MA

* Yogurt must not contain more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces of yogurt.



Crediting Tips for Serving M/MA in the CACFP

- M/MAs are measured in ounce equivalents (oz eq).
- The minimum creditable amount for M/MA is 0.25 oz eq per serving.
- M/MA is a required component at lunch and supper; M/MA is not required at snack but may be served as one of two required meal components.
- M/MA is not required at breakfast but may be served in place of grains up to three times per week to meet the entire grains requirement. 1 oz eq of M/MA is equal to 1 oz eq of grains.
- Some food items containing M/MA may not be listed in the FBG; however, they still may be creditable with proper documentation, such as a Child Nutrition (CN) label or Product Formulation Statement (PFS).

Nuts and Seeds and Nut and Seed Butters

Nuts and seeds and their butters credit toward the meal pattern requirements as a meat alternate and may be used to meet the entire M/MA component at a meal or snack. Please be aware that some participants may have nut or seed allergies or intolerances. Nuts and seeds should be served with caution to children under 4 years of age and some elderly participants, to reduce the risk of choking. Always supervise participants during meals and snacks.

Nut and seed meals or flours may credit as meat alternates only if they meet the requirements for alternate protein products established in appendix A of 7 CFR 226.20. Acorns, chestnuts, and coconuts do not credit as meat alternates because of their low protein and iron content.

Alternate Protein Products (APPs)

Alternate Protein Products (APPs) such as soy protein isolate or whey protein concentrate are generally included as an added ingredient in processed M/MA products such as a formed meat patty or vegetarian patty. M/MA with APPs must be accompanied by a CN label or a PFS and APP documentation. Prior to being added to other products, APPs must meet specific standards. Before using products containing APPs and claiming the meals for reimbursement, contact your State agency or your sponsoring organization. For more information about APPs, see <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cn/labeling/food-manufacturersindustry>.



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Use this section as a guide to identify creditable M/MA and products that contain creditable M/MA. This is NOT an all-inclusive list. For information on creditable M/MA commonly served in CNP, see the FBG. Details in the “Additional Information” column help you to determine if the product is creditable and where to find more information.

Note: CN label = Child Nutrition label; PFS = Product Formulation Statement

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Acorns			X	Acorns are not creditable due to their low protein content.
Bacon and Imitation Bacon Products			X	Bacon is not creditable. These products contain little meat. See the Other Foods section in the FBG for purchasing information.
Bacon/Pork Rinds			X	Bacon/Pork rinds are not creditable.
Bacon, Turkey		X		Turkey bacon is creditable only if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS.
Bean/Pea/Lentil Flour		X		Bean/pea/lentil flour used in pastas, other processed foods, or recipes is creditable toward the M/MA component when served with at least 0.25 oz eq of visible M/MA. Document meal pattern contribution with a CN label, PFS or standardized recipe. Note: Bean/pea/lentil flour used in pastas may also credit as a vegetable, but not as both M/MA and vegetable in the same meal.
Beans, Peas, and Lentils, Canned or Dry	X			Cooked dry or canned beans, peas, and lentils (kidney, garbanzo, black, pinto, etc.) may be credited as either a meat alternate or a vegetable, but not as both in the same meal. See the M/MA section in the FBG.
Beans, Refried	X			See the M/MA section in the FBG.
Beef Jerky		X		Beef jerky is creditable toward the M/MA component if it is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS. The PFS should identify the type of beef or pork used to make the product as listed in the FBG. For example, “ground beef (not more than 30 percent fat).” Please note beef jerky may be a choking hazard for some populations.

