



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



TO: Sponsors of the School Child Nutrition Programs

FROM: Therese Dandeneau, Education Consultant *Therese A. Dandeneau*
Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education

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SUBJECT: Operational Memorandum #28-13
Variations in Meal Requirements for Religious Reasons: Jewish Schools,
Institutions and Sponsors

This memorandum is intended to clarify allowable variations to Child Nutrition Program (CNP) food components in order to meet religious needs among Jewish schools, institutions and sponsors. The guidance pertains to meals served in Jewish facilities participating in the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the School Breakfast Program; institutions and their facilities participating under the Child and Adult Care Food Program; and sponsors and sites in the Summer Food Service Program.

The Food and Nutrition Service may approve variations in the food components of meals served in the CNPs on an experimental or on a continuing basis where there is evidence that such variations are nutritionally sound and are necessary to meet ethnic, religious, economic or physical needs.

During the religious observance of Passover, Jewish facilities may be exempted from the enrichment and whole grain portions of the CNP grain requirements. Un-enriched matzo may be substituted for the grain requirement during that period of time only. At all other times of the year, matzo served as a grain component must be whole grain rich, whole grain, or enriched in accordance with the specific regulatory meal pattern requirements operated in the particular program.

In addition to this variation, Jewish facilities may be granted flexibilities with regard to the meal patterns requirement that milk be offered with all meals. Such entities may choose from four alternative options; these options apply only to meals containing meat or poultry when participants do not have the opportunity to refuse the milk or meat/poultry through Offer vs. Serve:

1. Serve an equal amount of non-dairy milk substitute (for medical or special dietary needs) that is nutritionally equivalent to fluid milk as per 7 CFR 210.10(m).
2. Serve an equal amount of full-strength juice in place of milk with lunch or supper. **When juice is substituted for milk, it may not contribute to the vegetable/fruit requirement.** Entities operating five days per week may substitute juice for milk twice per week for lunches and twice for suppers, but no more than once each day. Those operating seven days per week may make three

substitutions per week for lunches and three for suppers, but no more than one each day.

3. Serve milk at an appropriate time before or after the meal service period, in accordance with applicable Jewish Dietary Law.
4. If applicable, serve the snack's juice component at breakfast, lunch or supper, and serve the corresponding meals' milk component as part of the snack.

Milk must be offered or served in other meals according to regulations, since Jewish Dietary Laws allow other meat alternatives (e.g., fish, egg, beans and peas, nuts and seeds and their butters) to be consumed with milk at the same meal.

In the same regard, Jewish Dietary Law poses challenges to serving the dark green vegetable subgroup as required in the NSLP. Jewish facilities facing this challenge may be exempt from the requirement to serve the dark green vegetable subgroup; however, **must serve the same total amount of vegetables**. The vegetables served in place of dark green vegetables must come from the *red/orange or beans/peas subgroups* since, according to The Dietary Guidelines for American 2010, these subgroups are underrepresented in the American diet.

Jewish schools, institutions and sponsors have the discretion to select one of the above options as an alternative to standard regulatory meal requirements. It is important to note that for review and audit purposes, *entities electing to use the options must inform their State agency in writing prior to implementation and must maintain a record of which option they have chosen.*

Questions may be directed to:

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