

# OSSE Nutrition Standards for CACFP

## D.C. CACFP FRIED / PRE-FRIED FOOD STANDARD

**Neither vegetables nor meats that have been deep-fried or commercially pre-fried should be served more than 2 times per month.**

In place of deep-fried and pre-fried foods, try healthier cooking methods—braise, bake, steam, grill, or poach.

## *Limit* Fried and Pre-Fried Meats and Vegetables



### Why is this standard important?

- Children need lean protein sources and a variety of colorful vegetables to get the nutrients they need to grow.
- Meats and vegetables are best prepared in some way other than frying.
  - See the handout on healthy cooking for ideas.
- Most fried and commercially pre-fried foods are:
  - High in calories.
    - Too many calories causes excess weight gain.
  - High in fat—usually unhealthy saturated or *trans* fat.
    - These fats contribute to heart disease.
  - High in sodium (salt).
    - Excess salt can contribute to hypertension.
- Teach children good eating habits by limiting fried and commercially pre-fried foods.



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I Am Healthy, I Am Happy

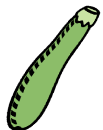
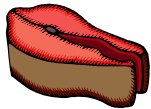
# Serve Meats & Veggies the CACFP Way

## What do you mean by “fried or pre-fried”?

- **Fried:** any meat, fish, poultry, potato or other vegetable that you or your vendor cooks by covering or submerging in oil, shortening, lard, or other animal fat.
- **Pre-fried:** any meat, fish, poultry, potato or other vegetable that you or your vendor buys already fried—even if you prepare it in the microwave or oven.

This includes:

- Refrigerated or frozen items that are breaded or battered.
- Most frozen potato products, even if the label doesn't say “fried.”
- Most frozen products described as “crispy” or “crunchy.”
- Examples of fried or pre-fried meats:
  - Chicken nuggets ▪ Chicken patties ▪ Country-fried steak ▪
  - Chicken tenders ▪ Fried fish fillets ▪ Fish sticks ▪ Popcorn shrimp ▪
- Examples of fried or pre-fried vegetables:
  - French fries ▪ Shoestring fries ▪ Crinkle-cut fries ▪ Tater Tots ▪
  - Hash Browns ▪ Onion rings ▪ Onion straws ▪ Fried okra ▪



## What can I serve instead of fried foods?

- **Buy uncooked meats and vegetables.**
  - When you prepare food yourself, you control what goes in it.
  - Lots of fat and salt can hide in packaged, pre-prepared foods.
  - Frozen uncooked meats and vegetables are just as good as fresh.
- **Vary the vegetables.**
  - Instead of relying on potato products, try lots of different veggies.
  - Use color as your guide when planning menus—aim to include vegetables of all colors during the week.
- **Look for lean meats, such as:**
  - Skinless chicken or turkey.
  - Unbreaded fish fillets.
  - Lean cuts of beef or pork—or trim off the fat yourself.
  - Ground meat labeled 90% lean (90/10) or 85% lean (85/15).
- **Experiment with low-cost meat alternates.**
  - Beans work as a side dish or in soups, casseroles, salads, and dips.
  - Low-fat yogurt and cheese are both creditable as meat alternates.
  - For children without allergies, eggs and nut butters are great choices.

## What if the children won't eat it?

- **Be patient**—you may have to serve a food as many as 10 times before a child will try it.
- **Get creative**—engage the children through cooking lessons, visiting a farmers' market or a farm, gardening, reading books about food, or doing food-related crafts or games.