

Substituting Vegetables for Fruits at Breakfast

Q: What are the current requirements for substituting vegetables for fruits in school breakfasts?

A: Current regulations allow schools to substitute vegetables for fruits at breakfast, provided that the first two cups per week are from the dark green, red/orange, beans, peas & lentils, or other vegetable subgroups. However, in recent years, through Federal appropriations, Congress has provided schools the option to substitute any vegetable for fruits at breakfast, with no vegetable subgroup requirements.

Q: What are the changes in the final rule for substituting vegetables for fruits in school breakfasts?

A: The final rule continues to allow schools to substitute vegetables for fruits in the School Breakfast Program and simplifies the vegetable variety requirement:

- Schools choosing to offer vegetables at breakfast one day per school week have the option to offer a vegetable from any of the vegetable subgroups.*
- Schools choosing to substitute vegetables for fruits at breakfast on two or more days per school week are required to offer vegetables from at least two different subgroups.**

**Note: For school year 2024-2025, Congress has provided schools the option to offer any vegetables in place of fruits at breakfast (no subgroup requirements).*

Q: How was USDA responsive to stakeholder feedback when making these changes?

A: USDA received hundreds of comments on the proposal, and many commenters noted that the change would allow greater menu flexibility at breakfast in a way that is less restrictive compared to the current standard, achievable for program operators, and durable for the long term.

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Dietary Guidelines) note that for most individuals, following a healthy eating pattern will require an increase in total vegetable intake and an increase from all vegetable subgroups. The Dietary Guidelines note that starchy vegetables are more frequently consumed by children and adolescents than the red and orange; dark green; or beans, peas, and lentils vegetable subgroups, underscoring the importance of encouraging variety.