

USDA's Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs

Controlling costs is one way to have a successful business. Buy the right amount of food for child care meals to control costs. Buy too little and the minimum serving sizes are not met. The result? It could be a loss of reimbursement if not corrected. If too much food is purchased, it costs your business in food waste.

The *Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* is a resource that helps take the guess work out of how much to buy to meet food program needs. Buying the right amount of fresh produce helps keep meal costs under control. Fresh fruits and vegetables are foods to offer often in child care meals. These foods help meet nutrition needs for vitamins, minerals, and fiber.

This issue of *Mealtime Memo* focuses on using the Fruit and Vegetable section of the *Food Buying Guide*. Here is a quick overview of the information in the yield charts.

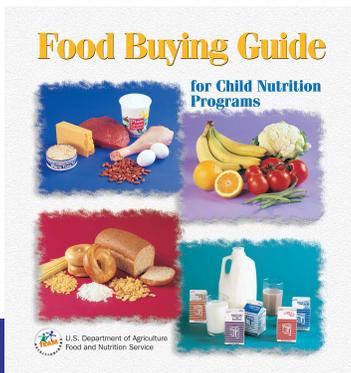
Understanding the Chart

Each column in the chart lists a piece of information. Know what each term means to be sure to use the chart correctly.

Section 2—Vegetables/Fruits

1 Food As Purchased, AP	2 Purchase Unit	3 Servings per Purchase Unit, EP	4 Serving Size per Meal Contribution	5 Purchase Units for 100 Servings	6 Additional Information
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Column 1 lists Food as Purchased, or AP. For each food item, there are separate rows for fresh, frozen, canned, or dried forms of the food.



Column 2 lists the Purchase Unit. Use this column to find the package, can size, or other unit of measure for a food, such as pound. The Purchase Unit helps find different ways foods are packaged. For example, a #10 can is large and commonly used in child care centers; a #300 can is smaller and more common in family day care homes.

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Column 3 lists Servings Per Purchase Unit, EP. The EP stands for edible portion. The column gives the number of servings that each purchase unit provides. The edible portion amount is often smaller than the purchased amount. Why is this? Edible portions are figured after the parts of foods we do not eat are removed.

Examples include

- Liquid drained from canned products (such as tuna or vegetables),
- Inedible peels from fresh produce (such as jicama or oranges), and
- Pits or seeds from fresh produce (such as apricots or cherries).

Knowing the edible portion each purchase unit provides makes it easy to decide how much food to buy.

Column 4 lists the Serving Size Contribution to the Meal Pattern. For Fruits and Vegetables, a $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving size is common.

Column 5 lists the Number of Purchase Units (cans, pounds, packages) for 100 servings (usually $\frac{1}{4}$ cup serving). This column is very useful for child care centers serving large numbers of children.

Column 6 lists useful Additional Information.

Use the Chart

These examples show how to use the chart for wise food buying choices.

The menu in this *Mealtime Memo* includes cucumber and zucchini squash sticks at snack on Day 2. A child care center serves 100 children ages 3 to 5 years old. How many pounds of cucumber and zucchini does the center need to buy? Each child needs to have a $\frac{1}{2}$ cup portion for snack. The menu calls for $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of each cucumber and zucchini sticks.

Column 4 lists the Serving Size for cucumbers. The bottom row lists the menu item, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup unpared (unpeeled) sticks (about 3 sticks, 3-inch by $\frac{3}{4}$ inch sticks).

Under Column 5, the chart shows 8.5 Purchase Units are needed for 100 servings.

Pounds are the Purchase Unit listed in Column 2. The buyer now knows to buy $8\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of fresh cucumbers to have enough for 100 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup servings (unpeeled).

It is important to check the menu and recipe to know if the cucumbers are peeled or not. If the cucumbers are going to be peeled more pounds are needed. When the peel is removed, there is less edible portion per pound. For cucumber sticks, 10.3 pounds are listed in Column 5. It may be hard to buy $\frac{3}{10}$ of a pound. If the purchaser buys $10\frac{1}{2}$ pounds of cucumbers, there will be enough for 100 servings of peeled cucumber sticks.

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Unpeeled cucumbers provide more fiber and more servings per pound. This menu choice is a win-win – better nutrition and lower total cost!

If, however, the peel on the cucumber is thick and tough, it may be hard for young children to chew. The child care center may choose to peel the cucumbers so that the children can easily eat the snack.

Either way the *Food Buying Guide* makes it easy to buy the right amount.

CUCUMBERS					
Cucumbers, fresh <i>Whole</i> <i>Unpared</i>	Pound	11.1	1/4 cup unpared, diced vegetable	9.1	1 lb AP = 0.98 lb (about 2-3/4 cups) ready-to-serve raw, unpared, diced cucumber
	Pound	12.4	1/4 cup unpared, sliced vegetable	8.1	
	Pound	10.5	1/4 cup pared, diced or sliced vegetable	9.6	1 lb AP = 0.84 lb ready-to-serve raw, pared, sliced cucumber
	Pound	9.71	1/4 cup pared vegetable sticks (about 3 sticks, 3-inch by 3/4-inch sticks)	10.3	1 lb AP = 0.81 lb (about 2-3/8 cups) ready-to-serve raw, pared cucumber sticks
	Pound	11.8	1/4 cup unpared vegetable sticks (about 3 sticks, 3-inch by 3/4-inch sticks)	8.5	1 lb AP = 0.98 lb (about 3 cups) ready-to-serve raw, unpared cucumber sticks

Next, the buyer looks at the *Food Buying Guide* information for summer squash to find zucchini squash. The menu calls for 1/4 cup of unpeeled zucchini sticks, per serving. Based on the chart, 8 1/2 pounds of zucchini will be needed.

