



## Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains in the CACFP Training Questions and Answers



Updated resources: CACFP meal pattern, meal requirements calculator, and grains charts are found under [Guidance Memorandum 12](#).

Additional webinars: *Feeding Infants Using Oz. Eq. for Grains*, *Determining Oz. Eq. in Recipes*, and *Single Serving Packages* are found in the Ounce Equivalents (oz. eq) for Grains section under [Guidance Memorandum 12](#).

### 1. Are the serving size charts still accurate?

The meal pattern charts have been updated with serving sizes in oz. eq. If you created a serving size guide for staff to refer to when serving grain items, you should verify that serving sizes still meet the amount required to be served when using ounce equivalents. For most grain items, the amount that needs to be served will not change. However, one item that will have different serving sizes are cereals.

### 2. Will I have to buy all new products to be in compliance with the new oz eq requirements?

No, the change from the previous serving sizes to oz eq is not that big of a change. We recommend looking at the grains you currently serve and compare them to [Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains](#) handout or the DPI [CACFP Grains Chart](#) (CCI component)/[CACFP Grains Chart - ADC](#) to see if what you are serving still meets the required serving sizes. More than likely, you will not have to make any major changes and the change to oz eq should not be a burden on your program.

### 3. Which grains chart should I use, the one from USDA or the DPI one?

You may use either one. The DPI [CACFP Grains Chart](#) (CCI component) or [CACFP Grains Chart - ADC](#) is only 2 pages long and there is a separate one for the child care and adult care components. So, if you only operate one of those components, it would probably be easier to just use the DPI Grains Chart for the applicable component. The [Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains](#) handout is 6-pages long and provides instructions on how to measure and weigh products in order to compare them to the chart. Both can be found under GM 12.

### 4. Are ounce equivalents required to be used for infants too?

Yes. Oz eq for grains will be required for the infant meal pattern as well. We have a recorded webinar that goes through the updated resources for infants. It can be found in the Ounce Equivalents for Grains section under [Guidance Memorandum 12](#).

### 5. Is popcorn creditable now? I noticed it on the grains chart.

Yes! Popcorn is creditable and is a whole grain rich item. However, the amount of popcorn required to meet the minimum serving size for the grain component may be too much for young children; therefore, programs may want to serve popcorn with another creditable grain, for example serve popcorn in a trail mix with pretzels and cereal for a snack. Refer to the [New Creditable Foods for CACFP](#) handout for additional information.

**6. Can popcorn be store-bought?**

Yes.

**7. What kind of popcorn can you serve?**

Plain and cheese popcorns are creditable. Toppings such as salt, cheese, and butter may be used, but programs are encouraged to limit the use of toppings. Encourage healthier toppings such as herb blends or serve fresh, plain popcorn. Caramel corn and kettle corn are considered grain-based desserts and cannot be served as a creditable component.

**8. Is puff corn the same as popcorn?**

No, Corn puffs or Puff Corn is not the same as popcorn. Puff Corn is a snack type item. The ingredients of Puff Corn are Degerminated Yellow Corn Meal, oil, and salt. This item is not creditable because it is not made with whole grains, enriched grains, and it is not fortified.

**9. Is popcorn only to be served to children ages 4 and up?**

In the CACFP, there are no specific rules regarding when popcorn can and cannot be served due to choking. With all foods, to prevent the risk of choking, program operators must consider the developmental readiness of children and the ability of disabled or older adults to swallow safely when deciding whether to offer foods, including popcorn. This consideration is especially important for program operators that serve young children.

**10. Are we able to serve granola bars?**

No. Granola bars are a grain-based dessert. Similar items such as cereal bars, breakfast bars, and marshmallow cereal treats are also grain-based desserts and cannot be served to meet the grain component.

**11. Can we serve French toast and chocolate chip flavored bagels or bagels with raisins? Or are they considered grain desserts?**

French toast and bagels, including flavored bagels such as chocolate chip flavored bagels or cinnamon raisin bagels, are not grain based desserts and may be served.

**12. If you are looking at serving a bagel or English muffin, most people will cut it into fourths, but with a top and bottom that is really 8 pieces. Is the 1/4 piece that is required to be served considered top and bottom together, or only one layer?**

When determining the serving size for a bagel or English muffin, the whole entire item is taken into consideration, so the 1/4 piece is the top and bottom half together.

**13. Questions about homemade items, such as pancakes:**

**We make homemade pancakes, and we typically use measuring cups to scoop the mix onto the griddle, so how does this change with the new requirements?**

**When making homemade pancakes, do pancakes need to be weighed to make sure the correct amounts are served?**

**Since homemade items often vary in size, do programs have to weigh each item for each size or do they take an average?**

To determine ounce equivalents of homemade items, such as pancakes, muffins, quick bread, etc., you will either need to weigh the item and compare the weight to the size in the [Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains](#) handout or DPI [CACFP Grains Chart](#) (CCI component)/ [CACFP Grains Chart – ADC](#), or follow steps to determine the ounce equivalents of grains in the recipe to know how many ounce equivalents are in a serving. You do not need to weigh the item or do a recipe analysis each time you serve the item as long as each time you make the item the size of the item is the same (ex. each time you make pancakes you make 4” pancakes).

**14. When is the training on homemade items?**

There is no live training for determining ounce equivalents in recipes. There is a recorded webinar on this topic. It can be found in the Ounce Equivalents for Grains section under [Guidance Memorandum 12](#).

