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FISCAL YEAR 2012
CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM
OPERATIONAL MEMORANDUM #22

TO: Child and Adult Care Food Program Institutions

FROM: Kyle L. Guerrant, Director K.G. 7-27-12
Office of School Support Services

DATE: July 27, 2012

SUBJECT: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs

Attached is the revision of the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) guidance on crediting of fruit smoothies in Child Nutrition (CN) Programs from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The memorandum released on July 11, 2012, focuses on the service of smoothies in the school meals programs but is applicable across all CN Programs.

If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, contact the Child and Adult Care Food Program office at 517-373-7391.

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DATE: July 11, 2012

MEMO CODE: SP 36-2012, CACFP 17-2012, SFSP 13-2012

SUBJECT: Smoothies Offered in Child Nutrition Programs

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

State Directors
Child Nutrition Programs
All States

This memorandum revises the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) guidance on crediting of fruit smoothies in Child Nutrition (CN) Programs. The memorandum focuses on the service of smoothies in the school meals programs but is applicable across all CN Programs.

Previously, FNS has not permitted fruit smoothies to contribute toward the milk requirements at breakfast. This crediting policy has been based on the premise that service of recognizable forms of food supports the educational aspects of the meal programs and simplifies program operation. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* emphasize that the majority of the fruit recommended should come from whole fruits, including fresh, canned, frozen, and dried forms, rather than from juice. When juices are consumed, 100% juice should be encouraged. However, there has been increased usage and identification of smoothies as a recognizable food item and in many cases, a healthful food option, particularly at breakfast and other meals and snacks as well.

Therefore, the guidance below provides school food authorities (SFAs) and other program operators with clarification on how smoothies may be offered at any meal served under CN Programs.

1. Can smoothies be offered to meet the fluid milk, meat/meat alternate, vegetable, fruit, and grain components?

Milk and fruit can be credited in smoothies prepared by program operators to meet meal pattern requirements for any meal served under CN Programs. Vegetables cannot be credited in a smoothie. Grains and meat/meat alternates (including yogurt) may not be credited when served as a beverage.

2. Can program operators blend smoothies before the point of sale such as in a satellite kitchen?

Yes. Blending after the point of sale is not a requirement; smoothies can be served directly from the service line.

3. Can smoothies include grain such as oatmeal and meat/meat alternates such as peanut butter and yogurt to improve flavor and consistency even though these ingredients in smoothies do not contribute to meal pattern requirements?

Yes. However, even though these extra ingredients in smoothies don't contribute to meal pattern requirements, the grain and meat/meat alternate components added in smoothies must be counted in the weekly minimum and maximum range tabulation for schools when offered in amounts greater than or equal to 0.25 oz equivalents. Program operators need to be aware of how these extra ingredients may impact calories and saturated fat.

4. Do smoothies have to include the full milk and fruit component if served?

No. Smoothies do not have to contain the full 1 cup fluid milk and full fruit requirement. However, program operators must always make certain that all components are offered in the required quantities to meet meal pattern requirements.

5. What type of milk must be used when making smoothies?

The types of milk used in smoothies must be consistent with CN Program guidance for the types of fluid milk acceptable for the specific program and age group being served. For school meal programs and Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) the types of milk include low-fat (1 percent milk fat or less, unflavored) or fat-free (unflavored or flavored).

6. How does pureed fruit credit toward the meal pattern requirement?

The volume of pureed fruit included in a beverage can be counted as juice toward the daily and weekly fruit requirements. Program operators must limit the amount of juice offered to children to half (50%) of the weekly fruit offerings in school meals and no more than half (50%) of the daily fruit/vegetable component at lunch in the CACFP. Pureed fruit included in a beverage may be counted as the entire daily fruit/vegetable component at breakfast in the CACFP. However, at snack, a smoothie is not creditable as juice and milk cannot be served at the same snack unless a third creditable component is served. Juice and pureed fruit in beverages must be included in this calculation.

Additionally, crediting of fruit is determined on a volume as served basis. The Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs currently has yield information for pureed blackberries, figs, guava, papaya, plums, and raspberries; we anticipate adding more fruits as we update the fruit section of the buying guide. Currently, for other fruits, program operators should determine crediting based on volume of fruit AFTER pureeing. For example, program operators may determine the volume of blueberry puree obtained from one cup of whole blueberries by separately pureeing the blueberries and recording the resulting amount of puree. For crediting of commercially prepared smoothies, see question 9.

Only pureed fruit in beverages count as juice towards meal pattern requirements.

7. When smoothies are offered during a meal, does additional fruit and milk need to be offered?

When smoothies are offered on the serving line in the school meal programs, the fluid milk component must also be offered on the serving line in the required quantity to meet the meal requirements. This is necessary in order to meet the requirement to offer a variety of milk options for the school meal programs. FNS also strongly encourages program operators to offer additional fruit options for children. This promotes variety and may assist in increasing offerings for Offer Versus Serve purposes and would allow a child that does not take a smoothie the option to select a fruit.

8. How do I identify the food components in the smoothie to students?

Consistent with the nutrition standards for school meal regulations, SFAs must identify the food components offered to students and smoothies are subject to this same requirement. Schools serving smoothies should inform students about the components by listing the smoothie as a fruit and milk smoothie, for example, on the serving line. SFAs should consult with State agencies if they have any questions regarding methods of identification that are appropriate and sufficient.

9. How do commercially prepared smoothies credit toward meal pattern requirements?

Commercially prepared smoothies may only credit toward the fruit component. Prepackaged smoothies do not comply with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standard of identity for "milk," and ***do not*** *meet the CN Program requirements for "fluid milk." When these products contain "milk," they may be labeled as "dairy beverage" or "dairy drink." Therefore, milk in a commercially prepared smoothie does not credit.*

Prepackaged smoothies do not have a Federal standard of identity, which means that product formulation and labeling can vary widely. Some frozen fruit products may be labeled as "fruit smoothie" even though they may actually meet the Federal standard of identity for Frozen Desserts that do not qualify for contributing to the reimbursable meal as fruit. Fruit purees made into a beverage may or may not have "smoothie" in the product name. However, the product label should include a statement regarding the "percent juice content" required by the FDA for beverages made with fruit puree. An eight fluid ounce smoothie beverage made from fruit puree with the juice content labeled as "contains 50% juice" would credit as 4.0 fluid ounces or ½ cup of juice for example. The volume of pureed fruit included in the commercially prepared beverage may be counted as juice toward the daily and weekly fruit requirement. Smoothies with less than 100% juice content are the only example of when less than 100% juice may be offered. When considering the use of commercially prepared smoothies, SFAs need to be aware of how non-fruit ingredients may impact calories and saturated fat, particularly in light of the non-contributing milk in these products.

10. Can smoothies contain nutritional supplements such as whey protein powder and herbal supplements such as Ginko biloba?

No. Smoothies with dietary and herbal supplements are not creditable for CN Programs. However, smoothies can be made with juice that has been fortified with vitamins and minerals such as orange juice with calcium and Vitamin D added.

11. Are smoothies allowed at breakfast and lunch?

Smoothies may be offered at any meal. It is not recommended to offer a smoothie at both breakfast and lunch on the same day.

The FNS Instruction 783-7, Rev. 1: Milk Requirement - Child Nutrition Programs will be updated to be consistent with this guidance to allow smoothies prepared by program operators with milk at breakfast.

School food authorities and other program operators should direct any questions concerning this guidance to their State agency. State agencies with questions should contact the appropriate FNS Regional Office.

Original Signed

Cynthia Long
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Child Nutrition Division