When students return to school in the fall, their lunch trays will look a little different. That’s because new U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) guidelines will be in place to help students make even healthier food choices in the school cafeteria.

Now it’s easier than ever to get a well balanced, nutritious breakfast and lunch at school. With a combination of new portion sizes and new menu offerings, we’re setting the table for healthier meals with an abundant harvest of fruits and vegetables, many of them locally grown.

Highlights of the new USDA nutrition standards include:
• More fruits and vegetables
• Meals with fewer calories, less fat and less sodium
• Leaner proteins, with more meat-free alternatives
• Right-sized portions of more satisfying foods

The most noticeable changes students will see at school include: greater focus on fruits and vegetables, fewer starch offerings (including rice and bread), and tighter rules about individual serving sizes.

Do you have questions about these changes? Send us a note at nacs@spps.org or call us at 651-603-4950 to share your thoughts. You can read more about the new USDA nutrition standards at ns.spps.org.

Meet Mr. Xiong, a local farmer who grows the food we serve in cafeterias across the district as part of our Farm to School program. Did you know that we offer more than 18 locally grown fruits and vegetables when in season?

For students with food allergies or sensitivities, we have made it easy to find the ingredients in each menu item. Look for these allergen symbols to find out which foods contain the top eight allergens so you can create a plan to help meet any student’s special dietary needs.

For more information go to ns.spps.org or contact your school nurse or cafeteria supervisor.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What do the new USDA school meal guidelines mean for parents?
The new guidelines dictate minimum and maximum calorie ranges (which vary by grade level), more fruits and vegetables, fewer starches and proteins, and a new requirement that students must take at least one fruit or vegetable at lunch.

What are the new calorie restrictions?
Calorie restrictions vary by grade level. Students in grades K-5 are allowed a maximum of 500 calories per breakfast and 650 calories per lunch meal. Students in grades 6-8 are allowed up to 550 calories for breakfast and 700 calories for lunch. Students in grades 9-12 are allowed up to 600 calories for breakfast and 850 calories for lunch.

Why do some students pay higher prices than other students?
Prices are based on portion sizes as planned and as taken by students. For example, students in higher grades may see larger portions of menu items such as pizza, spaghetti, chicken drumsticks and quesadillas, based on total calories per meal.

Will students still be offered extra bread and rice every day?
No. Part of the new USDA guidelines is a restriction on the maximum amount of grain-based starches the district can provide each day. However, single servings of bread and/or rice will still be available as part of certain meals, and students are able to eat their fill of fruits and vegetables from the Choice Bar.

What if students are still hungry after school?
The new USDA guidelines restrict the amount of calories, bread and protein that can be offered. Encourage your child to fill up on healthy “extras” like fruits and vegetables from the Choice Bar, and eat everything on his or her tray.

How can I encourage my child to eat more fruits and vegetables?
You can do a lot to help your children develop healthy habits for life by providing and eating healthy meals and snacks. For example, don’t just tell your children to eat their vegetables – show them that you eat and enjoy them too.

WHAT’S COOKING FOR BREAKFAST?

Superintendent Valeria S. Silva enjoys a healthy breakfast with summer school students at Washington Technology Magnet. Did you know that all of our schools offer free breakfast for students?

DON’T GO HUNGRY:
CHECK OUT THE CHOICE BAR

Ready for some more color at lunchtime? Don’t forget – you can fill up on healthy foods every day at the Choice Bar. New USDA recommendations encourage kids to fill at least half their school lunch trays with fruits and vegetables.

ONE THING I LOVE... ABOUT SPPS

“The multiple cultures that not only are represented by students but in the lunches too!”
Zachary, Student,
Washington Technology Magnet

“The taco bar is amazing; just pile as many toppings as you want on your tray and then dig in!”
Mason, Student,
Central High School

“The food at Saint Paul Public Schools is a cut above other school fare. I was pleasantly surprised to find so many quality food choices.”
John, Parent

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