

EMERGENCY MEAL SERVICE TOOLKIT

for

SCHOOL NUTRITION PROGRAMS

COVID-19



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Novel Coronavirus Disease 2019
(COVID-19) Emergency Meal Service Toolkit
USDA Child Nutrition Programs

LunchAssist Toolkit

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Dedicated to:

All of the child nutrition professionals who are working on the front lines of the COVID-19.

Disclaimer:

This resource was developed by school nutrition professionals based in the State of California. While much of the information will be relevant across the United States, regulations do vary state to state. Always refer to guidance from your State Agency.

Due to the nature of the COVID-19 outbreak, we cannot guarantee the accuracy of all information contained within this document. Please refer to the appropriate government agency for the most accurate and up to date information. If you are having a medical emergency, please dial 911.

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Policy

Several meal service waivers have been issued by the USDA as part of the COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act. The California Department of Education first released statewide waivers on March 9, 2020. A subsequent series of nationwide waivers have been released since that time. The nationwide waivers apply to all states, however individual State Agencies have specific guidance regarding the usage of each waiver. As always, contact your State Agency for exact guidance in your area.

The waivers apply to the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP), Seamless Summer Option (SSO), Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). Waiver authority does not apply to the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) or Special Milk Program. One Q&A has been issued to clarify flexibilities allowed for the FFVP during the COVID-19 outbreak.



1. Meal Times

Meals and snacks can be provided at times that best meet the needs of the community, even if the times are outside of federal guidelines. For example, all meals for the day could be provided at 10 a.m.



2. Non-Congregate Feeding

For the safety of the community and to support social distancing, all meals and snacks may be taken and consumed off-site.



3. Afterschool Activities

CACFP At-risk Afterschool and NSLP snack programs may serve supper and snack without educational or enrichment activities.



4. Meal Pattern

Meal flexibility is granted across all nutrition programs allowing meals to be served based on foods available. Each program must contact the State Agency to utilize this waiver.



5. Parent Meal Pick Up

Parents/Guardians are allowed to pick up meals for children.



6. CEP Application Deadlines

Deadlines for the SY 20-21 Community Eligibility Provision applications have been pushed back.



7. CACFP Monitoring

All CACFP facility reviews may be completed off-site. For existing CACFP facilities, only two facility reviews are required for SY 19-20, and only one of those needs to be unannounced. For new CACFP facilities, one review must be made during the first four weeks of operation.



8-9. SNP & CACFP Audits

All SY 19-20 CACFP and SNP Administrative Reviews may be completed by the State Agency through an off-site desk audit. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the SNP Administrative Review until SY 20-21.



10-11. SFSP Monitoring & Audits

Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) sponsors may complete monitoring requirements through an off-site desk audit. Sites who operate during normal summer operations (May-August) may postpone required site visits until summer 2020.



12. Claims Submission

Deadlines for submitting January and February 2020 claims have been extended 30 days.

COVID-19 WAIVERS & FLEXIBILITIES USDA Waivers #1-3 RELEASED MARCH 20, 2020	COVID-19 WAIVERS & FLEXIBILITIES USDA Waivers #4-6 RELEASED MARCH 25, 2020	COVID-19 WAIVERS & FLEXIBILITIES USDA Waivers #7-11 RELEASED MARCH 27, 2020	COVID-19 WAIVERS & FLEXIBILITIES USDA Waiver #12 RELEASED APRIL 5, 2020
<p>What You Need to Know:</p> <p>USDA issued 3 new waivers on Friday, March 20, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 3 waivers allow for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waiver #1: Meal Times</p> <p>USDA issued 1 new waiver on Friday, March 20, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 1 waiver allows for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waiver #2: Non-congregate Feeding</p> <p>USDA issued 1 new waiver on Friday, March 20, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 1 waiver allows for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waiver #3: After-school Activities</p> <p>USDA issued 1 new waiver on Friday, March 20, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 1 waiver allows for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p>	<p>What You Need to Know:</p> <p>USDA issued 3 new waivers on Thursday, March 25, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 3 waivers allow for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waiver #4: Meal Patterns</p> <p>USDA issued 1 new waiver on Thursday, March 25, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 1 waiver allows for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waiver #5: Parent Meal Pick-Up</p> <p>USDA issued 1 new waiver on Thursday, March 25, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 1 waiver allows for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waiver #6: CFP Application Deadlines</p> <p>USDA issued 1 new waiver on Thursday, March 25, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 1 waiver allows for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p>	<p>What You Need to Know:</p> <p>USDA issued 5 new waivers on Friday, March 27, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 5 waivers allow for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waiver #7: CACFP Monitoring</p> <p>USDA issued 1 new waiver on Friday, March 27, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 1 waiver allows for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waivers #8-9: SNP & CACFP Audits</p> <p>USDA issued 2 new waivers on Friday, March 27, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 2 waivers allow for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. 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The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p> <p>Waiver #12: Claims Submissions</p> <p>USDA issued 1 new waiver on Thursday, April 5, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The 1 waiver allows for the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak. The State Agency may also elect to postpone the completion of certain CACFP and SFSP activities during the period of the outbreak.</p>

[Click Here to Download the USDA Waiver Infographic & Policy Memos](#)

Additional Policy Guidance

USDA Nationwide Waiver Q&As

As of April 23rd, there are five Q&A documents addressing over 90 questions related to emergency feeding during the COVID-19 crisis. View the Q&A memos by clicking [here](#). Key takeaways include:

- Meal delivery to student homes is allowable in all child nutrition programs.
- Bulk foods are allowable. Foods do not have to be individually portioned, but specific instructions for easy preparation need to be provided. [Click here](#) to view a sample 5-day meal kit menu and instructions for serving bulk foods.
- Attendance records for CAFCP are not required, however, At-risk Afterschool Meal programs are still required to maintain daily meal counts.
- Equipment grants may be extended for a period of 12 months through the “no-cost extension”.
- Weekend and holiday meals are permitted for SSO and SFSP.

Statewide Area Eligibility Waiver

Most states also have an Area Eligibility waiver in place. This allows schools to serve meals under SSO and SFSP in areas that have less than 50% free and reduced price eligibility. COVID-19 waivers from USDA are listed by state. Nearly 50 states have the Area Eligibility waiver, however it is *not* a nationwide waiver.

Gather Information & Complete Emergency Checklist

Consult with your District/School Administration to determine the course of action for feeding during the COVID-19 outbreak. Outline clear expectations from the Nutrition Services Department by confirming the specific district, school, and meal service information.

- ☐ Complete the [Information Gathering](#) Worksheet (optional).
- ☐ Complete the [Emergency Checklist](#) Worksheet (optional).

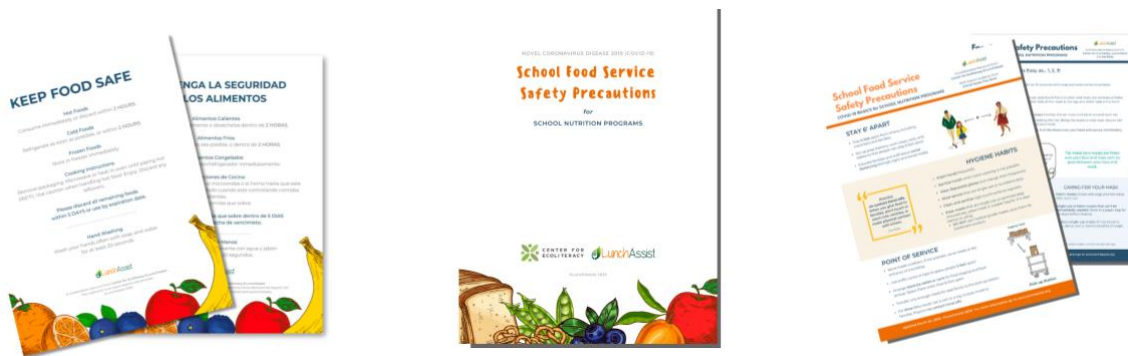
Join the Community!

LunchAssist is offering a free COVID-19 Membership to support child nutrition professionals during the COVID-19 outbreak. [Become a member for FREE](#) to receive training, support, guidance and inspiration for you and your team.

Visit the LunchAssist Website: lunchassist.org/covid-19

Protect Your Team and Others

Provide information for staff regarding food safety, how to protect themselves and others from the spread of COVID-19, and regulations surrounding privacy in employees' health information. Information on the resources below are based on current CDC guidance. Check the [CDC website](#) for the latest information.