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Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Bologna		X		Bologna is creditable toward the M/MA component. See the M/MA section in the FBG for creditable luncheon meats such as bologna. Bologna containing byproducts, cereals, or binders/ extenders is only creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS. Examples of binders/extenders are starch, cellulose, and nonfat dry milk. Examples of byproducts are glands, hearts, and other organ meats. As a best practice, it is recommended to serve low-fat versions of luncheon meats.
Canadian Bacon or Mild Cured Pork	X			See the M/MA section in the FBG for creditable pork products.
Canned or Frozen Combination Foods such as: Stews, Beefaroni, Chili, Macaroni & Cheese, Pizzas, Pot Pies, Raviolis		X		These products are creditable toward the M/MA component if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS and contains at least 0.25 oz eq M/MA per serving.
Canned, Pressed Luncheon Meat (Potted/Deviled)			X	Canned, pressed luncheon meat is not creditable.
Ceviche (Raw Fish Marinated in Citrus Juice)			X	Raw ceviche is not creditable. Raw fish is a potential health hazard for vulnerable populations.
Cheese, Cottage or Ricotta	X			See the M/MA section in the FBG. A 2 oz serving of cottage cheese credits as 1 oz eq meat alternate.
Cheese, Homemade			X	Homemade cheese is not creditable.
Cheese, Natural or Processed	X			See the M/MA section in the FBG. A 1 oz serving of hard cheese provides 1 oz eq meat alternate.



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	Yes	Maybe	No	
Cheese Foods, Cheese Food Substitutes, Cheese Spreads, and Cheese Spread Substitutes	X			See the M/MA section in the FBG. A 2 oz serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. These products are not creditable in the infant meal pattern.
Cheese, Imitation or Cheese alternative/alternate			X	Cheese labeled as “imitation” or as “cheese alternative” is not creditable because the nutrient content is inferior to the food it substitutes and therefore is not creditable.
Cheese Products			X	Cheese labeled as a “cheese product” is not creditable. Cheese products do not have a standard of identity.
Chicken Nuggets		X		The edible chicken portion is creditable toward the M/MA component. See the M/MA section in the FBG. Commercial chicken nuggets are creditable only if they have (1) a CN label or (2) a verified PFS. Document the meal pattern contribution of homemade nuggets with a standardized recipe. For breading/batter crediting, see the Grains section in the FBG. Deep-fat frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods onsite. Chicken nuggets credit if reheated using a method other than deep-fat frying. This product has a high fat content and as a best practice it is recommended to be served on a limited frequency.
Chickpeas, Roasted (Roasted Garbanzo Beans)	X			Roasted chickpeas may be credited as either a meat alternate or a vegetable but not as both in the same meal. A ¼ cup roasted chickpeas credit as a 1 oz eq meat alternate or a ¼ cup vegetable, but not as both at the same meal. Please note they may be a choking hazard for some populations.
Chitterlings (Chitlins, Tripes, Mondongo, Chinchulines)	X			Chitterlings are small intestines and credit toward the M/MA component. A ½ cup chitterlings is equal to 2 oz eq meat.

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Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Corn Dogs, Corn Dog Nuggets		X		Only the weight of the hot dog (frankfurter) credits toward the M/MA component. See the M/MA section in the FBG. If the hot dog contains byproducts, cereals, or binders/extenders they are only creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS. Examples of binders/extendors are starch, cellulose, and nonfat dry milk. For breading/batter crediting see the Grains section in the FBG. Deep-fat frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods onsite. Corn dogs credit if reheated using a method other than deep-fat frying. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe, a CN label, or a PFS. This product has a high fat and salt content and as a best practice it is recommended to be served on a limited frequency. Remember to serve corn dogs in small pieces for those participants where choking is a potential hazard.
Cream Cheese			X	Cream cheese is not creditable. See the Other Foods section in the FBG for purchasing information.
Deviled Eggs	X			Whole eggs are creditable. See the M/MA section in the FBG. The weights of the added ingredients (for example, relish, mayonnaise, etc.) cannot credit toward the meal pattern requirements.
Dried and Semi-Dried Meat, Poultry, and Seafood Snacks, Shelf-Stable		X		These products credit based on the percent of meat, poultry, and/or seafood the product contains. These products are creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS. The creditable amount cannot exceed the weight of the volume served. The creditable ingredients must match or have a similar description as listed on the product label and must match or have a similar description as listed in the FBG. Please note these products may be a choking hazard for some populations.
Eggs, Liquid Substitutes			X	Liquid egg substitutes are not whole eggs and are not creditable. Only whole liquid eggs are creditable.



