



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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Brian P. Kemp
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MEMORANDUM

To: Institutions and Sponsors Participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP)

From: Sonja R. Adams, Director of Provider Services – Nutrition (*Original Signed*)

Date: May 17, 2019

Subject: Crediting Popcorn in the CNPs

Legal Authority: USDA Policy Memorandum SP23-2019, CACFP 10-2019, SFSP 09-2019, April 17, 2019; and SP 08-2019, CACFP02-2019, SFSP 02-2019, December 4, 2018.

***Cross Reference/
See also:***

DECAL Policy Memorandum, *Update of Food Crediting System to Include Various Food Items Which Were Previously Uncreditable*, December 28, 2018.

This memorandum expands on the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) policy guidance originally released on December 4, 2018, whereby such guidance sought to inform participating institutions and sponsors of the credibility of various food items which were previously uncreditable.¹ Specifically, this memorandum seeks to clarify *how* popcorn will credit towards a reimbursable meal or snack for qualifying participants.²

Please Note: Pursuant to Georgia state licensing requirements, licensed child care learning centers are prohibited from serving popcorn to children less than three (3) years of age. Children older than three years of age, may be served popcorn provided that such food is cut in such a way as to minimize choking.³ Further, DECAL encourages institutions and sponsors to take similar health and safety precautions when serving popcorn to elderly or otherwise compromised adult participants.

Therefore, if an institution or sponsor wishes to credit popcorn as part of a reimbursable meal or snack, it is the responsibility of the institution or sponsor to ensure that the participants being served, qualify in age

¹ USDA Policy Memorandum, SP 08-2019, CACFP 02-2019, SFSP 02-2019, December 4, 2018.

² Previously, popcorn could not contribute to any component in the meal pattern but could be served as an “extra” food.

³ Ga. Comp. R. & R. 591-1-1-.15(7).

(or otherwise), pursuant to state licensing rules and regulations, and must consider the developmental readiness of qualifying children and the ability of disabled or older adults to swallow safely.

I. Crediting Guidance

CACFP

Institutions and sponsors participating in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) may credit popcorn as a **whole grain** in the following ways:

- **¾ cup** (or 0.25 ounces (7 grams)) popped popcorn as **¼ ounce equivalent** of whole grains in a reimbursable meal or snack.
- **1 ½ cups** (or 0.5 ounces (14 grams)) popped popcorn as **½ ounce equivalent** of whole grains in a reimbursable meal or snack.
- **3 cups** (or 1.0 ounce (28 grams)) popped popcorn as **1 ounce equivalent** of whole grains in a reimbursable meal or snack.

SFSP

Sponsors participating in the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) may credit popcorn as a **whole grain** in the following ways:

- **¾ cup** (or 0.25 ounces (7 grams)) popped popcorn as **¼ serving** of grains in a reimbursable meal or snack.
- **1 ½ cups** (or 0.5 ounces (14 grams)) popped popcorn as **½ serving** of grains in a reimbursable meal or snack.
- **3 cups** (or 1.0 ounce (28 grams)) popped popcorn as **1 serving** of grains in a reimbursable meal or snack.

Particularly apparent with young children, in situations where the volume standards above might be challenging to meet, institutions and sponsors are encouraged to pair popcorn with another creditable grain, using the crediting guidance for ½ and ¼ ounce equivalents and servings listed above. For example, institutions and sponsors may serve popcorn in a trail mix with pretzels and cereal for a snack.

II. Popcorn as an Ingredient in Creditable Foods

Popcorn may be used as an ingredient in creditable foods prepared commercially or by institutions and sponsors. As such, popcorn must be present in the minimum creditable quantities to credit in the CACFP and SFSP. For popcorn, the minimum creditable quantity is ¾ cup or ¼ ounce equivalent.

To credit commercially-prepared foods, a Product Formulation Statement (PFS) must be obtained.⁴ If using popcorn as an ingredient in other food prepared in-house, institutions and sponsors must follow the existing standards for determining meal contributions for in-house recipes, including creating standardized recipes. To determine how to credit popcorn that is ground into flour and made into crackers (for example), follow Exhibit A, found in the Appendix of the *Food Buying Guide*.

III. Popcorn Flavorings/Toppings

Both the CACFP and SFSP do not have specific quantitative requirements for calories, saturated fat, and sodium. Therefore, when popcorn is served, institutions and sponsors are strongly encouraged to limit the use of toppings such as salt, caramel, cheese, and butter that add sodium, sugar, or saturated fat. To be clear,

⁴ For additional information, visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/cnlabeling/food-manufacturerindustry>

these toppings are not prohibited but serving fresh, plain popcorn or utilizing healthier forms of flavoring (e.g. herb blend), is strongly encouraged.

Additionally, institutions and sponsors are to use their discretion in determining if a particular popcorn product or recipe is perceived to be a grain-based dessert and to follow the guidance in place for grain-based desserts accordingly.⁵

For questions concerning this memorandum, please contact the Policy Administrator at (404) 651-8193.

⁵ See also, DECAL Policy Memorandum, *Grain Requirements in the CACFP; Questions and Answers*, May 3, 2018.