

March is National Nutrition Month

March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. March is the start of Spring. March is when the flowers and wildlife start to enjoy new beginnings. March, as National Nutrition Month, is also a time to focus on the importance of physical fitness as well as eating nourishing meals. A healthy diet, combined with exercise, helps make our bodies stronger, improves our immune system, reduces our risk for chronic illnesses like diabetes and heart disease and gives us more energy. Most studies agree that fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean meats and proteins comprise a healthy diet. Really pile on the vegetables -- they are low in calories and high in nutrients and can be prepared in a variety of flavorful ways. And don't forget the milk!

Other month-long events to celebrate in March include National Women's History Month, National Sauce Month, National Noodle Month, National Frozen Food Month, National Flour Month and National Craft Month. So read on in this newsletter for craft ideas as well as tips and resources to be successful in the food program!

Menu Planning Tips

March 26 is National Spinach Day and a good time to remember that leafy greens, like lettuce and spinach, require a double portion to credit in the CACFP. If you need 1/2 cup of vegetables at Lunch, that probably means a full cup of salad!

Not all breads that have "wheat" in the name are whole grain-rich. Look at the first ingredient on the label. Remember that any "enriched flour," while creditable as a grain on the CACFP, is not WGR. If the food item you plan to serve has "whole wheat" or another whole grain as the first ingredient AND the next two grain ingredients are whole grains, enriched grains, bran or germ, it will credit as WGR.

March 7 is National Cereal Day. Some ready-to-eat cereals that are always WGR include Cheerios, Kix, Chex, and Frosted Mini Wheats. But remember that RTE cereals and oatmeal must adhere to the low-sugar requirements of the CACFP. No more than 6 grams of sugar per dry ounce! Did you know that any cereals listed on any state-approved WIC list are approved as low-sugar?!

Remember to also look at the portion sizes required for RTE cereal, as there are different minimum portion sizes for "rounds," "flakes," and "puffs." For example, Chex may require a 3/4 c serving to credit as .5 ounce equivalent of grains.

Avoid serving grain-based desserts, even if the first ingredient is whole wheat flour! Desserts like granola bars, oatmeal cookies and most breakfast rounds are not creditable on the CACFP.

March 9 is National Meatball Day, and March 20 is National Ravioli Day. Both of these are delicious foods to eat, but, along with foods like commercially processed macaroni and cheese, chicken nuggets, French toast and breaded fish, are combination foods. They may require a CN label or PFS (product formulation statement) to determine how much to serve to credit as a portion of meat/meat alternate, grain or other food component.

Tulip Paper Straw Craft

- Trace a tulip shape onto colored construction paper.
- Accordion fold the flower 4 times, then punch a hole in the center of the folded flower using a hole punch.
- Unfold the flower and fit a green paper straw in and out through the holes.
- Cut two thin leaves from green construction paper. Add glue to the bottom of each leaf and wrap them around the bottom of the paper straw.



Events in March

March 2 - Dr. Seuss Day

March 7 - National Cereal Day

March 11 - "Spring Forward" Daylight Saving Time

March 17 - St. Patrick's Day

March 19 - First Day of Spring

March 26 - National Spinach Day

March 29 - National Pita Day

Beaded Pipe Cleaner Butterflies

- Cut two 12-inch pipe cleaners and add about 40 pony beads to each, leaving about 1 inch empty at both ends.
- Shape each beaded pipe cleaner into a circle and twist the ends together to close the loop.
- Spread the beads apart to expose .5 inch of pipe cleaner at top and bottom, then pinch and twist into a figure eight.
- Repeat with a second 12-inch pipe cleaner so you have two beaded figure eights.
- Color a wooden clothespin with markers or use glue and glitter to decorate it.
- Pinch open the clothespin and slide in the "butterfly wings" or beaded figure eights.
- Cut one 6-inch pipe cleaner, add one pony bead at each end, and shape into the antennae, then clip into the top of the clothespin.