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	Yes	Maybe	No	
Eggs, Whites Only			X	Egg whites are not creditable if served without the yolks. Only whole eggs are creditable. See the Other Foods section in the FBG for purchasing information.
Eggs, Whole, Fresh, Frozen, Dried, or Liquid	X			All forms of whole eggs are creditable toward the M/MA component. One large egg credits as 2 oz eq meat alternate. See the M/MA section in the FBG.
Eggs, Yolks Only			X	Only whole eggs are creditable. See the Other Foods section in the FBG for purchasing information.
Falafel		X		The volume of meat alternate, such as chickpeas, in each serving is creditable. See the M/MA section in the FBG. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe, CN Label, or a PFS.
Fish, Commercial	X			<p>Must comply with State and local regulations. See M/MA section in the FBG. See “Fish sticks” item below for crediting breaded fish products.</p> <p>The FDA and the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> recommend that pregnant women and young children avoid eating fish that typically have higher mercury levels. Please note that bones in fish should also be considered a choking hazard.</p>
Fish, Home Pickled			X	For safety reasons, home pickled fish is not creditable.
Fish, Noncommercial, Home-Caught		X		<p>Home-caught fish is only creditable if it meets State or local public health policies regarding food safety or if the center is serving primarily a Native American population with donated traditional foods.</p> <p>The FDA and the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> recommend that pregnant women and young children avoid eating fish that typically have higher mercury levels. Please note that bones in fish should also be considered a choking hazard.</p>

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Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Fish Sticks or Portions/Nuggets (breaded)		X		<p>The edible fish portion credits toward the M/MA component. See the M/MA section in the FBG. For breading/batter crediting, see the Grains section in the FBG.</p> <p>Document the meal pattern contributions with a CN label, PFS, or a standardized recipe. Deep-fat frying is not allowed as a way of preparing foods onsite. Fish sticks credit if reheated using a method other than deep-fat frying. This product has a high fat content and as a best practice it is recommended to be served on a limited frequency. The FDA and the <i>Dietary Guidelines for Americans</i> recommend that pregnant women and young children avoid eating fish that typically have higher mercury levels.</p>
Game [e.g., Deer Meat (Venison), Bison, Elk, etc.]		X		<p>Meat from both farm raised and wild game animals (e.g., bison, venison, and reindeer) may be served in CNP. Producers selling domesticated and wild game animals to CACFP sites must meet applicable Federal, State, local, and Tribal food safety regulations and inspection requirements. CACFP sponsoring organizations should work with their local food safety authority to determine applicable State and local food safety regulations. See the policy memo: <u>Crediting Traditional Indigenous Foods in Child Nutrition Programs</u>.</p>
Home-Slaughtered Meat			X	<p>For safety reasons, home-slaughtered meat is not creditable.</p>
Hot Dogs (Frankfurters)		X		<p>Hot dogs (frankfurters) are creditable toward the M/MA component. See the M/MA section in the FBG. If they contain byproducts, cereals, or binders/extenders they are only creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS. Examples of binders/extenders are starch, cellulose, and nonfat dry milk. Examples of byproducts are glands, hearts, and other organ meats. The selection of low-fat versions of these types of products is encouraged as a best practice. Cut into age-appropriate sizes and shapes for those participants where choking is a potential hazard.</p>



