



## VEGETABLES

Vegetables are a required meal component for a reimbursable lunch/supper in the CACFP. Vegetables, fruits, or portions of both are a required meal component for a reimbursable breakfast. Vegetables are not required at snack but may be served as one of two required meal components. Fresh, frozen, or canned vegetables and full-strength vegetable juice may credit toward the vegetables requirement. The importance of adequate and recognizable amounts of vegetables must be considered in menu planning to ensure a well-balanced meal and to meet meal pattern requirements.

To allow program operators flexibility to offer a variety of vegetables, the meal patterns allow a second vegetable to be served in place of the fruits component at lunch and supper. Equal volume measures of vegetables can be substituted for equal volume measures of fruits. If substituting for fruits, the second vegetable must be different/distinct from the first vegetable. For example, the same vegetable served in different forms, such as raw carrots and cooked carrots, do not count as two different vegetables.

A **reimbursable breakfast** must contain:

- minimum required serving of fruits

OR

- minimum required serving of vegetables

OR

- adequate portions of both a fruit and a vegetable to provide the minimum required serving.

A **reimbursable lunch/supper** must contain:

- the minimum required serving of fruits and the minimum required serving of vegetables

OR

- two different minimum servings of vegetables; with this option, the second different vegetable is served in place of the fruit requirement.

A **reimbursable snack** may include a fruit and a vegetable which would meet the requirements to serve two of the five meal components. This means the program operator may offer:

- the minimum serving of fruits
- the minimum serving of vegetables



## Substituting Vegetables for Grains in American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Tribal Communities

All sponsors, institutions, and facilities in American Samoa, Guam, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Tribal Communities can offer any vegetable such as breadfruit, prairie turnips, yams, plantains, or sweet potatoes to meet the grains requirements in the CACFP to address cultural food preferences, product availability, and cost concerns. The vegetables served must meet the daily minimum grain quantity required and can be used to meet the whole grain-rich requirement. One-half cup vegetables substitutes for 1 ounce equivalent grains. There is no limit on the amount of times vegetables may be substituted for the grains requirement. The vegetables substituting for the grains component cannot also credit as the vegetables component in the same meal.

## Crediting Vegetables

Vegetables are credited based on their volume as served. The smallest creditable portion size of a vegetable is an  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup or 2 tablespoons.\*

There are a few exceptions:

- Raw leafy greens credit as half of the volume served. For example, a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup raw leafy greens credits as a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable.
- Tomato paste and puree credit based on their whole food equivalency. One tablespoon of tomato paste credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable, while 2 tablespoons of tomato puree credits as  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup vegetable.

Servings of vegetables that are less than an  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup are not creditable toward the vegetables component.

\*Please note minimum creditable amounts do not apply to the infant meal pattern.



## Crediting Tips for Serving Vegetables in the CACFP

- The minimum creditable amount for vegetables is  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup per serving.
- Vegetables credit based on volume served (with a few exceptions: raw leafy greens and tomato paste and puree).
- Full-strength 100% vegetable juice may credit toward the vegetables component at one meal, including snack, per day.
- Menu items that are mixtures of fruits and vegetables (for example: fruit salsa made with peaches and red pepper), must be credited separately for the fruits and the vegetables components.
- Snack-type foods made from vegetables (for example: potato chips, vegetable straws, etc.) and condiments (for example tomato ketchup), do **not** credit toward the meal pattern requirements.



# VEGETABLES

## Beans, Peas, and Lentils

Foods in this vegetable subgroup include beans (kidney beans, pinto beans, white beans, black beans, lima beans, fava beans, soybeans), dried peas (chickpeas, black-eyed peas, pigeon peas, split peas), and lentils. Edamame, which is the soybean in the pod, is also counted in this subgroup (even though it is eaten fresh and not dried).

Beans, peas, and lentils can credit toward either the vegetables or meats/meat alternates (M/MA) component, but not as both a vegetable and a meat alternate in the same meal. If two different servings of 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.

