

Meat/Meat Alternates Basics

Meat

- Meat options include lean meat, poultry, or fish.
- The creditable quantity of meat/meat alternate must be the edible (cooked) portion.

Meat Alternates

- Meat alternates, such as cheese, eggs, yogurt, and nut butters may be used to meet all or a portion of the meat/meat alternate component.

Tofu and Soy Products

- Commercial tofu may be used to meet all or part of the meat/meat alternate component in accordance with CACFP requirements.
- Non-commercial and non-standardized tofu and soy products are not creditable.
- Commercial tofu must be easily recognized as a meat substitute. For example, tofu sausage (with a CN label) would credit as a meat substitute because it is easily recognized as a meat. However; tofu noodles would not credit as a meat substitute because it looks like a grain instead of a meat.
- Commercial tofu or soy products must contain 5 grams of protein per 2.2 ounces (1/4 cup) to equal 1 ounce of the meat/meat alternate.

Yogurt

- Yogurt may be plain or flavored, unsweetened or sweetened.
- Yogurt must contain no more than 23 grams of total sugars per 6 ounces.
- Non-commercial or non-standardized yogurt products are not creditable food items. Some common examples include frozen yogurt, drinkable yogurt products, homemade yogurt, yogurt bars, and yogurt covered fruits or nuts.
- For adults, yogurt may be used as a meat alternate only when it is not being used to meet the milk component in the same meal.

Beans and Peas (Legumes)

- Cooked dry beans and peas may be used to meet all or part of the meat/meat alternate component. Beans and peas include black beans, garbanzo beans, lentils, kidney beans, mature lima beans, navy beans, pinto beans, and split peas.
- Beans and peas may be credited as either a meat alternate or as a vegetable, but not as both in the same meal.

Nuts, Seeds, and Nut Butters

- For lunch and supper, nuts and seeds may be used to meet half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the meat/meat alternate component. They must be combined with other meat/meat alternates to meet the full requirement for a reimbursable meal.
- Nut and seed butters may be used to meet the entire meat/meat alternate requirement.
- Nut and seed meal or flour may be used only if they meet the requirements for alternate protein products.
- Acorns, chestnuts, and coconuts are non-creditable meat alternates because of their low protein and iron content.