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Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Hummus		X		Hummus is a dip made from beans and nut/seed butter and does not have a standard of identity. Therefore, hummus would require a PFS or CN label to determine the volume of meat alternate in each serving of commercially prepared hummus. A standardized recipe can be used for crediting hummus if it is prepared onsite. Note: Nut/seed butter will credit as an M/MA, while the beans, peas, and/or lentils (e.g., chickpeas) could credit as either a vegetable or M/MA, potentially crediting as two food components.
Kidney, Liver, Heart, Gizzards	X			See the M/MA section in the FBG.
Liverwurst		X		Liverwurst is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS.
Luncheon Meats		X		Only luncheon meats that are listed in the FBG or have a (1) CN label or (2) verified PFS are creditable.
Meat Sauce (Spaghetti Sauce)		X		Only the amount of cooked meat in the sauce may be credited toward the M/MA component. The creditable ingredients must match or have a similar description as listed in the FBG (e.g., Ground Beef, not more than 30% fat). The minimum creditable amount is 0.25 oz eq. Commercial meat sauce is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS.
Meat and Poultry Sticks (Not Dried or Semi-Dried and Not Jerky)		X		Meat sticks in a jar are similar to Vienna sausage. Meat sticks are creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS. The creditable amount cannot exceed the weight of the volume served. The creditable ingredients must match those listed on the product label and must match or have a similar description as listed in the FBG.
Neufchatel Cheese			X	Neufchatel cheese is not creditable.
Nuts	X			A 1 oz serving of nuts provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the M/MA section in the FBG. Please note that nuts may be a choking hazard for some populations.

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Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Nut or Seed Butters	X			2 tablespoons of nut or seed butter provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the M/MA section in the FBG. Examples of nut or seed butters include: Almond butter, Cashew nut butter, Peanut butter, Sesame seed butter, Soy nut butter, Sunflower seed butter.
Nut or Seed Flour		X		Nut and seed meal flours (such as almond flour) may credit only if they meet the requirements for Alternate Protein Products (APPs) and are served in a product with at least 0.25 oz eq visible M/MA. Nut and seed flours do not credit toward the grains component.
Nut or Seed Spreads		X		Nut spreads (such as peanut spreads) are not the same as a nut butter. Nut or seed spreads must be credited using a PFS or CN label that lists the creditable ingredient(s) (i.e., peanuts) and uses the yields found in the FBG for the ingredient(s) that contribute to the meal requirements.
Pasta/Noodles or Flour made from Beans/Peas/Lentils		X		Noodles made from bean/pea/lentil flours may credit toward the M/MA component when paired with at least 0.25 oz eq of visible M/MA, such as meat or cheese. Document meal pattern contribution with a CN label or a PFS.
Peas or Lentils, Dry	X			A ¼ cup cooked dry peas or lentils credits as 1 oz eq meat alternate.
Pepperoni, Traditional, Dried		X		These products credit based on the percent of meat (beef and pork) the product contains. Pepperoni is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS.
Pepperoni, Turkey		X		These products credit based on the percent of poultry the product contains. Turkey Pepperoni is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS.
Pig's Feet, Neck Bones, or Tails (Parts)			X	These products contain small amounts of meat and are not creditable.
Pimento Cheese, Commercial	X			Pimento cheese is classified as a cheese spread. A 2 oz serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate.
Pizza, Commercial		X		Meats, cheeses, or other meat alternates on a pizza are creditable toward the M/MA component. The weights of the sauce, vegetables, and crust may credit toward the vegetable and grains components. Document the meal pattern contribution with a CN label or a PFS.



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Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Pizza, Homemade	X			Meats, cheeses, or other meat alternates on a pizza are creditable toward the M/MA component. The weights of the sauce, vegetables, and crust may credit toward the vegetable and grains components. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe.
Polish Sausage		X		Polish sausage is creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS.
Pot Pies, Commercial		X		The M/MA ingredients are creditable if there is at least a 0.25 oz eq M/MA per serving. See the FBG for information on crediting the remaining ingredients toward other meal components. Document the meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS.
Pot Pies, Homemade		X		The M/MA ingredients are creditable if there is at least a 0.25 oz eq M/MA per serving. See the FBG for information on crediting the remaining ingredients toward other meal components. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe.
Potted or Deviled Meats			X	Potted or deviled meats are not creditable.
Powdered Cheese (e.g., in Boxed Macaroni and Cheese)			X	Powdered cheese mix is not creditable. The macaroni, if made from enriched or whole grains, may be credited toward the grains component.
Queso Blanco, Commercial, Pasteurized	X			Queso blanco is a fresh, crumbly white cheese. Commercial, pasteurized queso blanco is creditable. Queso blanco credits similarly to feta cheese; 1 oz cheese = 1 oz eq
Queso Fresco, Commercial, Pasteurized	X			Queso fresco is a fresh, white cheese. Commercial, pasteurized queso fresco is creditable. Queso fresco credits similarly to feta cheese; 1 oz cheese = 1 oz eq
Quiche		X		The eggs, cheese, and other M/MA may be credited toward the M/MA component if there is at least a 0.25 oz eq per serving. See the FBG for information on crediting the remaining ingredients toward other meal components. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe if made from scratch, or a CN label or PFS if commercially purchased.

