Chapter 5

Preparing for a Nutrient Analysis

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After reading this chapter, you will understand how to:

- **Collect the necessary materials and information for conducting a nutrient analysis.**
- **Collect nutrient data or information for food items that are not listed in the CN Database.**

Information and Materials Needed for Nutrient Analyses

Whether you are an SFA conducting your own analysis, or a State agency conducting analysis during an SMI Review, you will need to have the following materials ready and available for nutrient analysis.

1. Menus

School Food Authority Perspective: If the SFA or school district is planning its own menus using NSMP, using another entity to plan menus for ANSMP, or if an SFA is planning menus based on one of the Food-Based Menu Planning systems – but is also conducting its own nutrient analysis of menus – the SFA will need a complete set of draft or tentative menus prepared for data entry. Written menus should include all menu or food choices with portion sizes to be served to each of the district's established grade or age groupings.

Most SFAs plan *centralized cycle menus* and conduct nutrient analyses of the school district's menus. School districts that conduct nutrient analysis find that cycle menus, repeated on a periodic basis, save time and resources.

State Agency Perspective: When the State agency conducts nutrient analysis as part of an SMI review of an SFA using food-based menu planning, State staff will choose one week of menus at a selected school(s). They will collect the menus of each age/grade grouping(s) of the school according to the meal pattern(s) used at the school

2. Standardized Recipes

In order to ensure that the nutrient analysis is reflective of what is planned/served, all schools regardless of menu planning system must use standardized recipes. Standardized recipes are those that have been tried and tested in the schools and found to be acceptable to students, have the same

ingredients and method of preparation, and provide a consistent yield.

Once the school district staff has developed these recipes for use in their schools, they should be available for input into the nutrient analysis software or be available to provide to the State agency during an SMI Review.

3. Food Product Descriptions or Specifications

The school district should have written food product descriptions or specifications for all foods used in the schools – not only as a purchasing tool but also for determining which product or ingredient to select from the software database for the analysis.

Examples of Food Product Descriptions:

Ground beef, frozen No more than 20% fat Like IMPS 136	OR	Milk, unflavored, 1% low-fat

School districts that utilize procurement software can provide a printout of food product descriptions for each food product. This allows the school district/school menu planner or State agency staff to select the correct ingredient from the software database when conducting nutrient analysis.

4. Nutrient Data or Information for Food Products Not in the Database

Identify food products not in the CN Database or in your software's local database.

- Review menus and the standardized recipes to be used for the preparation of the menus.

- Compare to the software database to determine if all food items or ingredients are included.

  For *single ingredient* foods or foods in the USDA *Food*

Buying Guide, the nutrient data for most products will already be in the CN Database. Examples of single ingredient foods are fruits, vegetables, and milk.

For food products with more than one ingredient, the food may be in the CN Database or it may not, depending upon whether the food has a standard of identity or the product manufacturer has submitted the product information for inclusion in the CN Database. Some software manufacturers also include a limited number of commercially prepared products in their ingredient database. These will be labeled as "Local."

TIP

For those of you with personal computers operating Windows®98SE or higher, you can now install the latest searchable version of the Standard Reference Database directly to your computer for use without Internet connection. Visit the USDA Web site (www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/foodcomp); click on the download link to begin the download process.

- If the product is not in the CN Database or your software's local database, you will need to locate the nutrient information for the product.

- Sources of nutrient data other than CN Database are:
  - Nutrition Facts Labels, often found on institutional-sized product packaging, even though they are not required. A sample Nutrition Facts Label is shown in Appendix E.
  - Nutrient data provided by the manufacturer. A nutrient analysis data form you can ask the manufacturer to complete is included in Appendix F.
  - Nutrient analysis data from another reliable source, such as USDA's Nutrient Database for Standard Reference. http://www.nal.usda.gov/fnic/cgi-bin/nut_search.pl

5. Food Production Records

All SFAs/schools are required to document the foods served to students as part of a reimbursable meal. In addition to ensuring that meals served adhere to meal requirements, production records also provide valuable information for conducting nutrient analyses of foods offered to children.

Food production records must include:

- Number of reimbursable meals planned and actually served;
- All menu items (or food items) planned for reimbursable meals including milk[4] and condiments;
- Portion or serving sizes for each age/grade group;
- Recipes used (note if USDA quantity recipe, or local recipe);
- Brand names, CN label numbers (if desired), and identification numbers of commercially prepared food products;
- Total amounts of foods planned and actually served;
- Documentation of a la carte, adult, and/or other non-reimbursable meals, including number of portions for each of these food items;
- Documentation of substitutions and/or leftovers used.

A Menu Planner for Healthy School Meals provides more information on documenting food production records and provides several sample food production record forms. Additionally, many State agencies have developed State prototypes or sample food production records for use by school districts/schools within the State. Several foodservice software companies, including ones that also have approved nutrient analysis software, have software applications that can be used for creating computerized food production records at the school level.

[4] If types of milk are not separated on the food production records, milk invoices to support the types and quantities of milk offered must be available.