



## The Ins and Outs of Serving Family Style Meals

**FAMILY STYLE MEAL SERVICE**, in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), is a type of meal service that allows children to serve themselves from communal platters of food with assistance from supervising adults, if needed. Family style meal service introduces children to new foods, tastes and menus. It also allows children to develop a positive attitude toward healthy foods, sharing in a group eating setting and practicing good eating habits. Unlike pre-plated meals, family style meal service

provides some flexibility in the initial portion of food that is selected. While this can reduce food waste, additional servings of each food should be readily available at each table and additional food can be selected by children at any time.

### SERVING GUIDELINES

Serving meals family style is optional in the CACFP. If a center or day care home chooses to serve meals family style, they must comply with the following practices:

**1** A sufficient amount of food must be placed on each table to provide the full required portions of each of the meal components, for all children at the table.

**2** Each required meal component must be offered to each child. However, a child is not required to put the food on their plate or eat the food in order for the meal or snack to be reimbursable. For example, if there are three children between the ages of 3-5 years at a table for lunch, then at least  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of sliced apples must be available for each person. In this example, a total of  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of sliced apples must be placed in the

*(continued on page 2)*



### DID YOU KNOW?

**February is American Heart Month.** 

- Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S. but impacts some communities disproportionately.
- National Wear Red Day is the first Friday in February. Wear red and encourage others to do the same to help raise awareness about heart disease.
- In most cases, heart disease is preventable when people adopt a healthy lifestyle. This can be achieved by not smoking, maintaining a healthy weight, controlling blood sugar and cholesterol, treating high blood pressure, being physically active and getting regular checkups.
- The origins of Valentine's Day are murky, but it is thought to have officially become a holiday associated with love in the 1300s.
- Nearly 250 million roses are grown in preparation for Valentine's Day each year.
- According to Hallmark, a whopping 145 million Valentine's Day cards are exchanged every February 14 (and that doesn't include kids' Valentines exchanged in classrooms!).
- According to the National Retail Federation, candy is the most popular gift to give on Valentine's Day.

### INSIDE:

- Cold and Flu Season Tips
- Buying, Washing & Storing Berries

- Recipes
- Food Funny

## The Ins and Outs of Serving Family Style Meals

— Continued from front page

communal bowl or plate on the table to meet the meal pattern requirement for the fruit component to offer  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of fruit per child.

**3** During the course of the meal, it is the responsibility of the supervising adults to actively encourage each child to serve themselves the full required portion of each meal component of the meal pattern. Supervising adults may choose to serve any meal components directly to the participants. However, when choosing to serve any meal component, the full required minimum quantity must be provided to each child. For example, children 3–5 years old, when not pouring their own milk, must be served the full 6 fluid ounces of low-fat or fat free milk at breakfast, lunch and supper.

Even when a complete family style meal service is not possible or practical, it may be useful to offer one meal component or multiple meal components in a family style manner. For example, children can pass around dinner rolls with tongs while the rest of the meal components are pre-plated or served by the supervising adult. This practice can help young children develop motor skills as well as the dexterity and hand strength needed to serve themselves.

While participants must be allowed to serve themselves in family style meal service, supervising adults may help children who are unable to serve themselves. Portions served to them must be at least the minimum portion size. In the case of young children, family style meals are an opportunity to help them develop motor skills. For example, a center or day care home may choose to have children start by serving themselves one menu item while the supervising adult acts as a model and serves the remaining food.

### BENEFITS OF FAMILY STYLE MEALS

Family style meals provide an opportunity for children to honor their hunger and fullness cues by controlling their own portion sizes. To help everyone take the appropriate serving size for their age, use serving utensils that provide the amount needed for one serving. For example, if the meal pattern requires



$\frac{1}{2}$  cup of fruit, use a  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup scoop, ladle or spoodle for participants to serve the fruit. If a child does not take the minimum serving size, they should be encouraged to take more. However, the child does not have to self-serve or consume the full serving size in order for the meal to be reimbursable. On the other hand, if a child takes more than the serving size for their age group, the meal is still reimbursable because the meal pattern serving sizes are minimums. If the food in a communal platter is emptied before each child is served, then the platter must be re-filled so each child is offered a complete reimbursable meal. As a reminder, second helpings cannot be claimed as additional meals.

In line with the nutritional goals of the CACFP, family style meal service promotes mealtime as a learning experience for children. It provides the opportunity for children to practice their fine motor skills while building self-esteem and confidence, eating without pressure, developing healthy eating behaviors, practicing social and language skills, and participating in educational activities that are centered around food.

— Adapted from *Food & Nutrition Service, USDA*

## KIDS' HEALTH &amp; SAFETY

# Cold and Flu Season Tips

It's that time of the year! The air is crisp, our mugs are warm and full, our favorite winter sweaters and coats are getting worn again, and...germs are spreading more easily than usual. Although it's not possible to entirely eliminate the spread of germs, parents and providers can minimize the impact of illness in homes. Here are some tips to help protect families and prevent the spread of germs this year:

## SNEEZE PROTECTION

Show children how to properly cover their nose and mouth when coughing or sneezing with a tissue. The tissue should be thrown in the garbage afterward and hands should be washed thoroughly.

## FREQUENT HAND WASHING

Reinforce proper hand washing techniques and encourage frequent hand washing. Choose a hand washing song to help kids wash up for at least 20 seconds or more. Caregivers should demonstrate how to properly wash your hands, lathering up your palms, between fingers and the back of your hands using soap and warm water.