COVID-19 Employee Safety Information

The [School Food Service Safety Precautions Guide](#) outlines best practices, safety precautions, and recommendations for school nutrition professionals during the COVID-19 outbreak. For easy-to-digest printable information, view the [Face Mask Tip Sheet](#) & [Safety Precautions Tip Sheet](#) (available in English & Spanish).

Social Distancing Cards

Design meal service and distribution methods to support social distancing. Download a deck of seven social distancing cards to support staff training [here](#) (available in English & Spanish).

Food Safety Cards

In order to reduce the risk of foodborne illness, practice food safety guidelines according to existing Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) food safety plans. Use our printable [Food Safety Cards](#) to share information with families on how to safely handle meals taken off-site (available in English & Spanish).

HIPAA & Privacy Protection

Employers need to take steps to keep employees' health information confidential at all times. Even if a staff member has a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, managers must still take steps to protect the privacy of employees within the guidelines of their local health department guidelines.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration Safety Requirements

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to take reasonable precautions to ensure employee safety and prohibits employers from placing their employees in situations likely to cause serious physical harm or death.

Meal Service Operations

All children 18 years of age or younger are eligible to receive meals, even if they do not attend the school where meals are being served. Per the Nationwide USDA Waiver #5, eligible children are not required to be present while their parents/guardians pick up the meals, however program accountability must be maintained in order to prevent duplicate meals or meals being served to adults without eligible children.

Food Production

Evaluate your district's production kitchens, storage areas, and serving sites to determine where food will be prepared during the emergency. Staff may be reallocated to a location that differs from their usual worksite. Food production may need to be set up in a multi-purpose room or larger space on campus to allow for social distancing between staff.

If storage space is limited, the delivery schedule may need to be changed to accommodate more frequent, smaller deliveries. Some districts may find it helpful to rent or borrow a refrigerated truck or a mobile freezer container for food storage, if needed.

Allowable Meals Types

Up to two meals, or one meal and one snack, per child, per day, may be reimbursed through SFSP or SSO. Meals for multiple days may be offered. For example, programs may elect to distribute five days' worth of meals on Mondays, to minimize exposure to between staff and families. In this case, each child may receive ten meals (two meals for each day).

In addition to the meals listed above, program operators serving at sites that were previously approved for At-risk Afterschool Meals (Supper) or the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) may also serve Supper and/or FFVP.

Meal Counting

Separate meal counts and records must be maintained for meals served under a COVID-19 waiver. Meal counts must be recorded at the time of service.

Update: As of April 2020, USDA approved several Area Eligibility Waivers allowing approved program operators to serve meals through the SFSP and SSO at non-area eligible locations. This enables approved sponsors to operate open SFSP or SSO meal sites at locations that do not meet fifty percent free and reduced-price threshold for area eligibility. Program operators who wish to operate an open SFSP or SSO meal site location in an area that does not meet the area eligibility guidelines must submit an SSO or SFSP to the state agency including a description outlining why their site will provide benefits for children during this time.

Individual students' information (names, PIN numbers, etc.) does not need to be recorded. Meal counts can be taken utilizing one of the following methods:

- Tally/toggle meal counts recorded on the [Daily Meal Count Form for COVID-19](#)
- Clicker meal counts recorded on a [Clicker Meal Count Form](#)
- California Daily Meal Count Form SNP25a (downloadable from CNIPS)
- Any other meal count form recommended by your state agency

Point of Service Options

Meals served during the COVID-19 outbreak may be unitized or served in bulk. Schools may offer meals in a variety of unique and innovative ways such as “grab n’ go,” “drive-thru,” or “curbside” meal service. Schools may also deliver to community locations, along bus routes, or directly to student homes. Multiple day meal services are also an option. All meal service options must support the ability for families to take meals with them to consume off-site. Refer to the [School Food Service Safety Precautions Guide](#) for details about how to safely implement specific guidelines for serving meals in accordance with social distancing guidelines.

