

Why We Choose These Foods

When building our students' school menus, we look for foods that offer high-quality nutrients and beneficial ingredients to help improve diet quality and support the health of a growing body.

But with the recent conversations discussing added sugar in the diet, you may wonder why certain foods with added sugar remain on the school breakfast and lunch menus.

The answer is simple – **they provide important nutrients and beneficial ingredients.** And did you know that when sugar is added to certain foods, like whole grains, dairy products and some fruits, children are more likely to eat them?

In fact, the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans agree! They stated that a healthy eating pattern has room for nutrient dense foods with added sugars, such as cranberries, as long as calories from added sugar are less than 10% per day of total calorie intake.



Flavored Milk & Yogurt

- ✿ Dairy is an excellent source of protein, calcium, potassium and vitamin D – **needed for healthy bone growth!**
- ✿ Sometimes a little sweetening (**like chocolate milk!**) can help encourage children to drink more milk and ensure they get these important nutrients.

Canned, Frozen and Dried Fruit (such as dried cranberries and cranberry sauce)

- ✿ Fruit contributes necessary nutrients to the diet, such as **fiber, potassium, folate and vitamin C.**
- ✿ Some fruits offer even more – such as cranberries, which are associated with added **health benefits** like fighting off bacterial infections.
- ✿ Cranberry products are usually sweetened because, unlike other fruits, cranberries are **naturally low in sugar** and high in acidity, making them especially tart.
- ✿ But, the total amount of sugar in dried cranberries is equal to other dried fruits. Even when sweetened, all cranberry products have potential health benefits.

Whole Grain-Rich Foods (such as breads, cereals and pastas)

- ✿ Fiber, iron, zinc, vitamin B6 and vitamin A are just some of the many nutrients that whole grains have to offer.
- ✿ What's more, a diet rich in whole grains **supports a healthy heart and body weight!**
- ✿ Still, many **Americans are not getting enough** – and a little sugar added to whole grain cereals, breads or other products may encourage people to make at least half their grains whole each day.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015 – 2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition.

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