

School Lunch: Good for Kids and Good for Your Wallet



As the cost of everything increases – there is one meal that is still a great value: both nutritionally and economically! School lunch is still an incredible bargain at less than \$2.08 nationally!

Every School Lunch Includes Five Great Choices:

- Milk – Fat free or 1% - flavored or regular
- Vegetables – From jicama slaw to fresh carrot sticks
- Fruit – Everything from kiwi to locally grown apples; often fresh
- Grains – More whole grain items like rolls or sandwich bread
- Meat or meat alternate –White meat chicken, bean chili, lean beef



Save Money: Eat School Lunch

- On average it costs less to buy a school lunch than to bring a lunch from home.
- The estimated national average of a school lunch from home was \$3.43 last school year.¹

School Lunch vs. Bagged Lunch

\$2.08 **\$3.43**

;comparison of national averages;

There *is* Such a Thing as a Free Lunch (and a Reduced Price One Too)

- All children at participating schools may purchase meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals.
- Families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals; these students can be charged no more than 40 cents.
- Contact your school nutrition department to fill out a school meal application.

Healthy Meals Feed Eager Minds

- Meals served under the NSLP must meet nutrition guidelines based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- No more than 30% of calories can come from fat and less than 10% from saturated fat.
- School lunches provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories over the course of one week of menus.
- Students who eat school lunches consume less calories from fat than students who bring lunch from home.
- Compared to lunches from home, school lunches contain:
 - Three times as many dairy products
 - Twice as much fruit
 - Seven time the vegetable amounts
- NSLP participants have substantially lower intakes of added sugars than do non-participants.

For more information contact your district's school nutrition director or the School Nutrition Association: servicecenter@schoolnutrition.org (703) 739-3900

¹ According to a meal cost analysis by Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SNS of Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI

Why Breakfast at School?

1) Great Choice for Busy Families

- Not all kids are hungry first thing in the morning.
- Eating breakfast at school helps parents reduce the stress of a hectic morning routine.
- Cost of school breakfast is small and some children are eligible for a free or reduced rate.

2) Learning

- Hungry kids can't learn.
- Eating breakfast improves test scores.
- Breakfast eaters make fewer mistakes.
- Kids who eat breakfast have improved attention spans and productivity.

3) Behavior

- Kids who eat breakfast have increased energy and improved behavior.
- Breakfast eaters make fewer visits to the nurse's office.

4) Improved Attendance

- Breakfast at school can be an incentive for kids to avoid tardiness and absenteeism.

5) Healthier Kids: Mind & Body

- School breakfast meets USDA requirements for nutrients and supplies foods from the five food groups, providing your child with a fourth of his or her daily needs.
- Elementary school children need a minimum of three servings of dairy foods per day.
- Nutrient-rich milk is a key part of school breakfast.

6) Support a Healthy School Environment

- Children who eat breakfast are less likely to choose high fat, high sugar snacks throughout the day.
- Breakfast eaters are less likely to become overweight.
- Eating breakfast is part of a healthy lifestyle kids can learn in school.