Foods Served

Several types of foods can be served during emergency meal services. Hot, cold and/or shelf stable items may be offered. Frozen items that require heating are a great way to utilize existing inventory. Bulk foods can replace single servings, especially when foods are sent home for multiple days. Regardless of what foods are offered, consider providing food safety guidance to families as they take meals off-site, such as these printable [Food Safety Cards](#).

Schools may choose to offer primarily shelf-stable or cold items in order to support good food safety practices, mitigate waste and minimize staffing needs during a disaster. Individually wrapped (IW), pre-packaged items may further prevent the spread of germs, or reduce the risk of foodborne illness when meals are taken to be consumed off-site.

When serving hot meals during the COVID-19 outbreak, ensure adequate precautions are taken to prevent the risk of foodborne illness. Staff must be trained to follow all applicable hot-holding, meal transport, and time and temperature control procedures. Frozen items or ingredients requiring further heating and minimal preparation may be sent home with families to be prepared in their home kitchens.

Meals may be sent home for multiple days. For example, a school may decide to serve only one day per week but send families home with five breakfasts and five lunches so they have a full week’s worth of meals. A school could also serve two, three, or four days per week, sending extra meals home for the days they are not offering pick up meal services. In order to mitigate waste, consider sending items in bulk, rather than individual portions. Also be sure to include details on how the foods in the meal kit make individual meals and how to maintain proper food safety. Only include foods that require minimal preparation. For families that may not have access to cooking facilities or refrigeration, consider offering an alternative meal kit with shelf stable options.

When serving bulk meals, be sure to:

- Include required food components in the proper minimum amounts for each reimbursable meal claimed (unless a meal pattern waiver is in place);
- Provide menus with directions indicating with items and portion sizes to be used for each meal;
- Consider whether households have access to proper equipment such as refrigerators, stoves, and microwaves when providing food that requires storage and/or reheating; provide alternative options in cases where reheating or refrigeration is not possible;
- Provide foods that require minimal preparation and no additional chopping, mixing, baking, etc.
- Consider sending a sample menu and instructions such as the template available [here](#).

Home Delivery

Delivering meals to student homes is a great way to increase participation in the meal program, reach students in rural areas, and provide additional services to students with special needs. Prior to delivering to student homes, schools must obtain written consent from the household to determine the number of students requiring meals. From that point forward, meals may be delivered to and dropped at the front door. Parents and students do not need to be present for meals to be delivered.

Outreach to Families

Ensure families are informed about all meal service options. Consider communicating in multiple languages and formats. Suggested strategies include:

- Public announcements on radio or television
- Email campaigns
- Social media posts
- Automated phone calls and text messages
- Website announcements
- Newspaper notifications
- Community partner newsletters

Accommodating Children with Special Dietary Needs

Meals served during the COVID-19 outbreak must comply with relevant civil rights requirements, including documented requests to accommodate children with special dietary needs and the requirement for “And Justice For All” posters to be visible in all serving locations.

If possible, communicate with families in need of special dietary accommodations to make a plan for when and where they will pick up special meals. In addition, consider keeping a supply of items in stock at each feeding location. An extra supply of these items may be useful for accommodating students that have a documented special dietary need and unexpectedly arrive for meal service. You may also consider home delivery of meals for students with special needs.

Special Diet Supplies:

Dietary Need	Lactose Intolerance	Gluten Intolerance	Dairy Allergy	Nut Allergy	Fructose Malabsorption
Recommended Supplies	Lactose-free milk	Rice Chex Cheerios Corn Tortillas Dry brown rice	Compliant Soy Milk Hummus* *in lieu of cheese items	Sunbutter Sunflower seeds	Cheerios Unflavored milk Oranges

Program Monitoring

Site monitoring and facility reviews for SSO, SFSP, and CACFP meal services continue to be required, however forms may be completed via desk review. Directors do not need to go to the site in person to complete monitoring requirements.

Menu Planning & Production

Schools must follow the SSO meal pattern, unless they have been approved to operate under SFSP. For Supper, follow the applicable CACFP meal pattern.

Update: The Nationwide USDA Meal Pattern Flexibility Waiver #4 allows schools to apply flexibility in meeting the meal pattern requirements. Schools that have submitted a meal pattern flexibility waiver may be reimbursed for meals that do not meet the meal pattern requirements. We **highly recommend** that every program file for the Meal Pattern Flexibility Waiver #4, especially in order to avoid the vegetable subgroups which are particularly challenging to meet during this time. Each program must contact their State Agency to utilize this waiver.

