

North Dakota Aging Services Menu FAQ

Question	How were the menus designed?
Answer	<p>The menus are designed to meet the requirements of the Older Americans Act (OAA) Nutrition Services. The menus were created based on the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) meal patterns. Each meal must have nutrient analysis done to ensure it meets 1/3 of the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs) while adhering to the 2020-2025 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs).</p> <p>Nutrition Providers are only allowed to use menus that have been approved by Adult & Aging Services.</p>
Question	What do the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGAs) include?
Answer	<p>The DGAs focus on whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and protein while reducing added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.</p> <p>Products and ingredients used for recipes should focus on reducing added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Additional guidelines are included as footnotes on the week-at-a-glance (WAG) menu and on the meal pattern.</p>
Question	Why do I receive so many different menus?
Answer	<p>The goal is to provide many options to meet the preferences of your participants and to allow flexibility to meet the needs of your dining operation. Cycle menus are provided for those who would like menus that repeat every 4 weeks. Monthly menus are provided for those who prefer a new menu each month. Alternate menus are provided to be optional meals that may be substituted on the menu.</p>
Question	What is a week-at-a-glance (WAG) menu?
Answer	<p>The WAG menu lists all the food and serving sizes of what <u>must</u> be provided to meet the DRI & DGA requirements.</p>
Question	Do I need to print every new menu packet I receive?
Answer	<p>No, the master menu packet only needs to be printed once. Then all additional menus sent out only "<u>Section Two</u>" needs to be printed. This includes the WAG menu and recipes, along with the nutrition analysis.</p>
Question	What is the protein requirement?
Answer	<p>A protein (poultry, beef, port, tofu, etc.) must be a minimum of 3oz <u>after</u> being cooked. If it is an ounce or so larger that is <u>OK</u> and will not put the meal outside of nutritional requirements. The 3oz serving is based on whole muscle meats (boneless meat) such as turkey breast vs whole turkey. Processed meat products should be used in limited amounts due to fat and sodium content.</p>
Question	Why are there 2 slices of bread for many meals?
Answer	<p>The USDA requirement for grain has been updated to 2 servings per meal based on the new guidelines. Example: 1 grain serving = 1 slice of bread, ½ bun, ½ c rice or pasta, 6" tortilla or 1/2c cooked oatmeal or granola topping.</p>

Question	Why are there two vegetable servings at meals?
Answer	The USDA guidelines requirement for vegetables is 2 - 1/2c (4oz) equivalents per meal.
Question	Why are there very few desserts on the menu?
Answer	There are limited desserts on the menus as they are not part of a healthy overall eating pattern. Fruit-based desserts are approved for use <u>one-time</u> weekly but should be made from fresh, frozen, or canned fruit, and <u>not</u> pie filling. If a nutrition provider chooses to serve desserts more frequently the cost of the dessert is not part of a reimbursable meal.
Question	Are we allowed to serve the community's "favorite" meal?
Answer	The nutrition provider is allowed to offer <u>one</u> "Provider Choice" meal per month which was approved by Adult & Aging Services. The "Provider Choice" meals exceed sodium or other nutrition guidelines. It is noted in the menu packets if it is a "Provider Choice" meal.
Question	Can I substitute items on the menu for a better-accepted item?
Answer	Menu substitutions can only be made for like items. Example: fruit (frozen or canned for fresh), vegetable (an alternate vegetable with the <u>same</u> cooking process), protein (chicken for beef but <u>must</u> be cooked the same way). All menu substitutions must be documented on the menu and kept on file as Adult & Aging Services will ask to review them during site assessments.
Question	What if I do not see an item on the substitution list?
Answer	The substitution list has many options but is <u>not</u> all-inclusive.
Question	Can vegetable blends be substituted for other vegetables?
Answer	Vegetable blends available from food vendors are appropriate substitutions for other vegetables with the focus being on colorful. Fresh vegetables can provide more benefits and can be used as a substitute but may not always be an available option. Sweet potatoes and squash are acceptable Vitamin A substitutes. A whole fruit item is an appropriate substitute for a sliced or cubed fruit. Following the specified meal pattern when making substitutions will help ensure the DRIs are met.
Question	Can meals be moved to other weeks or months?
Answer	Meals are designed to meet 1/3 of the DRI daily which allows the nutrition providers the flexibility for them to be moved to another day. Meals can also be moved from one month to month. For example, a meal from the July menu can be served in September.
Question	What if I have a question that is not listed above?
Answer	Nutrition providers are strongly encouraged to reach out to Dietary Solutions with any questions. Dietary Solutions can also be a support for recipes that you might want to use, have errors, that are unclear, or any other specific needs. Preferred communication is to email Dietary Solutions directly at NDSupport@Dietarysolutions.net .