

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – FAQ'S

Why does my student have to take a fruit or vegetable every day for lunch? Beginning with the 2012-13 school year students now have to take a serving (at least ½ cup) of a fruit OR a vegetable to qualify as a meal. This is part of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act. A wide variety of options are served daily from salad bars, which allows students to choose items they like. We also work with Farm to School to provide fresh and local produce as frequently as possible. In this past year we have served fresh and local tomatoes, peppers, watermelon, cantaloupe, apples, zucchini and sweet potatoes.

Are students getting enough calories, especially when they are active or student athletes? Lunch meals provide up to 650 calories for elementary students and 850 calories for secondary students. Students are encouraged to take all available components (meats, fruits, vegetables, grains and milk) so they aren't hungry and have enough energy for all their activities.

Why do you serve items that seem unhealthy, like pizza and nachos? All menu items must meet strict nutrient guidelines so may be different than expected. For example, pizza has a whole grain crust, low fat cheese and must meet sodium standards. Portion sizes are also age appropriate and not excessive. Menus are written to appeal to both students and parents and we modify kid friendly items/recipes to meet nutrition guidelines.

Why do you offer flavored milk? Students can choose from 4 types of milk; 1% white, skim white, chocolate skim or strawberry skim. While flavored milk has some additional carbohydrates it is still a nutrient dense drink which provides significant amounts of protein, calcium and vitamin D. None of the milk choices contain high fructose corn syrup. Some students who normally won't drink white milk gain the nutritional benefits of milk from drinking flavored varieties. If you don't want your student to drink flavored milk you should encourage them to take one of the white choices.

Do you serve fried foods? No, there are no fryers used in any production kitchens. Items are baked or steamed.

Why are there desserts on the menu? Desserts are offered no more than twice each week. They must also meet strict nutrient guidelines so are made with whole grains and reduced sugars and fats. School meals, just like meals at home, are ideally written to promote moderation and variety.

Is anything made from scratch or are all items "processed"? Yes, many items are made from scratch, such as casseroles, soups, salads and many entrees like sloppy joes. Most of the desserts; cookies, cakes and crisps, are made from scratch as well as many "grain choices", such as wheat and oat rolls. We do purchase some commercially processed items through the USDA or our local distributor but these items have been re-formulated to reduce breading, fat and sodium so they meet the new guidelines.

For additional information or questions please contact Alison Demory, Nutrition Services Director at 319-688-1021 or Demory.alison@iowacityschools.org

or visit the following USDA website for more detailed information: <http://www.fns.usda.gov/school-meals/healthy-hunger-free-kids-act>