CLAIMS



CORNER

Claims Corner has reminders to help providers receive the most money possible each month.

- Child Enrollment Forms (CEFs) must be renewed annually. Monitor KidKare for children whose enrollment paperwork is expiring soon. Have parents/caregivers update, sign and date forms to avoid any gaps in enrollments.
- Send new or updated CEFs to Sue (email: sue@wildwoodcacfp.org) by the 25th of the month to allow time to update records before the start of a new claims month.
- Submit menus and attendance by the 5th of the month for on-time processing and payment. Claims received after the 5th of the month will be marked late and will be processed the following month.
- If school age children are in care during school breaks, remember to mark them "Out of School" in KidKare, or Wildwood will not be able to reimburse for those meals.
- If you are open and providing care on a holiday, remember to mark this on your KidKare calendar or your paper claim. Otherwise, Wildwood must deduct meals served on holidays.
- When Wildwood advances the claim month, children whose paperwork has expired will "fall off" your roster. Call the Colorado office at 303-730-0460 to have those children reactivated so you can continue to record their attendance and meals. Reimbursement will not be paid until updated paperwork is received and processed by Wildwood.
- Site visits are an important part of the services that Wildwood provides. You must give prior notice by notifying your field representative and updating your calendar when you will be closed. If your field rep attempts an in-person site visit during a scheduled mealtime and is unable to complete the visit because prior notice was not given, Wildwood must disallow reimbursement for that meal.



***The last day Wildwood can receive original WY & CO February claims for processing is April 24, 2024.**

***The last day Wildwood can receive original WY & CO March claims for processing is May 24, 2024.**

Often-Missed Questions on Wildwood Training:

All Wildwood providers are required to complete annual training in Civil Rights, Nutrition and Program. Free Training is available on our website at www.wildwoodonline.org. All trainings have been approved for state licensing requirements in CO and WY. Here are some questions that have stumped providers recently in Wildwood's training courses:

Child Nutrition Labels (2024)

Q: Most store-bought combination foods you find in the grocery store will have a CN Label.

A: False. Most store-bought combination foods, like chicken nuggets, hamburger patties, fish sticks, macaroni and cheese, meatballs, French toast and pizza, do not have a Child Nutrition (CN) Label. CN Labels can be costly and time consuming for the manufacturer to receive and are only valid for the exact product description and package size. They expire five years from the date of issue, sooner if the formulation changes. While a PFS (Product Formulation Statement) may be easier to get from the manufacturer or distributor than a CN Label, you will almost always be better served making combination foods from scratch. It may be less expensive to buy the individual components than to purchase packaged commercial foods. And you will know, because you're following the recipe, that you're using the correct amounts of meat/meat alternate, grain or other food components.

Crediting Store-Bought Combination Baby Foods (2023)

Q: After baby is regularly eating solid foods, the infant should be offered the full portion of food according to the Infant Meal Pattern.

A: True. Once the infant is regularly eating fruits or vegetables at Breakfast, for example, they should be served a food from that component category at every Breakfast. Remember that there are different requirements for children ages 6 to 11 months. Use the infant meal pattern as a guide to help ensure that the correct food components are being served, in the correct minimum amounts, to these children. Notice that IFIC (Iron Fortified Infant Cereal) is the only creditable grain option at Breakfast and Lunch and that meat/meat alternate food items are not creditable at Snack! Notice as well that infants ages 6 to 11 months should be receiving three components at Snack, unlike the two components that are required for children ages 1 and up: Formula or Breast Milk, IFIC or another grain component, and a fruit or vegetable.

To access FREE training, visit Wildwood's homepage and click **CACFP | Home Child Care | FREE Online Training**. Use the password **milk2014**. Review the content and complete the training and test online. Or call the Colorado office at 303-730-0460 to request paper training content. Wildwood will provide a certificate for scores of 80% or higher.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.