**15. Are recipes acceptable documentation to support meal service?**

Recipes are acceptable documentation for homemade meals. When using a recipe, you can refer to the recipe on the production record for the components the recipe is contributing to. The recipe must include the amount of ingredients used, serving sizes, and number of servings per recipe so it can be determined that meal pattern requirements have been met.

**16. For a dish containing pasta and chicken for example, how do we make sure we are serving the correct amount of both components?**

If preparing the pasta and chicken separately, serve the minimum required amount of pasta to each participant, and then the required amount of chicken; participants can then mix the items together. When preparing a mixed dish such as a casserole, you need to have a recipe that provides the amount of ingredients used, serving sizes, and number of servings per recipe so it can be determined that meal pattern requirements have been met. There are many CACFP standardized recipes that include contribution information to the CACFP meal pattern. Here are links to some websites with standardized recipes:

- [Institute of Child Nutrition \(ICN\) Recipe Box](#)
- [Team Nutrition Recipes](#)
- [CACFP Recipes for Child Care Homes and Adult Day Care](#)

**17. What if you buy bulk crackers that come in 2lb bags with 6 bags per case? There is not a nutrition label on the box. How would I know how much to serve to 100 1–5-year-olds?**

All food items must have a nutrition facts label. If it is not on the box, contact your distributor to get the production information sheet.

**18. What cereals are considered "puffed"?**

Kix was mentioned in the training as being a puffed cereal. Other puffed cereals include Chex Cereal (Corn, Rice, Wheat), Crispix, Crispy Rice, Rice Krispies, and Life. For a list of other cereals for each type of cereal, refer to the Cereal Types handout under the Grains section of [Guidance Memorandum 12](#).

**19. How do I figure the amount needed for Mini Shredded Wheat Squares?**

Shredded wheat is considered a flake cereal. For a list of other cereal examples for each type of cereal, refer to the Cereal Types handout under the Grains section of [Guidance Memorandum 12](#). This handout also lists the minimum amounts to serve to each age group.

**20. Where do you get the app to put in numbers to calculate grain amounts on the computer?**

The Grains Calculator is part of the [Meal Requirements Calculator](#), which is an excel document.

**21. How do I prove that we are doing this? Do I need to keep any information on file for oz. eq.?**

You do not need to keep information on file for single component grain products to show ounce equivalents. However, you still must maintain product labels to show that cereals meet the sugar limit thresholds and grains served as the whole grain rich item meet whole grain rich criteria.

**22. When serving chicken nuggets or chicken patties, the CN label usually says 'x' amount of meat/meat alternate and 'x' amount of oz equivalent of grain. Should we consider those oz equivalents when menu planning and not serve too much grain if we also serve a noodle or bread.**

When a combination food contributes to the grain component you can serve the item to meet the grain component provided there is enough grain to meet the minimum ounce equivalent requirements per the meal pattern. You can serve just that food for the grains component or choose to serve an additional grain item, for example a bun along with a chicken patty.

Processed combination foods still require a Product Formulation Statement (PFS) or Child Nutrition (CN) Label to credit these foods. The PFS or CN label includes the portion sizes for meat/meat alternates, fruits, vegetables, and grains. Most of the time, these portion sizes for grains will already be in ounce equivalents. If the CN label still says "bread or bread/alternate" you may have an old label, so you will need to get an updated label on file.

**23. Are pita rounds the same as pita flat bread? Can we just cut the flat bread?**

Yes, pita rounds and pita flat bread are similar, and you must compare either one to the nutrition facts label to make sure they weigh the same or more than the size in the [Using Ounce Equivalents for Grains](#) handout or DPI [CACFP Grains Chart](#) (CCI component)/[CACFP Grains Chart – ADC](#).

**24. Questions about menu documentation:**

**How should this information be documented on the menu? Do we need to list the ounce equivalent, or can it just say 1 each, 1/2 each, etc.?**

**On our menu, how do you want the serving amounts for grains listed? We currently list it as 0.5 oz. Do you want the amount listed in grains or 1/2 oz. eq.?**

Amounts of food served do not need to be listed on the menu. However, if your agency chooses to do so, you can document ounce equivalents as either 0.5 oz eq or ½ oz. eq.

**25. On the production record do we show oz. for the amount prepared?**

No, total ounce equivalents do not have to be recorded on the production record. When documenting amounts prepared for grain items, record the total quantity of packages used and size of the package, for example '5 - 14 oz. boxes.' Just make sure items served meet the oz eq requirement.

**26. Is serving the participating adults an adult serving size a new thing; I was under the impression they got the same serving size as children?**

In the CACFP there is a Child Care component and an Adult Care component, which is for Adult Daycare Centers. There is a separate meal pattern for Adult Daycare Centers with specific minimum serving sizes that must be provided to participating adults. In a child care centers, program adults such as teachers often eat with the children during the meal service. When they do, the child serving size can be used.

**27. Do I have to count out the number of each item I need to serve to a participant at every meal and snack? For example, 20 crackers?**

The best way to measure out foods, such as small crackers, is to place the number of crackers in a measuring cup. For example, according to the CACFP Grains Chart, 21 goldfish crackers (the serving size for 1-5 year olds) is 1/4 cup, so you can measure 1/4 cup of goldfish to each child. If you serve single-serving packages of grains, we recommend you watch the USDA webinar on crediting single serving packages of grains to learn about how those items credit as oz. eq.