

What Schools Can Do To Improve Their Menus

(NAPSA)—More fruits and vegetables, less sodium and a cap on calories—those are just some of the recommendations a committee of experts has made on how to improve this nation's school lunch and breakfast menus.

A report, "School Meals: Building Blocks for Healthy Children," has been issued by the Institute of Medicine.

Among Recommended Changes in Standards for Menu Planning:

- More fruit at breakfast
- More vegetables at lunch
- More whole grain-rich foods
- Minimize trans fat
- Reduce sodium content



The report recommends that the Food and Nutrition Service of the USDA—which oversees this nation's school meal programs—adopt standards for menu planning that are more in line with the Department of Health and Human Services' Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

The recommendations include: Increase the amount and variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains; set a minimum and maximum level of calories; and reduce the amounts of saturated fat and sodium in school lunches. These updates are based on the latest child health and nutrition science. Since the school meal programs were last updated in 1995, experts have learned more about the links between diet and chronic health problems, including obesity and heart disease.

The Institute of Medicine is the health arm of the National Academy of Sciences. To learn more, visit iom.edu/schoolmeals.