

School Lunch: Good for Kids and Good for Your Wallet

As the cost of everything increases – there is one meal that is still a great value: both nutritionally and economically! School lunch is still an incredible bargain at \$2.25 for an Elementary Lunch and \$2.30 for a Secondary Lunch!

Every School Lunch Includes Nutritious Food Choices:

- Milk – Fat free or 1% - flavored or regular
- Fruits & Vegetables – Favorite varieties including hot cooked veggies, fresh green salads and veggie sticks, fresh fruit, and chilled fruit in juice or light syrup
- Grains- Assorted enriched and whole grain foods such as breads, rice, pasta, noodles, tortillas, taco shells, and cereals
- Meats and meat substitutes- Sources of high quality protein, for example lean chicken, beef, beans, eggs, and reduced fat cheeses and yogurt

Healthy Meals Feed Eager Minds

- School meals must meet nutrition guidelines based on the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- No more than 30% calories can come from fat and less than 10% from saturated fat.
- School lunches provided 1/3 of the Recommended Dietary Allowances of protein, vitamins A and C, calcium, iron, and calories over the course of one week of menus.
- Students who eat school lunches consume fewer calories from fat than students who bring lunch from home.
- Compared to lunches from home, school lunches contain 3 times as many dairy products, twice as much fruit, and seven times the vegetable amounts.
- Students who eat school lunch have substantially lower intakes of added sugars than students who do not eat school lunch.



Save Money: Eat School Lunch:

- On average it costs less to buy a school lunch than to bring a lunch from home
- The estimated national average of a school lunch was brought from home was \$3.43 last school year.¹

There *is* Such a Thing as a Free Lunch (and a Reduced Price One Too)

- Families meeting certain income guidelines are eligible for **free school meals or for meals at a reduced price of \$0.40.**
- Applications for free/reduced priced meals are approved based on **current** income, and **families may apply for benefits any time during the school year.**
- Typically families complete meal applications at the beginning of the school year. **Families are also encouraged to complete a new application if their particular financial circumstances change during the school year.**
- To request a meal application, please contact the Main Office at your student's school.

¹According to a meal cost analysis by Alice Jo Rainville, PhD, RD, CHE, SNS of Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI