

School Lunch: Good for Kids and Good for Your Wallet



As the cost of everything increases – there is one meal that is still a great value: both nutritionally and economically! School lunch is still an incredible bargain at \$2.50/\$2.75/\$3.00 at our elementary/middle/high schools.

Every School Lunch Includes Five Great Choices:

- Milk – Fat free or 1% - flavored or regular
- Vegetables – From green beans to fresh carrots
- Fruit – Everything from pineapple to locally grown apples; and fresh fruit is always available
- Grains – More whole grain items like rolls or pizza crust
- Meat or meat alternate –White meat chicken, low fat cheese, lean beef

Every School in Offers at least three different Entree Choices:

- Entrée of the day
- Smucker's Uncrustable sandwich
- Sandwich Selection
- Grab bag (Reduced Sugar cereal, Low Fat yogurt, & cheese stick)

Save Money: Eat School Lunch

- On average it costs less to buy a school lunch than to bring a lunch from home.
- The estimated national average of a school lunch from home was \$3.43 last school year.¹

School Lunch vs. Bagged Lunch

\$2.08 \$3.43

(comparison of national averages)

There *is* Such a Thing as a Free Lunch (and a Reduced Price One Too)

- All children may purchase meals through the National School Lunch Program (NSLP).
- Families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level are eligible for free meals.

- Families with incomes between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level are eligible for reduced-price meals; these students can be charged no more than 40 cents.
- Contact your school's office or the student nutrition department at 610.359.4275 to obtain a school meal application.



Healthy Meals Feed Eager Minds

- Meals served under the NSLP must meet nutrition guidelines based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- No more than 30% of calories can come from fat and less than 10% from saturated fat.
- School lunches provide one-third of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, iron, calcium and calories over the course of one week of menus.
- Students who eat school lunches consume less calories from fat than students who bring lunch from home.
- Compared to lunches from home, school lunches contain:
 - Three times as many dairy products
 - Twice as much fruit
 - Seven time the vegetable amounts
- NSLP participants have substantially lower intakes of added sugars than do non-participants.

For more local information contact your district's Food Service Director, Eileen M. Bellew, MA., RD., LDN at 610.359.4275.

¹ According to a meal cost analysis by Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SNS of Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI