

Offer vs Serve and the New Lunch Meal Pattern

How to make sure you have reimbursable meals and pleasant meal times

What is Offer versus Serve?

Offer versus Serve (OvS) is a concept that applies to menu planning and to the determination of reimbursable school meals. OvS allows students to decline up to 2 of the 5 components offered in a school lunch.

Where is Offer vs Serve used?

- Required for lunch at senior high schools (grades 9-12).
- Optional at lunch in lower grade levels (grades K-5 and 6-8).

Who makes decisions about Offer vs Serve?

- **School Food Authorities** decide :
 - Whether to implement OVS at lunch in grades K-5 and 6-8.
- **Students** decide:
 - Whether or not they would like to decline 0, 1, or 2 items.

Why use Offer vs Serve?

- Less food waste.
- Cost savings when preparing less food.
- Increased customer satisfaction.
- Students eat better when they are allowed choices.

What does a reimbursable lunch look like?

- Schools must **offer** the minimum daily serving sizes of all 5 food components every day.
- Students may decline two food items; however, **students must take a fruit or vegetable**. Students can opt to take a smaller portion of the fruit or vegetable.
Options include:
 - A 1/2 cup serving of fruit, OR
 - 1/2 cup serving of vegetable, OR
 - 1/4 cup serving of fruit and a 1/4 cup serving of vegetable to equal 1/2 cup total AND
 - With any of the above options, students still have to select two other components for the meal to be considered reimbursable.
- Students may take smaller portions of declined food items (does not affect price of the meal).
- Lunch must be priced as a unit. Students select 3, 4, or 5 items and are charged the same price.