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	Yes	Maybe	No	
Salami		X		Creditable only if it is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS. This product is high in sodium and fat and as a best practice should be served less frequently.
Salt Pork			X	Salt pork contains little meat and it is not creditable.
Sausage		X		Sausage products that are listed in the FBG are creditable. See the M/MA section in the FBG. Other sausage products must have (1) CN label or a (2) verified PFS.
Scrapple			X	Scrapple contains little meat and is not creditable.
Seeds	X			A 1 oz serving of seeds provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. See the M/MA section in the FBG.
Shellfish	X			Shellfish must be fully cooked; only the edible fish portion is creditable. See the M/MA section in the FBG.
Soups, Bean or Pea, Commercial	X			1 cup serving of commercially prepared bean or pea soup provides ½ cup heated beans which credits as 2 oz eq meat alternate. Beans, peas, and lentils may be credited either as a vegetable or meat alternate, but not both in the same meal. See the M/MA section in the FBG.
Soups, Commercial with M/MA		X		The M/MA ingredients are creditable if there is at least a 0.25 oz eq M/MA per serving. See the FBG for information on crediting the remaining ingredients toward other meal components. Document the meal pattern contribution with a CN label or PFS.
Soups, Homemade with M/MA		X		The M/MA ingredients are creditable if there is at least a 0.25 oz eq M/MA per serving. See the FBG for information on crediting the remaining ingredients toward meal pattern requirements. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe.
Soybeans, Fresh (Edamame) or Dry/Roasted (Soy Nuts)	X			A ¼ cup soybeans credits as 1 oz eq meat alternate. Soybeans may credit toward either the M/MA or vegetables component, but not both in the same meal. See the M/MA section in the FBG.



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	Yes	Maybe	No	
Surimi Seafood, Commercial (Imitation Crab, Imitation Shellfish)	X			3 oz of commercially prepared surimi seafood credits as 1 oz eq meat. See the M/MA section of the FBG. Document surimi seafood products containing higher quantities of fish product, or other creditable ingredients with a PFS or a CN label.
Sushi (Raw Seafood and Sashimi)			X	Raw sushi is not creditable. Raw fish is a potential health hazard for vulnerable populations.
Tahini (Sesame Seed Butter)	X			Tahini is classified as a seed butter. A 2-tablespoon serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate.
Tempeh, Commercial	X			1 oz of commercially prepared tempeh provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. Document meal pattern contribution of tempeh that contains other creditable ingredients (grains, seeds, etc.) with a PFS or a CN label.
Tofu, Commercial	X			Commercially prepared tofu is creditable. A 2.2 oz (¼ cup) serving of commercially prepared tofu, containing at least 5 g of protein, provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. Homemade or noncommercial tofu is not creditable.
Vienna Sausage		X		Vienna sausage is creditable toward the M/MA component. See the M/MA section in the FBG. If Vienna sausage contains byproducts, cereals, or binders/extendors it is only creditable if the product is (1) CN labeled or (2) has a verified PFS. Examples of binders/extendors are starch, cellulose, and nonfat dry milk. Examples of byproducts are glands, hearts, and other organ meats. The selection of low-fat versions of these types of products is encouraged. Remember to serve Vienna sausage in age-appropriate sizes and shapes for those participants where choking is a potential hazard.

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	Yes	Maybe	No	
Yogurt, Commercial Plain, Unflavored, Flavored, Sweetened	X			Product must be labeled as “yogurt”. A ½ cup or 4 oz serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. Must contain no more than 12 g of added sugars per 6 oz. See the M/MA section in the FBG for additional crediting information. Homemade yogurt is not creditable.
Yogurt, Soy	X			A ½ cup or 4 oz serving provides 1 oz eq meat alternate. Must contain no more than 12 g of added sugars per 6 oz.
Yogurt in a Tube	X			Product must be labeled as “yogurt”. A 2.2 oz tube of yogurt provides ½ oz eq meat alternate. Must contain no more than 12 g of added sugars per 6 oz (or no more than 4 g of added sugars per 2 oz of yogurt).
Yogurt, Frozen		X		Only yogurt that is frozen by program operators may credit. Please note that crediting of yogurt in this form is discouraged, as it is perceived as a dessert. Commercial frozen yogurt is similar to ice cream and is not creditable.
Yogurt Drinks		X		Yogurt drinks that meet the Food and Drug Administrations’ Standard of Identify for yogurt may credit. Must contain no more than 12 g of added sugars per 6 oz (or no more than 4 g of added sugars per 2 oz of yogurt). Note: cultured milk (kefir) credits toward the fluid milk component.
Yogurt Products (commercial); Frozen Yogurt, Yogurt Bars, Yogurt Flavored Products, Yogurt-Covered Fruits or Nuts, or similar products			X	These products are not creditable.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES

Meats

1. Can pizza be credited toward the M/MA component?

Yes. Meats, cheeses, or other meat alternates on a pizza are creditable toward the M/MA component. The sauce, vegetables, and crust may credit toward the vegetables and grains components. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe, CN label, or a PFS.

2. Chicken nuggets, corn dog nuggets, and fish sticks are very popular in our center. How many nuggets or sticks should we serve to meet requirements?

Commercial nuggets and sticks are creditable only if they have (1) a CN label or (2) a verified PFS. These products vary in size and in the amount of meat and breading or batter in the product. Only the edible meat or meat alternate portion is creditable as a M/MA. For homemade nuggets and sticks, document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe. For breading/batter crediting, see the Calculating Grains Contribution section of the **“Child Nutrition Labeling Manual.”**

The CACFP meal pattern requirements prohibit deep-fat frying as way of preparing food onsite but allow CACFP sites to serve pre-fried purchased foods.

Meat Alternates

1. Why are nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters allowed as meat alternates and how do they credit?

Nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters are good sources of protein and other nutrients. One ounce of nuts or seeds provides 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate. Nuts and seeds may count toward the entire M/MA requirement at meals and snacks.

Two tablespoons of nut or seed butter, such as peanut butter or sunflower seed butter, provides 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate. They may be used to meet all or a portion of the M/MA component.

Please note that nuts and seeds may be a choking hazard for some populations. Nuts are not recommended for children under 4 years of age and adults at risk for choking. A spoonful of peanut butter or other nut butters can also be a choking hazard. Spread nut butters thinly on other foods (e.g., toast, crackers, etc.). Serve only creamy, not chunky, nut butters. Always supervise participants during meals and snacks. Additionally, some participants may have food intolerances or allergies to nuts, seeds, and nut/seed butters.

MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES

2. What types of cheeses are creditable under the CACFP meal pattern requirements?

Creditable cheeses include natural and processed, low-fat, or reduced-fat cheeses, such as:

- Cheddar, American, Swiss, Colby, and Monterey Jack
- Fresh cheeses such as feta, mozzarella, and queso fresco
- Cottage cheese and ricotta cheese
- Romano and Parmesan cheese
- Cheese foods**
- Cheese spreads**

**Note that cheese foods and cheese spreads are not creditable in the infant meal pattern.

Noncreditable cheeses include products labeled as:

- Imitation cheese
- Cheese products
- Cheese alternates/alternatives
- Cheese whips
- Cream cheese and Neufchatel cheese

Homemade cheese is not creditable in the CNP.

