

Meal Accommodations Quick Guide Maine Child Nutrition Programs

Meal Accommodation: a change to the planned menu due to an individual’s special dietary needs.

Disability: a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities or bodily functions.

Required Meal Accommodations

Federal school nutrition regulations require sponsors to make reasonable modifications to meal requirements for students with a disability which affects their diet when supported by a completed Medical Statement.

The **Medical Statement is required and must be completed & signed by a Licensed Physician.** It must identify:

1. The participant’s major life activity or bodily function affected by the physical or mental impairment restricting the diet;
2. An explanation of what needs to be done to accommodate the disability;
3. The food(s) to be omitted from the participant’s diet, or other dietary accommodations to be made; and,
4. The food(s) that must be substituted when items are omitted from the diet.

Medical Statements do not need to reference a disability and Sponsors do not need to determine if the participant has a disability. This is determined by a licensed physician. The physician’s determination of the participant’s disability must be based on the regulatory criteria for a “disabled person.” (7 CFR 15(b)(3))

Licensed Physician includes Medical Doctors (MD), Doctor of Osteopathy (DO), Physician’s Assistant (PA), and Nurse Practitioner.

Meal Preference Requests

Sponsors **may** choose to make meal modifications for students who do not have a disability however the accommodation must still meet meal pattern regulations.

Milk Substitution Requests

A sponsor **may** choose to make substitutions for students who request a substitution for cow’s milk. The substitution **must be nutritionally equivalent to cow’s milk.** *Juice and water are NOT allowable substitutions.* Participants must provide the sponsor with a signed milk substitution request from a parent/guardian or recognized medical authority.

Milk Substitute Nutrition Standards

Nutrient	Per Cup
Calcium	276 mg
Protein	8 g
Vitamin A	500 IU
Vitamin D	100 IU
Magnesium	24 mg
Phosphorus	222 mg
Potassium	349 mg
Riboflavin	.44 mg
Vitamin B-12	1.1 mcg

Meal Charges

There can be **no** additional charges to students with or without disabilities for meal substitutions.

USDA Meal Reimbursement

Meal accommodations supported by a completed Medical Statement are reimbursable at the standard meal reimbursement rate. Meal preference requests that do not meet program requirements are not reimbursable. While any additional costs for substituted foods are considered allowable program costs, no additional Child Nutrition Program reimbursement is available.

Communication & Documentation

Communication between the sponsor, student, and the parent/guardian is key to ensure reasonable accommodations are made for participants with disabilities. This includes balancing the safety of the student with inclusion when considering “allergy-free” seating arrangements.

Keep all documentation on file including the medical statement and notes from conversations.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Maine Department of Education Child Nutrition Rev. 2023/Adapted from Oregon Department of Education