SQUASH, SUMMER (continued)					
Squash, Summer, fresh <i>Zucchini</i> <i>Whole</i>	Pound	11.9	1/4 cup raw vegetable sticks (about 3 sticks, 1/2-inch by 3-inch sticks)	8.5	1 lb AP = 0.95 lb (about 2-7/8 cups) ready-to-serve or -cook raw (1/2-inch by 3-inch) squash sticks

To figure amounts for fewer servings, use this guide:

For 25 servings, divide the number in Column 5 by 4 (or multiple by .25)

For 50 servings, divide the number in Column 5 by 2 (or multiple by .50)

To serve 25 children, a child care center needs to buy 2 1/8 pounds each of unpeeled cucumbers and zucchini ($8.5 \div 4 = 4.125$ or 2 1/8 pounds).

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To serve 50 children, a child care center needs to buy $4\frac{1}{4}$ pounds each of cucumbers and zucchini ($8.5 \div 2 = 4.25$ or $4\frac{1}{4}$ pounds).

Practice Using the *Food Buying Guide*

Use the *Food Buying Guide* to help figure the amount of food to buy for use in recipes.

The menu in this *Mealtime Memo* includes Blueberry Muffins (A-03). The muffins call for either fresh or frozen blueberries.

Each muffin provides $1\frac{1}{4}$ servings of bread/grain equivalent. A family day care home provider plans to serve $\frac{1}{2}$ a muffin for breakfast one day and later in the week, $\frac{1}{2}$ a muffin for snack ($\frac{1}{2}$ muffin meets the $\frac{1}{2}$ slice bread serving size). To save time, she will prepare the muffins in one batch and freeze the extra muffins not needed for breakfast for later use. She plans to use the recipe that makes 25 servings.

During the summer, fresh blueberries are in season. The recipe calls for $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of fresh blueberries. Column 6 (Additional Information) shows one pint of blueberries is about $2\frac{2}{3}$ cups. A pint of blueberries gives the $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups needed for the recipe with 1 and $\frac{1}{3}$ cups left over. If blueberries are purchased by the pound, 9 ounces (slightly more than half a pound) are needed for the recipe.

BLUEBERRIES					
Blueberries, fresh Whole Includes USDA Commodity	Pint (14-1/4 oz)	10.7	1/4 cup raw fruit	9.4	1 pt AP = 0.87 lb (about 2-2/3 cups) ready-to-serve raw berries
	Pound	11.9	1/4 cup raw fruit	8.5	1 lb AP = 0.96 lb ready-to-serve raw berries

Frozen blueberries cost less than fresh during most of the year. The chart shows that a pound (16 ounces) of frozen berries is about $2\frac{2}{8}$ cups (column 6). A local store carries frozen blueberries in 12 ounce and 16 ounce packages. The 12 ounce package would provide enough blueberries for the 25 muffin recipe with some to keep in the freezer for another use.

Blueberries, frozen Whole	Pound	7.80	1/4 cup cooked fruit, sugar added	12.9	
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Some *USDA Recipes for Child Care* will include food purchasing information for selected items. On the recipe, it is called a Marketing Guide for Selected Items. The Blueberry Muffin (A-03) recipe shows the amount of fresh blueberries needed to prepare the recipe, 9 ounces (over $\frac{1}{2}$ a pound) for 25 muffins and 1 pound 2 ounces for 50 muffins.

Download a copy of *The Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs* from the USDA Web site. Use this resource to make the most of your program food dollars.

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Breakfast Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Cooked oatmeal Apple juice Milk	English muffin Applesauce Milk	Blueberry Muffin A-03 ¹ Apricots Milk	Cooked farina Fruit cocktail Milk	Puffed corn cold cereal Orange juice Milk

Lunch Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Pizza in a Pocket F-04 ¹ Broccoli Peaches and yogurt Milk	Mexican-style Cornbread A-10 ¹ Vegetable Chili D-26 ¹ Orange smiles (½ circles) Milk	Tuna Salad Sandwich F-11 ¹ Carrot sticks Cherry Crisp B-10 ¹ Milk	Chicken Stir-Fry D-18 ¹ Brown rice Apple slices Milk	Beef Burrito D-21 ¹ Tossed salad Banana Milk

Snack Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Peanut butter on whole wheat bread ² Water ³	Yogurt dip ⁴ Cucumber and summer squash sticks Water ³	Hummus Whole wheat pita wedges Water ³	String cheese Crackers Water ³	Banana Muffin A-04 ¹ Milk

¹USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org.

²Sunflower butter can be substituted for peanut butter.

³Water is suggested as a beverage for all snacks even when other beverages are offered to encourage children to drink water.

⁴Season nonfat plain yogurt with a salt free herb mix to taste.

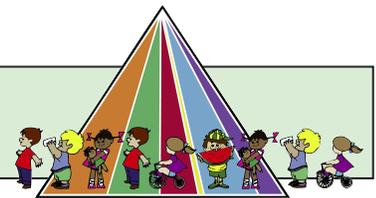
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Sources

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U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Nutrition Service, & National Food Service Management Institute. (2005). *USDA recipes for child care*. Retrieved June 27, 2008, from www.nfsmi.org

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