## DISINFECT TOYS OFTEN

Disinfect surfaces and toys more often during cold and flu season to avoid the spread of germs. Choose safe and healthy products to kill germs, cleaning frequently used toys, doorknobs, countertops, desks and bathrooms on a daily basis.

## CHILDREN AND STAFF SHOULD STAY HOME IF SICK

Keep an eye out for the first signs of a cold or the flu. If a child has symptoms such as sneezing, runny nose, fever, fatigue, headaches, body aches, sore throat or vomiting, ensure you contact their parent or guardian immediately.

## CREATE STRONG SICK POLICIES

Consider creating sick day policies for when children do become ill. Insist that parents adhere to your policy, keeping their child home for the required number of days. You may wish to send a letter or email to parents to remind them of the policy details at the beginning of the season.



## STAY INFORMED

Understand differences between cold and flu symptoms to be able to identify potential illnesses correctly and proceed accordingly. Check for local health updates and follow public health guidelines for masking, gathering indoors and testing. Each season may bring different recommendations based on the types of viruses circulating.

## PRACTICE HEALTHY HABITS

Make sure children are getting balanced meals with fruits, vegetables, whole grains and protein to ensure they're getting plenty of nutrients to keep their immune system strong. Implement fun indoor activities to keep kids active and moving. Ensure that kids are drinking plenty of water, as maintaining hydration is vital.

## PRACTICE SELF-CARE

Don't forget to take care of yourself too! Get plenty of rest, drink lots of fluids and make sure you wash your hands often as well. Keep your hands away from your face, especially your nose, mouth and eyes to avoid spreading germs. Practice positive self-talk and mindfulness to manage stress, which can weaken the immune system.

— *Adapted from Cold and Flu Season Tips for Child Care*  
by Kali Kan, Hey Mama

## Marry Me Chicken

Extra-virgin olive oil (divided use).....	3 Tbsp	Crushed red pepper flakes, optional .....	1 tsp
Chicken breasts, boneless & skinless .....	4 (8 oz each)	Chicken broth .....	3/4 cup
Salt .....	to taste	Sun-dried tomatoes, chopped .....	1/2 cup
Pepper .....	to taste	Heavy cream.....	1/2 cup
Garlic, finely chopped .....	2 cloves	Parmesan, finely grated .....	1/4 cup
Thyme leaves, fresh .....	1 Tbsp	Basil, for serving .....	to taste

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Heat 1 Tbsp of oil in a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Generously season chicken with salt and pepper and cook, turning halfway through, until golden brown, about 5 minutes per side. Transfer chicken to a plate.
2. In the same skillet, heat the remaining 2 Tbsp of oil over medium heat. Stir in garlic, thyme and red pepper flakes. Cook, stirring until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in broth, tomatoes, cream and parmesan. Bring to a simmer, then return chicken and any accumulated juices to skillet.
3. Transfer skillet to oven. Bake chicken until cooked through and juices run clear when chicken is pierced with a knife, 10 to 12 minutes. Spoon sauce over and top with basil.

Yield: 12 servings

Meets requirement for meat/meat alternate

— *Delish.com*



## Kickin' it in the Kitchen

### BUYING, WASHING & STORING BERRIES

Farmers' markets usually have the freshest berries picked on the morning of sale or the day before. If purchasing at a supermarket, choose plump, colorful berries without dark spots, discoloration or mold. It is best to wash berries when ready to eat.



Washing berries under running water may make them squishy and soggy. Instead, fill a large bowl with cold water, then place the berries in a colander and dip it in the water bath for an even rinse. Strawberries top the “dirty dozen” list, so they should be washed by dipping them in a 3-to-1 mixture of water and distilled white vinegar to clean off pesticides before the cold-water rinse. Dry berries gently and thoroughly on a paper or cloth towel, then transfer them to a towel-lined, airtight container and refrigerate. Most berries will last 3 to 5 days and strawberries can last 5 to 7 days.

Use a larger airtight container to store berries so they can lay flat in a single layer instead of being stacked.

To freeze berries, arrange them in a single layer on a parchment paper-lined baking sheet and freeze until firm. Once frozen, transfer to a freezer bag and keep for up to six months.

## Fruit Salsa with Homemade Tortilla Chips

Fresh strawberries, finely chopped .....	1 cup
Navel orange, peeled & finely chopped .....	1 medium
Kiwifruit, peeled & finely chopped .....	3 medium
Pineapple, unsweetened, crushed, drained .....	1 (8 oz) can
Lemon juice .....	1 Tbs
Sugar .....	2 tsp
Tortillas, whole wheat or enriched flour (8 inches) ...	8
Butter, melted .....	1/4 cup
Sugar .....	1/4 cup
Ground cinnamon .....	1 tsp

1. In a bowl, combine all the fruits, lemon juice and sugar. Cover and refrigerate until serving.
2. For chips, brush tortillas with butter; cut each into 8 wedges. Combine sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over the wedges. Place on ungreased baking sheets.
3. Bake at 350° for 5-10 minutes or just until crisp. Serve with fruit salsa.

Yield: 8 servings

Meets requirement for fruit and breads/grains

— *Tasteofhome.com*



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**Food Q.** Where did the hamburger take their Valentine on a date?  
**Funny A.** To the meatball!