## Vegetable Mixtures

Vegetable mixtures, like frozen carrots and peas, credit as one serving of vegetables when you don't know how much of each vegetable is in the mix. If the program operator has documentation—standardized recipe, Child Nutrition (CN) label, or Product Formulation Statement (PFS)—showing the amounts, the mix can credit as two different servings of vegetables when each vegetable meets the minimum amount.



## Noncreditable Vegetables

Snack-type foods, such as potato chips and vegetable straws, are not creditable toward the CACFP meal pattern requirements. These processed food items are typically high in sodium, fat, and/or sugar and low in nutrients.

Condiments such as pickle relish, mustard, tomato ketchup, or chili sauce are not creditable toward the CACFP meal pattern requirements. Additionally, dehydrated vegetables that are used for seasoning, such as spices made from pepper flakes, are not creditable.

Home-canned vegetable products are not allowed in the CACFP due to health and safety reasons. See the **Resource Section** for additional information on produce safety. However, home-frozen vegetable products are allowed. For example, when sweet corn is in season (when it is the most economical to buy and tastes the best), you may freeze corn for use in the winter months when fresh corn is not available or is more expensive.

## Vegetable Juices

Pasteurized, 100% vegetable juice (in either liquid, gelled, or frozen form) may count toward the vegetables component at only one meal per day, including snack. Juice may be used as one component of a snack when the other component is not fluid milk. Juice must be pasteurized and full strength (100%). Vegetable juice may be fresh, canned, frozen, or reconstituted with water from concentrate. The product label must include the word(s): “juice” or “full-strength juice” or “single-strength juice” or “100% juice” or “reconstituted juice” or “juice from concentrate.” Juice may not be served as part of a reimbursable meal for infants.

If juice blends are served, they must be 100% juice or a full-strength juice blend. A juice blend that contains only vegetables such as tomatoes, carrots and spinach juice, credits toward the vegetables component.

Juice blends or purees that are mixtures of vegetables and fruits credit toward the vegetables or fruits component based on the highest quantity ingredient. For example, if the first ingredient listed on the product label is a fruit juice/puree (e.g., strawberry), then the juice blend credits toward the fruit requirement. If the first ingredient is a vegetable juice/puree (e.g., carrot), then the juice blend credits toward the vegetable requirement. As a best practice, you are encouraged to specify the type of juice served on your menu.

Please see page 57 for information on crediting smoothies containing juice.

## Food Mixtures With Fruits and Vegetables

Foods that contain a mixture of vegetables and fruits with known quantities must be credited separately for the vegetables and fruits component in reimbursable lunches, suppers and snacks. The mixture must contain at least an 1/8 cup of vegetable to count toward the vegetables component and at least an 1/8 cup of fruit to count toward the fruits component. For example, a carrot-pineapple mixture served to 6-year-olds contains a 1/2 cup carrots and a 1/4 cup pineapple. This mixture would credit as a 1/2 cup vegetable and a 1/4 cup fruit. This carrot-pineapple mixture meets the full vegetables component and full fruits component requirements for a reimbursable lunch/supper for children 6 through 12 years old.



# VEGETABLES

## Serving Size and Yield for Selected Vegetables

This is a quick-reference table of commonly served raw vegetables and the amounts needed to provide ¼ cup servings. Double check to ensure that your serving sizes meet meal pattern requirements and refer to the FBG for purchasing and yield information.

Vegetable	Serving Size and Yield
Avocado	1 slice is ¾ inch by 3½ inch. About 3 slices = ¼ cup vegetable
Bell Peppers	¼ cup pepper strips or chopped/diced pepper pieces = ¼ cup vegetable
Broccoli	¼ cup raw spears/pieces = ¼ cup vegetable
Carrot Sticks	1 stick is 4 inches long and ½ inch wide. 3 sticks = ¼ cup vegetable
Celery Sticks	1 stick is 4 inches long and ½ inch wide. 3 sticks = ¼ cup vegetable
Cucumber Sticks	1 stick is 3 inches long and ¾ inch wide. 3 sticks = ¼ cup vegetable
Jicama (Yam Bean)	¼ cup raw peeled, julienned vegetable strips = ¼ cup vegetable
Lettuce Head (Iceberg)*	½ cup raw, shredded lettuce or ½ cup raw lettuce pieces credits as ¼ cup vegetable
Lettuce, Leaf*	½ cup raw lettuce pieces credits as ¼ cup vegetable
Olives, Ripe	8 (large) olives = ¼ cup vegetable
Pickles	⅓ (large) pickle = ¼ cup vegetable
Radishes	7 small radishes = ¼ cup vegetable
Tomatoes, Small/Medium	5 slices, ⅛ inch thick = ¼ cup vegetable
Tomatoes, Cherry	3 tomatoes = about ¼ cup vegetable