Seamless Summer Option

Emergency menus under the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) may follow a weekly menu that is planned according to the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program HRFKA meal patterns. The menu may follow the meal pattern requirements for a single age/grade group if the SNP 39 form is on file. This is a standard flexibility that is available every summer in order to increase the ability of programs to feed participants of all ages more easily, while still meeting the meal pattern requirements. We are recommending that all schools serving under the SSO plan menus according to the K-5 age/grade groups for breakfast and lunch.

Offer versus Serve is *not* allowed during the COVID-19 outbreak. All meals must include all required components in the minimum required amounts unless a meal pattern waiver is on file (highly recommended). If a meal pattern waiver is on file, then there is greater flexibility in meeting the meal pattern requirements. The Seamless Summer Option follows the same meal pattern as NSLP and SBP:

Daily K-5 Breakfast Meal Pattern:

- Fruit or Vegetable: 1 cup
- Grains: 1 oz eq
- Milk: 1 cup

Daily K-5 Lunch Meal Pattern:

- Fruit: ½ cup
- Vegetable: ¾ cup including vegetable subgroup requirements
- Grains: 1 oz eq
- Meat/Meat Alternates: 1 oz eq
- Milk: 1 cup

Additional information on the SSO Meal Pattern, including weekly requirements and vegetable subgroups, may be found on the [CDE website](#).

Summer Food Service Program

If an SFA has participated in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) at any time during the current year, or in either of the two previous calendar years, then the State Agency may approve their waiver request to operate meal services during the COVID-19 outbreak under SFSP. SFSP allows for higher reimbursement and a more simplified menu planning option.

The SFSP has a unique meal pattern. There are no weekly requirements, subgroups, or whole grain requirements, and there is only one age/grade group.

Daily Breakfast Meal Pattern:

- Fruit: ½ cup
- Grains: 1 oz eq
- Milk: 1 cup

Daily Lunch Meal Pattern:

- Fruit or Vegetable: ¾ cup
- Grains: 1 oz eq
- Meat/Meat Alternates: 1 oz eq
- Milk: 1 cup 1 oz eq grain

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At-risk Afterschool Meals, also known as the “Supper Program”, allows schools to provide an additional meal in the afternoon during scheduled enrichment activities. During the COVID-19 outbreak, Supper meals may be provided during non-congregate feeding without the need for enrichment activities (see [Waiver #3](#)). Enrollment rosters do not need to be recorded, however meal counts must be taken. The meal pattern is listed below, however as in the other child nutrition programs, a meal pattern waiver may be filed in order to assist schools experiencing difficulty meeting the meal pattern requirements.

Daily Supper Meal Pattern Ages 6-18:

- Fruit: ¼ cup
- Vegetable: ½ cup
- Grain: 1 oz eq
- Meat/Meat Alternative: 2 oz eq
- Milk: 8 fl oz eq

More information on the CACFP meal pattern can be found [here](#).

Menu Production Records

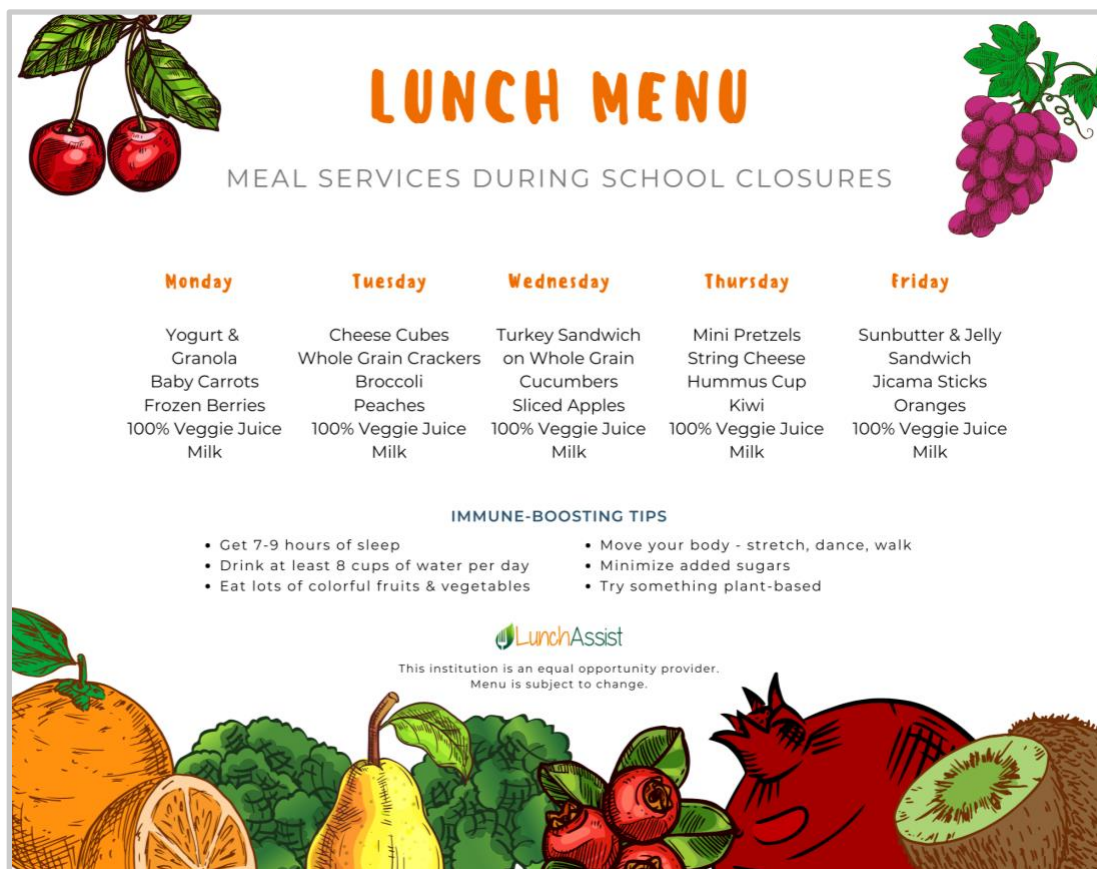
Menu production records are required during the COVID-19 outbreak meal service. All food items served must be recorded for each meal served. Generate Menu Production Records (MPR) for staff to use during the closure.

- ☐ This [Blank Emergency Menu MPR](#) can be filled out electronically or completed by hand.

Menu production records must be completed for each meal served, even when meals are sent home for multiple days. Keep these on record, along with temperature logs and other relevant paperwork for a period of three years past the current school year.


Sample Menus and Menu Templates

The menus below are 5-day sample lunch and breakfast menus that comply with the Seamless Summer Option K-5 meal pattern for use during the COVID-19 outbreak meal service with a meal pattern waiver in place.




[Click HERE to Download Blank 5-Day Emergency Menu Templates](#)

To download a **Sample 5-Day Meal Kit with Bulk Menu Items**, click [here](#).



BREAKFAST MENU


MEAL SERVICES DURING SCHOOL CLOSURES




Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Banana Bread Watermelon Milk	Muffin Banana Milk	Scone Strawberries Milk	Cereal Tangerine Cuties Milk	Oatmeal Pear Milk

SLEEP RECOMMENDATIONS BY AGE

<p>Infants 4-12 mo: 12-16 hours</p> <p>Children 1-2: 11-14 hours</p> <p>Children 3-5: 10-13 hours</p>	<p>Children 6-12: 6-12 hours</p> <p>Teenagers 13-18: 8-10 hours</p> <p><small>Source: American Academy of Pediatrics</small></p>
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 This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
 Menu is subject to change.



[Click HERE to Download Blank 5-Day Emergency Menu Templates](#)

To download a **Sample 5-Day Meal Kit with Bulk Menu Items**, click [here](#).

References and More Resources

Please visit the LunchAssist website for a list of policy references and memos, which are being updated regularly during this time. New resources are being added daily.

LunchAssist

lunchassist.org/covid-19

California Department of Education Nutrition Services Division

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/schoolmeals.asp>

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/nu/nutritionwhatsnew.asp>

United States Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/programs>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19>

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/disaster/pandemic/covid-19/cn-waivers-flexibilities>

<https://www.usda.gov/>