

Dietary Specification Assessment Tool (DSAT): Resources and Technical Assistance

The Dietary Specifications Assessment Tool (DSAT) is utilized to help assess the risk for violations to dietary specifications including levels of calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat and sodium. Recommend the SFA review responses to the DSAT questions while reviewing this technical assistance.

For additional information on dietary specifications, program regulations and nutrition standards view resources at the following link: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/nutrition-standards-school-meals>.

Dietary Specifications Online Training Module available here:
<https://mdoe.state.mi.us/GEMS/training/vhhj8ltg/presentation.html>.

1. Product specifications should be considered when purchasing menu items and condiments to limit Saturated fat, sodium and Trans Fat.
Bid documents should include a request for information on the levels of saturated fat, calories, sodium and trans-fat in food items. This nutritional specification information should be reviewed prior to purchasing foods/ingredients to be used in School Meals. Refer to USDA's Tools for Schools on Procurement: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/healthierschoolday/tools-schools#Procurement>.
2. Only low-fat (1 percent milk fat or less, unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored or flavored) milk and milk products should be used for student consumption and in menu recipes. This includes yogurt and cottage cheese. Only low-fat (1 percent milk fat or less, unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored or flavored) milk should be used for student consumption and in menu recipes.
3. Same as 2.
4. Cheese (all varieties including reduced fat) should be controlled by placing items in portion cups, portion controlled packaging or the use of appropriate serving size utensils to limit portion size allowed per meal. This includes cheese offered on salad bars.
Uncontrolled portions of cheese will affect dietary specifications. Students should not be free to take unlimited amounts of cheese (all varieties including reduced fat). Use of portion cups, individual portion controlled packets, or the use of appropriate serving size utensils is encouraged to limit the portion size of cheese selected per meal.
5. Non-creditable cheese products should not be offered as part of a reimbursable meal (Non-creditable cheese includes: cheese sauce without a CN label, cheese product, imitation cheese and powdered cheese). SFA should evaluate product labels and compare with the Food Buying Guide to ensure correct cheese products are purchased. Following is a link to the food buying guide: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/food-buying-guide-school-meal-programs>.
6. Reduced-fat, low fat, fat-free mayonnaise, sour cream, and/or salad dressings should be offered instead of full-fat varieties. Review product labels to ensure reduced fat, low-fat, and fat-free items are being used.
7. Product labels must be reviewed to ensure reduced/low sodium food items are being used. This includes: soups, broths, canned vegetables and other items.
8. Same as 7.
9. SFA should examine product labels to ensure reduced fat, low-fat, and fat-free items are being used. Recommend SFA eliminate or limit items high in sodium and saturated fat from menu (including bacon, bacon bits, pepperoni, chow mein noodles, pickles, olives, packaged crackers and/or

croutons from food and/or salad bars). Consider replacing these items with low-fat, low sodium items. Bacon, bacon bits, pepperoni, chow mein noodles, pickles, olives, packaged crackers and/or croutons should be available to students rarely or never.

10. Same as 9.
11. Canned fruits should be packed in water, fruit juice, or light syrup.
12. Grain-based desserts such as doughnuts, pastries, cakes, and cookies must be limited to 2 oz. eq. per week or less for LUNCH. Refer to Exhibit A - Whole Grain-Rich Oz Eq Requirements for School Meal Programs at the following link: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/WholeGrainResource.pdf>. Recommend SFA to check nutrition facts labels and ingredients lists to determine if products are considered grain based desserts.
13. Same as 12.
14. Other seasonings, such as herbs and spices, should be substituted for salt.
15. Oil should be used in recipes, rather than shortening, margarine, or butter.
16. Fat should be drained from browned meats and poultry and/or fat is skimmed from broths, soups, stews, or gravies and/or skin is removed from poultry or skinless poultry is used.
17. A deep fat fryer should not be used on-site to prepare school meal items.
18. Butter or margarine should not be added to breads and/or vegetables prior to serving.
19. Standardized recipes should be followed: all ingredients must be weighed or measured with standardized weight or measuring utensils. For standardized recipe assistance see the USDA Mixing Bowl at the following link: <http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/>. Recommend staff receive training about standardized recipes.
20. Meal pattern for appropriate age/grade groups must be used for menu planning, including the meal patterns and serving sizes.
21. Extra, non-reimbursable food items (e.g. potato chips, ice cream, pudding and/or gelatin) should not be offered on the menu or offered rarely.
22. Uncontrolled usage of condiments will affect dietary specifications. Students should not be free to take unlimited amounts of condiments. Use of portion cups, individual portion controlled packets, or the use of appropriate serving size utensils is encouraged to limit the portion size of condiments allowed per meal.
23. Students should not have access to unlimited amounts of butter and/or margarine. Added fats will affect dietary specifications. Recommend limiting amounts allowed.
24. Students should not have access to unlimited amounts of salt. Recommend limiting access and amount of salt allowed. Uncontrolled usage of salt will affect dietary specifications.
25. Second portions or larger portions cannot be served, since this affects the dietary specifications. Second portions purchased as an a la carte item is not counted in determining compliance with dietary specifications. Suggestion: if students appear to want more food to eat, the school may want to consider allowing unlimited trips to the salad bar, if the items on the salad bar will not affect dietary specifications.