\*Raw leafy greens credit half of the volume served.



# VEGETABLES

Use this section as a guide to identify creditable vegetables and products that contain creditable vegetables. This is NOT an all-inclusive list. For information on creditable vegetables commonly served in Child Nutrition Programs (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.

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Barbecue Sauce			X	Barbecue sauce is a condiment and is not creditable.
Beans, Peas, or Lentils, Canned or Dry	X			Beans, peas, or lentils (kidney, garbanzo, black, lentils, etc.) may be credited as either a vegetable or as a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal. See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Bean Sprouts (canned or cooked)	X			See the Vegetables section in the FBG for canned or cooked sprouts. Please be aware, for food safety reasons, raw sprouts are not creditable.
Carrot Bread		X		Carrot bread must contain at least an ⅛ cup (2 tablespoons) of visible vegetable per serving. Document the meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a PFS. Generally, these products contain an insufficient amount of vegetable per serving.
Chickpeas, Roasted (Roasted Garbanzo Beans)	X			Roasted chickpeas may be credited as either a vegetable or a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal. A ¼ cup of roasted chickpeas credits as a ¼ cup of vegetable or a 1 oz eq of meat alternate. Please note they may be a choking hazard for some populations.
Chili Sauce			X	Chili sauce is a condiment and is not creditable.
Coleslaw		X		The vegetable portion of coleslaw, without condiments or other ingredients, is creditable. Document meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a PFS. See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Corn, Fresh (Kernel or On-the-Cob)	X			See the Vegetables section in the FBG.



# VEGETABLES

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Corn Chips			X	Corn chips are classified as a grain (not a vegetable) when made from creditable ingredients. See the Grains section in the FBG.
Corn Syrup			X	Corn syrup is a sugar, not a vegetable, and considered a noncreditable food in CNP.
Dehydrated/Dried Vegetables	X			Dehydrated and dried (including freeze-dried) vegetables are creditable based on the rehydrated volume served. See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Dry Spice Mixes			X	Spices do not credit toward meal pattern requirements.
French-Fried Potatoes (French Fries)		X		French-fried potatoes that are air-fried, pre-fried, flash-fried, or par-fried by a commercial manufacturer may be served, when reheated by a method other than deep-fat frying. Foods deep-fat fried onsite are not creditable. See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Gelatin Containing Vegetables (Aspic)		X		Gelatin containing vegetables must contain at least an 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) of visible vegetable per serving. Document meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a PFS.
Gravy Base			X	Gravy base is not a vegetable and is not creditable.
Greens, All Varieties (such as Mustard, Collard, and Chard)	X			See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Hominy, Canned	X			See the Vegetables section in the FBG. 1/4 cup of canned, drained hominy credits as 1/4 cup vegetable. Note: hominy grits credit toward the grains component.
Hummus		X		Hummus is a dip made typically from chickpeas 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 vegetables (chickpeas) 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.



# VEGETABLES

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Juice, 100% Vegetable	X			Pasteurized, 100% full-strength vegetable juice is creditable.
Juice Blends (Vegetable only or Fruit and Vegetable)		X		Vegetable and fruit juice blends that are combinations of pasteurized, 100% full-strength juices are creditable. If vegetable is the first ingredient listed, the juice blend may credit toward the vegetables component.
Ketchup (Catsup)			X	Ketchup is a condiment and is not creditable.
Macaroni Salad (also Pasta Salads)		X		Macaroni Salad containing vegetables must contain at least an 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) of visible vegetable per serving. Document with a standardized recipe or a PFS.
Mayonnaise, Salad Dressing, Margarine, Salad Oil, and Butter			X	These products are condiments and are not creditable.
Mustard			X	Mustard is a condiment and is not creditable.
Olives	X			Olives may be credited if a minimum of an 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) is provided. Please note that most olives are high in sodium and may pose a choking hazard to young children.
Onion Rings		X		Onion rings that are air-fried, pre-fried, flash-fried, or par-fried by a commercial manufacturer may be served but must be reheated by a method other than deep-fat frying. Foods deep-fat fried onsite are not creditable. To credit as a vegetable, this product must contain at least an 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) of cooked onion per serving. Document meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a PFS.
Pasta/Noodles from Bean/Pea/Lentil Flours		X		Noodles made from bean/pea/lentil flours may credit toward the vegetable or meat/meat alternate component. Program operators may serve noodles made from bean/pea/lentil flours without serving additional recognizable vegetables and credit toward the vegetables component.
Pickle Relish			X	Pickle relish is a condiment and is not creditable.
Pickles	X			Pickles may be credited if a minimum of an 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) is provided. Please note that most pickles are high in sodium.



# VEGETABLES

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Pie Filling: Sweet Potato, Pumpkin		X		Pie fillings containing vegetables must contain at least an 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) of visible vegetable per serving. Document meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a PFS.
Pizza Sauce (Tomato Sauce)		X		Pizza/Tomato sauce may be credited if a minimum of an 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) of sauce is provided. An 1/8 cup of sauce equals an 1/8 cup of vegetable. See the Vegetables section in the FBG. Document meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a PFS.
Potato Chips (and Other Vegetable Chips)			X	Snack-type vegetable products, such as potato chips, do not credit toward meal pattern requirements.
Potatoes	X			See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Potatoes, Dehydrated	X			Reconstituted, heated potatoes made from dehydrated potatoes are creditable. See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Pumpkin Bread		X		Pumpkin bread must contain at least an 1/8 cup (2 tablespoons) of visible vegetable per serving. Document meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a PFS. Generally, these products contain an insufficient amount of vegetable per serving.
Salsa	X			Salsa is creditable toward the vegetables component. See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Soups: Canned, Condensed, or Ready-To-Serve (Minestrone, Tomato, Tomato with other basic ingredients such as Rice, Vegetable, and Vegetable with basic ingredients such as Meat and Poultry)	X			1 cup of reconstituted or ready-to-serve soup provides 1/4 cup of vegetable. See the Vegetables section in the FBG. Please note that 1 cup of soup may be an excessive volume for young children.



# VEGETABLES

Food	Creditable			Additional Information
	Yes	Maybe	No	
Soups, Homemade		X		Homemade soups must contain at least an ⅛ cup (2 tablespoons) of visible vegetable per serving. Document meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe.
Soybeans, Roasted	X			Roasted soybeans may be credited as either a vegetable or a meat alternate, but not as both in the same meal. A ¼ cup of roasted soybeans credits as a ¼ cup of vegetable or a 1 oz eq meat alternate. Please note these may be a choking hazard for some populations.
Spaghetti Sauce (Meatless)	X			Spaghetti sauce is creditable toward the vegetables component. See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Vegetable Spirals (from Fresh or Frozen Vegetables such as Carrot or Squash)	X			Fresh or frozen vegetable spirals are creditable toward the vegetables component based on the volume served.
Vegetable Sticks/ Vegetable Straws (Dehydrated/ Puffed)			X	Snack-type vegetable products, such as dehydrated/ puffed vegetable sticks/straws, do not credit toward meal pattern requirements.
Vegetables, Fresh, Frozen, or Canned (All Varieties)	X			See the Vegetables section in the FBG.
Zucchini Bread (Squash in Bread)		X		Zucchini bread must contain at least an ⅛ cup (2 tablespoons) of visible vegetable per serving. Document meal pattern contribution with a standardized recipe or a PFS. Generally, vegetable breads contain an insufficient amount of vegetable per serving.