



## SCHOOL FOODSERVICE

Beef continues to be an important part of a healthy diet for kids and essential component of healthy school meals.

- The amount of meat/meat alternate required as part of the new school lunch plans are almost identical to previous requirements.<sup>2</sup> (Note: See the table below for a detailed comparison.)
  - Schools were previously required to provide at least 1.5 – 2 oz. equivalent (eq.) meat/meat alternate daily for grades K-12, which translates to 7.5 – 10 oz. meat/meat alternate each week through the 2011-2012 National School Lunch Program.
  - As background, meat and meat alternate include meat, poultry, fish, cheese, yogurt, dry beans and peas, whole eggs, alternate protein products, peanut butter or other nut or seed butters, and nuts and seeds.
  - Schools are still required to offer a minimum amount of meat/meat alternate daily through this year's new 2012-13 National School Lunch Program requirements.
  - For students in grades 9-12, schools are required to provide 2 oz. eq. of meat/meat alternate daily and provide a total of 10-12 oz. each week.
  - For students below grade 9, schools are required to provide 1 oz. eq. of meat/meat alternate daily and between 8-10 oz. eq. weekly.
  - The new National School Lunch Program requirements now have what USDA refers to as a “weekly range” for meat/meat alternate and grains. The top end of the range is a maximum amount that schools may offer. This is intended to help schools offer age-appropriate meals within the required calorie range.
  - Depending on whether schools previously (in the 2011-2012 school year) followed the “Traditional” or “Enhanced” Food-Based Approach, kids may actually be offered more ounces of meat/meat alternate under the new meal plan guidelines.

High-quality protein, like lean beef, is especially important for children because it supports the growth, repair and maintenance of all body tissues, makes red blood cells and boosts the immune system.<sup>2</sup> Sufficient protein is essential for children to perform their best both physically and mentally.<sup>3,4</sup>

- Many studies show a direct link between nutrient intake and academic performance. Zinc, iron and other nutrients are critical for brain development and function.<sup>5,6,7,8</sup>
- Beef is an excellent source of zinc; a 3-oz serving of cooked beef provides about 39% of the daily value for zinc.<sup>9,10</sup> Beef is the top food source of zinc among U.S. children aged 2 to 18 years.<sup>11</sup>
- A 3 oz. serving of cooked beef provides 14% of the daily value for iron and 32% of the iron recommendations for 9 to 13 year old boys and girls.<sup>12,13</sup>

Schools can feel good about continuing to include high-quality protein, like beef, on the menu to help growing kids get all the essential nutrients they need for optimal health while still meeting the requirements for healthy school meal patterns.

- Pairing produce and other whole foods with a family favorite like nutrient-packed lean beef helps you meet the Dietary Guidelines and MyPlate recommendations.<sup>12,13</sup>
- Pairing fruits and vegetables with favorite foods like beef can help make it easier for Americans to enjoy more produce in a balanced diet. Once people have anchored their plate with protein, the next step is to fill at least half of the plate with colorful vegetables and fruits.<sup>13</sup>

- 1 Dwyff RL. *Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Complete Food and Nutrition Guide*. 5th ed. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt; Revised, Updated edition (April 18, 2017)
- 2 Schwarzenberg SJ, et al. *Advocacy for improving nutrition in the first 1000 days to support childhood development and adult health*. *Pediatrics* 2018;141:e20173716.
- 3 Michaelsen KF, Greer FR. *Protein needs early in life and long-term health*. *Am J Clin Nutr* 2014;99:718S-22S.
- 4 Black MM. *Micronutrient deficiencies and cognitive functioning*. *J Nutr* 2003;133:3927s-31s.
- 5 Black MM. *The evidence linking zinc deficiency with children's cognitive and motor functioning*. *J Nutr* 2003;133:1473S-6S.
- 6 Benton D. *The influence of dietary status on the cognitive performance of children*. *Mol Nutr Food Res* 2010;54:457-70.
- 7 Prado EL & Dewey KG. *Nutrition and brain development in early life*. *Nutr Rev* 2014;72:267-84.
- 8 U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Agricultural Research Service, Nutrient Data Laboratory. *USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, Legacy*. Version Current: April 2018. Available at <http://www.ars.usda.gov/nutrientdata>. (NDB#13364 for beef)
- 9 National Institutes of Health Dietary Supplement Label Database. *Labeling Daily Values*. Available at <https://www.dslid.nlm.nih.gov/dslid/dailyvalue.jsp>
- 10 Keast DR, et al. *Food sources of energy and nutrients among children in the United States: National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey 2003-2006*. *Nutrients* 2013;5(1):283-301.
- 11 National Institutes of Health Office of Dietary Supplements. *Iron: Fact sheet for health professionals*. Available at <https://ods.od.nih.gov/factsheets/Iron-HealthProfessional/>
- 12 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. *2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at <http://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/guidelines/>
- 13 U.S. Department of Agriculture, Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion. *ChooseMyPlate.gov*. Available at: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

# SCHOOL FOODSERVICE RECIPES

to help growing kids get all the essential nutrients they need for optimal health while still meeting the requirements for healthy school meal patterns.

## BEEF SAUSAGE BREAKFAST BURRITO



## BEEF SAUSAGE LASAGNA



## SPY THAI BEEF MEAL



## ROCK AND ROLL BEEF WRAPS 93%



Find these amazing school foodservice beef recipes here:

[sdbeef.org/resource-room/recipes-for-lunch-programs](https://sdbeef.org/resource-room/recipes-for-lunch-programs)