3. Can vegetarian meals be served in the CACFP?

Yes. There are a variety of creditable foods within the M/MA component to allow program operators to plan vegetarian meals. Examples of creditable vegetarian meat alternates for the CACFP include cheeses, eggs, yogurt (including soy yogurt), tofu, tempeh, beans, peas and lentils, nuts and seeds, and nut and seed butters.

4. We have several participants that attend our CACFP site who cannot eat certain foods because of religious reasons. Can we claim these participants on the food program?

Yes. Substitutions may be made to accommodate religious dietary restrictions within existing meal pattern requirements. See page 5 for more information about accommodating nondisability dietary preferences.

5. Is tofu creditable as a meat alternate in the CACFP?

Yes. A 2.2 ounce serving (¼ cup) of commercially-prepared tofu, containing at least 5 grams of protein, is creditable as 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate.



MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES

6. How would you calculate the creditable amount of meat alternate contributed by tofu in a stir fry using the yield information from the FBG?

The FBG yield information for tofu is 2.20 ounces (oz) (or ¼ cup) credits as 1 ounce equivalent (oz eq) meat alternate (MA).

For example, if you prepare a vegetable stir fry that contains 1.50 oz of creditable tofu per ½ cup serving of stir fry, calculate the meal pattern contribution as follows:

- a. Amount of tofu divided by 2.20 oz per 1 oz eq MA:

$$1.50 \text{ oz tofu} \div 2.20 \text{ oz}/1 \text{ oz eq} = \mathbf{0.68 \text{ oz eq}}$$

- b. Round down to the nearest 0.25 oz eq:

$$0.68 \text{ oz eq rounds down to} \\ \mathbf{0.50 \text{ oz eq MA}}$$

In this example, a ½ cup serving of vegetable stir fry with tofu provides 0.50 oz eq MA.

7. How are fresh soybeans (edamame) credited?

Fresh soybeans (edamame) are classified as “beans, peas, and lentils” and may credit as a vegetable or a meat alternate. These fresh soybeans are the only immature beans/peas that credit the same as mature beans/peas. A ¼ cup of soybeans (fresh or dry/roasted) credits as 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate or as ¼ cup vegetables.

8. Is soy yogurt creditable as a meats/meat alternate?

Yes. A ½ cup of soy yogurt credits as 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate. To be creditable in the CACFP, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce).

9. Must yogurt be offered in 4-ounce portions to be credited?

No. Although ½ cup (4 ounces) of yogurt provides 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate, this does not mean that programs are limited to offering yogurt in ½ cup (4 ounce) servings. Meal planners may use their discretion to vary the portion sizes offered. To credit toward the meat alternates component, a minimum serving size of ⅓ cup (1 ounce) of yogurt is required to provide the minimum 0.25 ounce equivalent meat alternate. To be creditable in the CACFP, yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces (2 grams of added sugars per ounce). Please note minimum creditable amounts do not apply to the infant meal pattern.

10. Why is there an added sugar limit for yogurt of no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces? Does this also apply to soy yogurt?

Yogurt, including soy yogurt, is a great source of calcium, protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, riboflavin, and vitamin B-12. However, some yogurt products have significantly more sugar than others. To promote healthy habits early in life, the meal patterns limit the amount of added sugars allowed in creditable yogurts. Yogurt must contain no more than 12 grams of added sugars per 6 ounces.

11. What method should be used to determine if a yogurt meets the added sugars limit?

There are two methods you may use to determine if the yogurt meets the added sugars limits.

Method 1:

Use the Table of Yogurt Serving Sizes and Added Sugars Limits to determine if the yogurt is within the added sugars limits.

Method 2:

Divide the added sugars amount by the serving size in ounces. Compare the answer to 2.0 which is the maximum grams of added sugars per 1 ounce of yogurt allowed.

Table of Yogurt Serving Sizes and Added Sugars Limits

Serving Size (ounces)	Serving Size (grams)	Added Sugars cannot be more than (grams):
If the serving size is:		
2.25 oz	64 g	4 g
3.5 oz	99 g	7 g
4 oz	113 g	8 g
5.3 oz	150 g	10 g
6 oz	170 g	12 g
8 oz	227 g	16 g

*Serving sizes here refer to those commonly found for store-bought yogurts. Homemade yogurt is not creditable in the CACFP. Added sugars limits are pre-calculated and set forth by the USDA.





MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES

Method 1 – if serving size is in ounces

Step 1: What is the serving size in ounces?

6 ounces

Step 2: What is the amount of added sugars in grams?

11 grams

Step 3: Use the table on page 43 to determine if the yogurt meets the added sugars limit.

This yogurt is creditable because it has 11 grams of added sugars which is less than the limit of 12 grams of added sugars for a 6 ounce serving size.

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size 6 oz

Amount per serving

Calories 125

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g 0%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 10mg 3%

Sodium 90mg 4%

Total Carbohydrate 23g 8%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Total Sugars 19g

Includes 11g Added Sugars 8%

Protein 6g

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Method 1 – if serving size is in grams

Step 1: What is the serving size in grams?

113 grams

Step 2: What is the amount of added sugars in grams?

10 grams

Step 3: Use the table on page 43 to determine if the yogurt meets the added sugars limit.

This yogurt is not creditable because it has 10 grams of added sugars which is more than the limit of 8 grams of added sugars for a 113 gram serving size.

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size 113 g

Amount per serving

Calories 120

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 2g 0%

Saturated Fat 1g 0%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 10mg 3%

Sodium 80mg 4%

Total Carbohydrate 23g 8%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Total Sugars 18g

Includes 10g Added Sugars 8%

Protein 5g

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

MEATS/MEAT ALTERNATES

Method 2 – compare to 2.0 grams of added sugars per 1 ounce of yogurt

Step 1: What is the serving size in ounces?
4.5 ounces

Step 2: What is the amount of added sugars in grams?
8 grams

Step 3: Divide the added sugars by the serving size. In this example, it would be:

$$\frac{\text{Added Sugars (g)}}{\text{Serving Size (oz)}} = \frac{8}{4.5} = 1.78$$

Step 4: If the number is **2.0 or less**, the yogurt is within the added sugars limit. 2.0 is the maximum grams of added sugars per 1 ounce of yogurt allowed.

This yogurt is creditable because 1.78 is less than 2.0.

Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size 4.5 oz

Amount per serving

Calories 140

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 2g 3%

Saturated Fat 0g 0%

Trans Fat 0g

Cholesterol 10mg 3%

Sodium 90mg 4%

Total Carbohydrate 23g 8%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Total Sugars 16g

Includes 8g Added Sugars 8%

Protein 8g

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

12. How are cups of commercially prepared yogurt containing fruit credited? Does the volume of fruit have to be subtracted from the total weight of the containers?

Commercially prepared yogurt containing fruit receives the full credit toward the M/MA component. For example, ½ cup (4 ounces) of yogurt containing fruit provides 1 ounce equivalent meat alternate. It should be noted that the fruit in commercial yogurts cannot be credited toward the fruits component. Fruit may be credited only when the program operator adds sufficient quantities of fresh, frozen, or canned fruit to commercial yogurt.

13. Will yogurt credit if I serve it frozen?

Program operators may credit yogurt that they have frozen. Please note that crediting M/MAs in this form is discouraged as it is perceived as a dessert. Commercial frozen yogurt is similar to ice cream and is not creditable.

14. Can I use commercially-bought yogurt in a smoothie, and credit the yogurt?

Yes. Yogurt used as an ingredient in a smoothie may credit toward the M/MA component. The yogurt must be creditable and meet the added sugars limit. For more information on smoothies, see the policy memo, **Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs**.